

The Art of Happiness

Decreasing Stress and MAXIMIZING Joy

The Gospel Tool Kit

Skills for Increasing Happiness



Russ Seigenberg, Ph.D.

**Men are, that they might have joy.
(2 Nephi 2:25)**



The 12 Principles of Change

1. Understand the dual nature of man
2. Trust in God
3. Live well one day at a time
4. Find peace through acceptance
5. Let virtue garnish your thoughts unceasingly
6. Take care of the inner self
7. Recognize individual worth
8. Change self-defeating inner beliefs (schemas)
9. Strengthen social connections
10. Live by celestial principles in your family
11. Perfect your desires
12. Seek continual self-improvement

Principle no. 1

Understand the Dual Nature of Man

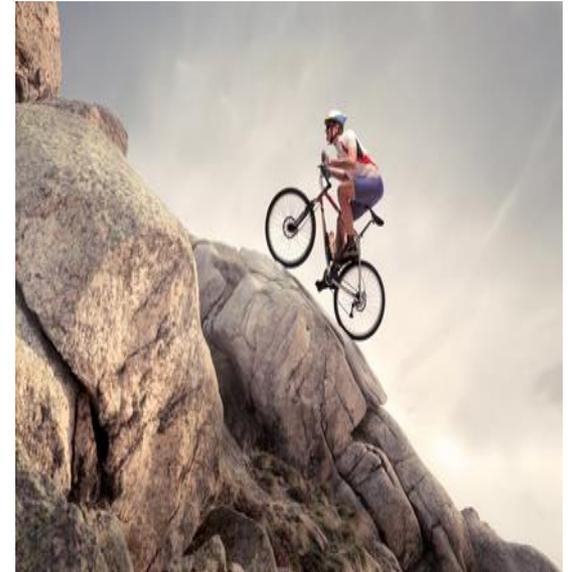
The spirit of man is knit together with the body and has a powerful effect on our personality and behavior. Learning how the heart and mind interact is essential to effective emotional functioning.

Man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be. (D&C 93:29)

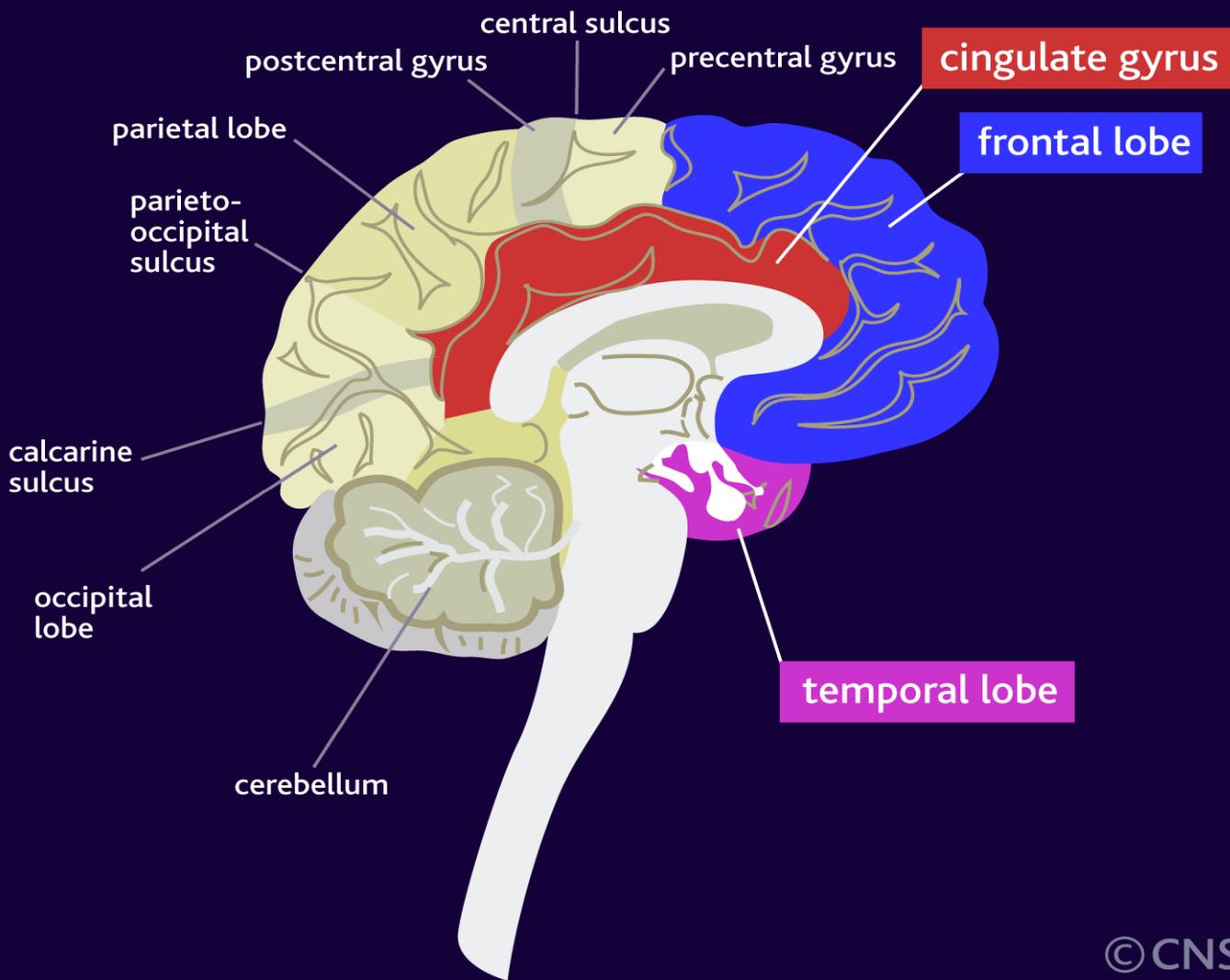
We are much more than we appear to be!

The Daily Battle of Willpower

Most human beings have aspects of impulse control and self-discipline that are problematic to them. We also struggle to control our thoughts.

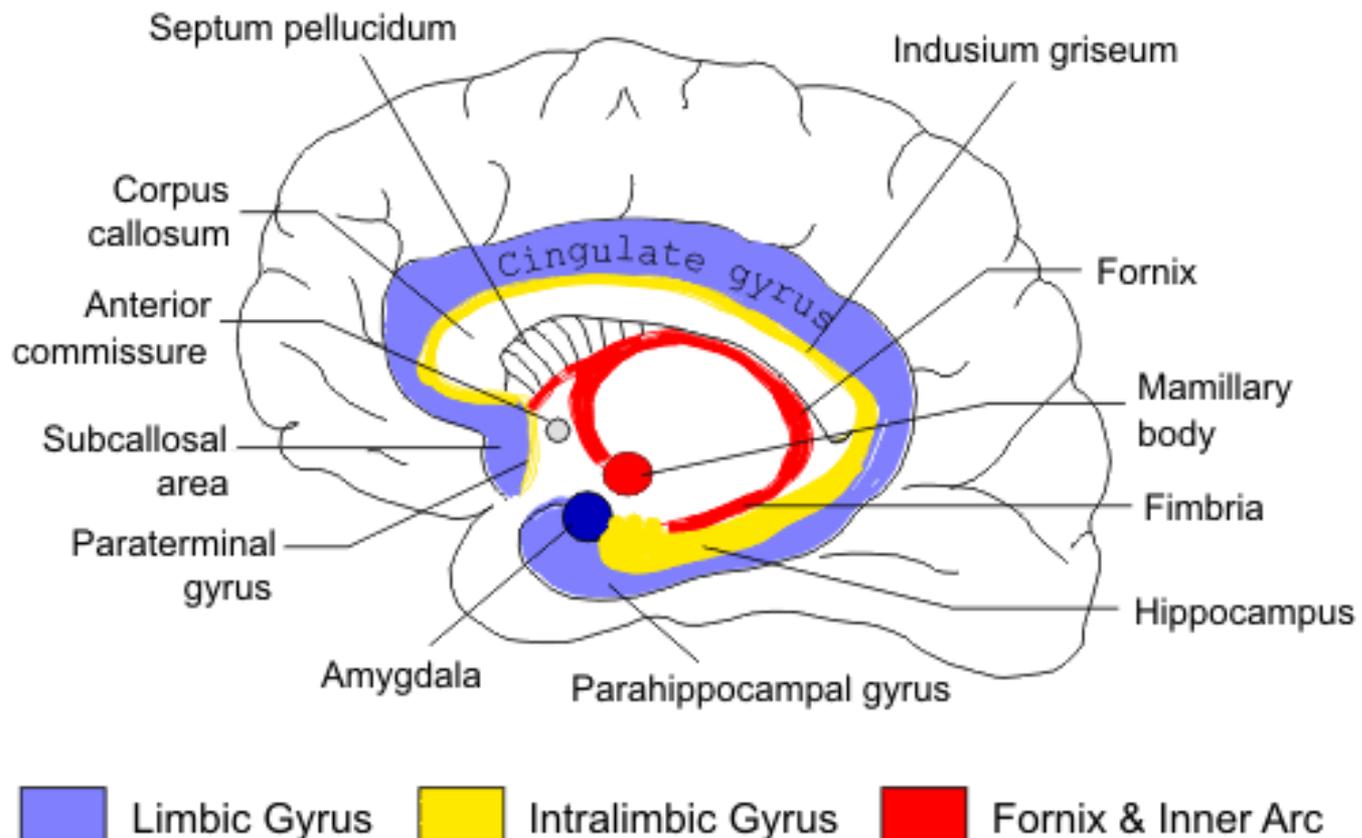


The Brain



The Emotional Mind

The Limbic System



Neuroscience Discovers the Subconscious

Benjamin Libet, 1983 (Measured brain activity preceding simple movements using EEG.)

C.S. Soon, 2008 (brain activity measured by fMRI)

J. Dylan-Haynes, 2008 (brain activity measured by fMRI)

Answers to simple choices can be predicted 7 seconds or more in advance by subconscious activity. In the Dylan-Haynes and Soon studies the activity in the subconscious predicted the ultimate response about 60 percent of the time.

The Bicameral Brain

- The emotional system allows us to act fairly spontaneously using pre-established automatic subroutines (quick and energy efficient).
- The rational (conscious) system allows us to make sense of set behavioral patterns, interrupt them, and establish new, more effective patterns.

Incognito - David Eagleman (neuroscientist)

The Happiness Hypothesis – Jonathan Haidt

The Brain's Dual System

1. The conscious, rational system.
2. The emotional, subconscious automatic system.



The Pre-Existence

Man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be. (D&C 93:29)

Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was; and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones.

And God saw these souls that they were good, and he stood in the midst of them, and he said: These I will make my rulers; for he stood among those that were spirits, and he saw that they were good; and he said unto me: Abraham, thou art one of them; thou wast chosen before thou wast born. (Abraham 3:22-23)

*And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,
And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.
(Revelation 12:7-8)*

A Prophet Speaks



President David O. McKay:
The spirit in man controls this physical body just as the driver of an auto may control that machine.

The Heart of Man According to Modern-Day Prophets

President Brigham Young: The spirit is the intelligent part of man, and it is intimately connected with the tabernacle.

President James E. Faust: The main mission of the Church is to change the inner self.

President David O. McKay: The highest purpose of man is to develop the spirit within him.

The Heart According to the Scriptures

Purify your hearts, ye double minded. (James 4:8)

Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. (Psalms 51:10)

Yea, behold, I will tell you in your mind and in your heart, by the Holy Ghost, which shall come upon you and which shall dwell in your heart. (D&C 8:2)

A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. (Matthew 12:35)

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. (Matthew 6:19-21)

For I, the Lord, will judge all men according to their works, according to the desire of their hearts. (D&C 137:9)

For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: (Proverbs 23:7)

And the spirit and the body are the soul of man. (D&C 88:15)

Recognizing the Heart

Emotions

Desires

Intuition

Emotionally-based thinking

(Logical thinking is altered to fit what we want to see)

Why is Changing the Heart Important?

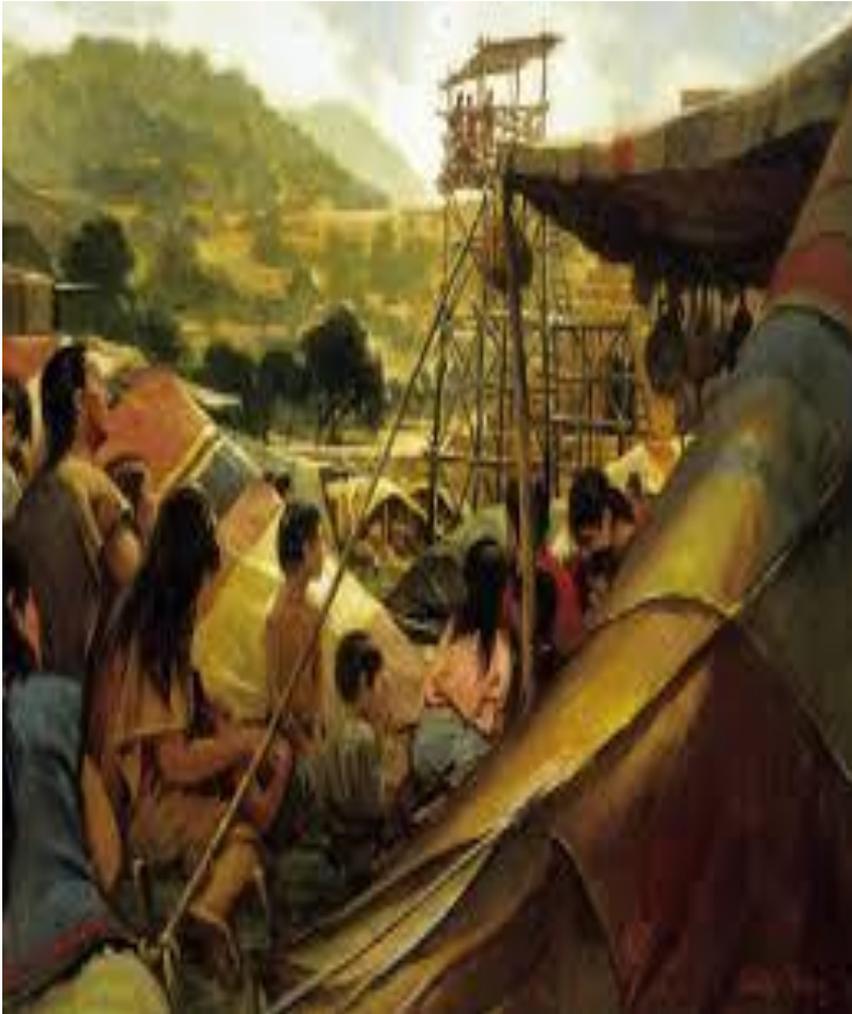
For I, the Lord, will judge all men according to their works, according to the desire of their hearts. (D&C 137:9)

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.
(Matthew 6:19-21)

King Benjamin's Warning



But this much I can tell you, that if ye do not watch yourselves, and your thoughts, and your words, and your deeds, and observe the commandments of God, and continue in the faith of what ye have heard concerning the coming of our Lord, even unto the end of your lives, ye must perish. And now, O man, remember, and perish not. (Mosiah 4:30)

The Power of Thoughts

For my ways are higher than your ways, and my thoughts higher than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:9)

For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he (Proverbs 23:7)

Let thy bowels also be full of charity towards all men, and to the household of faith, and let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven.

The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and thy scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth. (D&C 121:45-46)

Emotions come from thoughts and perceptions



From restless thoughts, that, like a deadly swarm
Of hornets arm'd, no sooner found alone, But rush
upon me thronging.

(John Milton)

lzquotes.com



How Do the Two Systems Interact?

- We can communicate with the emotional system.
- The emotional system provides information and feedback to the conscious mind and the conscious mind provides analysis and direction.



Gaining Cooperation with the Heart

Our main leverage with the emotional mind is persuasion and truth.

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. (John 8:32)

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. (John 4:23)

Assignment for Next Week

Read chapters 1 and 2

<http://ldsmentalhealth.blogspot.com>

Action Step

During the next week choose three different situations and practice identifying the different aspects of functioning - rational mind and emotional mind (the heart).

Principle #2 Trust in God

Turn your life and will over to Jesus Christ by making spirituality your greatest goal.

Spirituality could be defined as: 1) being obedient to the commandments and promptings of the Holy Ghost, 2) maintaining a positive emotional state by cultivating right thoughts and actions, 3) focusing on service to others and personal growth, 4) seeking to be in harmony with other people, nature, and truth.

What Causes Depression?



The Science of Depression

There appears to be an inherited biological predisposition to depression. First-degree relatives of those with unipolar depression have a three times greater chance of developing the condition.

Life events may also play a role. A study performed at Stanford University showed that 409 depressed male subjects averaged twice as many negative or stressful life events as a non-depressed control group. Some depressions are situational, while other depressions are of a more longstanding nature.

Depression and the Brain

Neuroimaging research shows us that in depression there is lower activity in the left prefrontal cortex (frontal lobe) and higher activity in the amygdala in depressed individuals. Decreased activity in the prefrontal cortex is likely experienced as difficulty in thinking effectively. Higher activity in the amygdala is thought to be associated with the increased processing of negative emotions.

When the human will is discouraged about the future and ceases to energetically pursue relevant goals, less energy will be sent to the prefrontal cortex, the chief executive of the mind. The amount of energy sent to the higher centers of the brain is dependent upon perceptions. Two of the main neurotransmitters involved in activation are dopamine and glutamate. Serotonin is more of a mood modulator. The mechanism by which serotonin improves mood is not known.

The Magic Pill ?



- A research study conducted in 1999 under the auspices of the Agency for Health Care Policy and Research looked at 80 studies performed on the efficacy of newer antidepressants (e.g. SSRIs such as Prozac or SNRIs such as Effexor) on those with major depression. The researchers found that antidepressants provided moderate relief to 50 percent of participants, compared to 32 percent for those given placebos (non-active treatment such as sugar pills).
- The national Star*D study told us that while antidepressants are moderately helpful for many, they appear to be only marginally effective for those with more severe chronic depression (helping less than one in five people).
- Literally hundreds of studies have been performed comparing antidepressants to exercise. Exercise was superior the vast majority of times.

Feeling Boxed In: Hopelessness



Tied Down with Negative Thoughts?



HE FOUND THAT HIS ARMS AND LEGS WERE TIGHTLY FASTNED TO THE GROUND.

How Do We Build Hope?



Hope is a belief that things can change for the better in the future.

Beliefs are formed from past experiences, present thoughts, and recent evidence.

We all want to believe that we can find meaning and happiness.

Pleasure Seeking Always Fails in the End



Wickedness never was
happiness. (Alma
41:10)

Worldly Goals are Uncertain



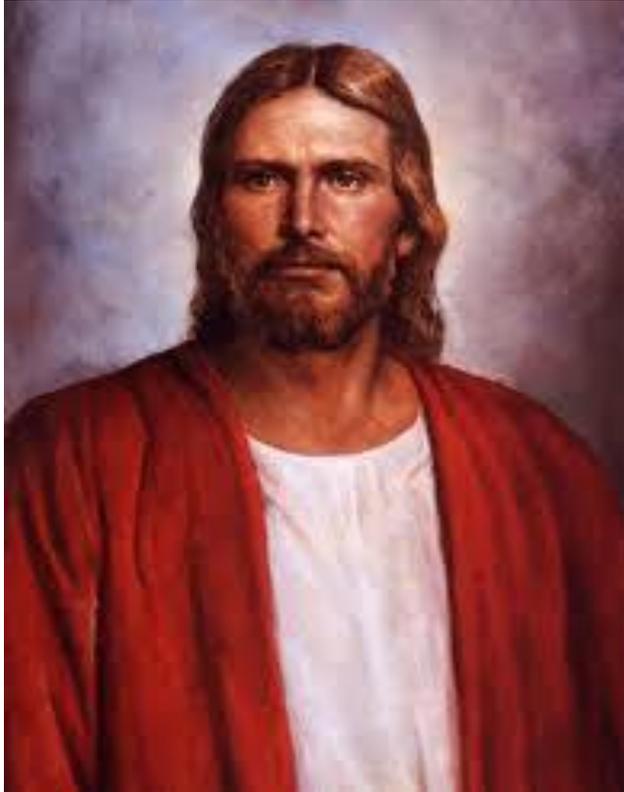
Energetically pursuing goals we deem as important increases neurotransmitter levels as we activate the brain. However, dreams often do not go as planned. Doubts and fears can stop us from even trying.

Choosing Our Path



The First and Greatest Decision

To Place our Faith in Jesus Christ



Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. (John 14:6)

God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

To Do:

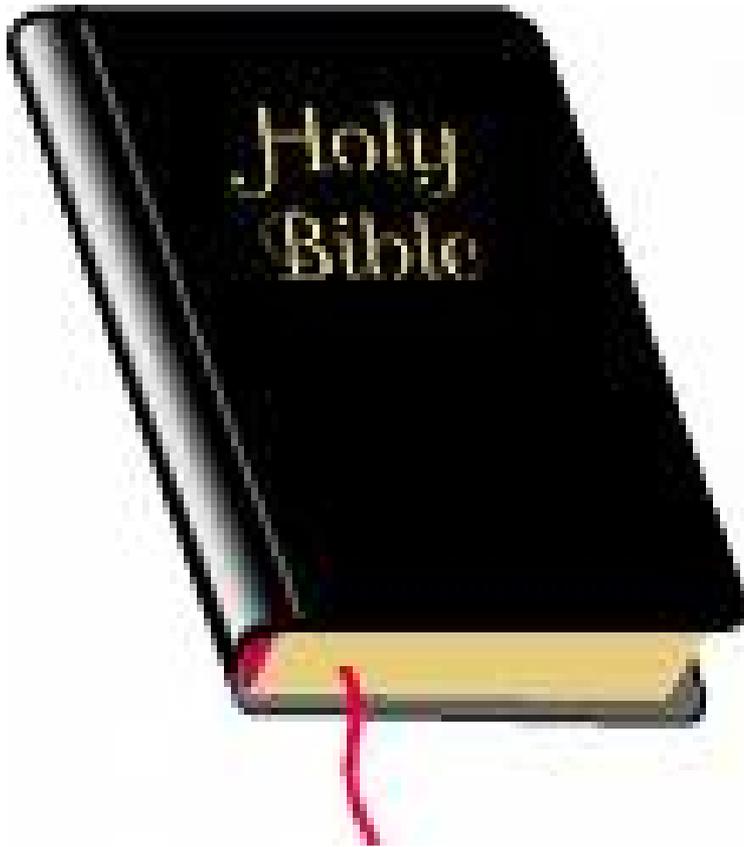
- Pay tithing
- Study scriptures
- Attend the temple
- Hold FHE
- Be happy?

The Gospel Formula

There are three essential ingredients to the gospel formula for happiness. The last one is often overlooked, but it is likely the most important factor in mood management.

1. Exercising faith and obeying the commandments.
2. Being born again and receiving the blessings associated with having the Holy Ghost in your life.
3. ???

Obedience to the Commandments



- And I give unto you a commandment, that ye shall forsake all evil and cleave unto all good, that ye shall live by every word which proceedeth forth out of the mouth of God. (D&C 98:11)

Being Born Again

And they all cried with one voice, saying: Yea, we believe all the words which thou hast spoken unto us; and also, we know of their surety and truth, because of the Spirit of the Lord Omnipotent, which has wrought a mighty change in us, or in our hearts, that we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually. (Mosiah 5:2)

Pray always, and I will pour out my Spirit upon you, and great shall be your blessing. (D&C 19:38)

Tiwanaku

Tiwanaku was an ancient pre-Incan civilization around the area of Lake Titicaca in the altiplano area of Peru and Bolivia

In modern times this land at 13,000 ft. was considered largely unsuitable for agriculture because of unpredictable frosts.

Scientists realized from aerial photographs that there was likely a canal system that existed hundreds of years previously. They convinced the local farmers to experiment with criss-crossed canals and raised bed agriculture.

The ancient methods worked. The canal waters soaked in heat from the sun during the day and raised the ground temperature 2 to 4 degrees. Yields of crops doubled and in some cases quadrupled.

The Light of Christ

Which light proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space—

The light which is in all things, which giveth life to all things, which is the law by which all things are governed.
(D&C 88:12-13)

And unto every kingdom is given a law; and unto every law there are certain bounds also and conditions.

All beings who abide not in those conditions are not justified. For intelligence cleaveth unto intelligence; wisdom receiveth wisdom; truth embraceth truth; virtue loveth virtue; light cleaveth unto light. (D&C 88:38-40)

The Inner Spiritual Reservoir of the Heart



Changing our Thoughts

Emotions and desires are highly influenced by our thoughts and perceptions. Negative thoughts associated with anger, fear, self-criticism, or depression must be converted to more logical and positive thoughts using correct gospel principles.

President David O. McKay An upright character is the result of continued effort and right thinking, the effect of long-cherished associations with God-like thoughts.

For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he. (Proverbs 23:7)

Spirituality versus Worldliness

President McKay: Christ has asked us to develop the spiritual within us. Man's earthly existence is but a test as to whether he will concentrate his efforts, his mind, his soul upon things which contribute to the comfort and gratification of his physical nature or whether he will make as his life's purpose the acquisition of spiritual qualities.

President Benson: The road lies before us. It is clearly marked. The means to travel it are richly provided. We must follow the path set for us by the Son of God in all that we desire, think, and do.

Spirituality in the Church

President Brigham Young: Do not be too anxious for the Lord to hasten his work. Instead, let our anxiety be centered upon this one thing, the sanctification of our own hearts, the purifying of our own affections, the preparing of ourselves for the approach of the events that are to come.

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.
(Galatians 5:25)

Changing Our Hearts

The Prophet Joseph Smith: Search your hearts, and see if you are like God. I have searched mine and feel to repent of all my sins.

Let thy bowels also be full of charity towards all men, and to the household of faith, and let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven. (D&C 121:45)

And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;
And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;
And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.
For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:5-8)

Research on Happiness

Happy people tend to be optimistic, outgoing, helpful and have high self-esteem. They are also creative, energetic, forgiving, and grateful. They tend to have close relationships or a satisfying marriage, be involved in a meaningful religious, and have good genetics for a positive temperament.

Factors not associated with happiness: Age, race, gender, parenthood, education, wealth, and winning the lottery.

Positive Psychology

Martin Seligman

PERMA: The five elements of the good life.

- **P**ositive emotion
- **E**ngagement
- **R**elationships
- **M**eaning
- **A**chievement



Principle of Change No. 2

Trust in God

Turn your life and will over to Jesus Christ by making spirituality your greatest goal. Spirituality could be defined as: 1) being obedient to the commandments and promptings of the Holy Ghost, 2) maintaining a positive emotional state by cultivating right thoughts and actions, 3) focusing on service to others and personal growth, 4) seeking to be in harmony with other people, nature, and truth.

Keys to Spiritual Living

1. Values and principles– Strive to live according to higher laws. Treat all others and yourself with dignity and respect. Be an influence for good.

2. Meaning- Seek truth and knowledge and create a personal philosophy and life style that suits your unique personality, talents, and interests.

3. Enriching daily activities- The “4 L’s” can fill our hearts with positive emotions.

- **Love**- Love is the royal emotion. Our ability to value and care about others has the greatest effect upon our disposition.
- **Learning**- Gain knowledge through reading great books. Improve skills and talents and spend time contemplating important ideas.
- **Labor**- Work provides balance and focus, helps us to find meaning, and builds self-discipline.
- **Leisure**- Recreation adds to our joy in life and also serves as a valuable mental release.

4. Centering activities- Prayer, meditation, reading in books of wisdom, music, communing with nature.

5. Positive thoughts- Be optimistic, thankful, and compassionate in your outlook. See beauty and goodness in all your experiences. View difficulties as opportunities for learning and personal growth.

6. Mindfulness- Savor each minute and each day through mindful living. Live in the moment and divert attention from the negative.

7. Detachment- Things don't have to be a certain way for us to be happy, we just *want* them to be different. It is fine to wish to have more as long as we are also willing to strive to be happy with what we have right now.

8. Wellness- Learn and follow the principles for maintaining good physical and mental health so you can maintain your vital energy.

9. Service- Think beyond just one's self. Render compassion and service to family, community, and the world.

10. Continual progression- Set goals small and great. Develop the skills of self-discipline. View personal progression as the central purpose of existence, the existential pearl of great price.



The Sanctification Process

Continual progression

The nearer man approaches perfection, the clearer are his views, and the greater are his enjoyments, till he has overcome the evils of his life and lost every desire for sin.

- The Prophet Joseph Smith



Principle of Change No. 3.

Live well one day at a time

Maintain a spiritual focus. Concentrate on the experience of the moment. Keep your thoughts off the past and the future and be in the present 95 percent of the time. Constructive activities create positive emotions and disrupt negative thinking patterns. Find joy and purpose in each day.

Making Each Day Work



- New primary goal – gaining skills in the art of happiness
- One day at a time
- Spiritual activities involve the 4 L's - love, labor, learning, and leisure)

Aspects of Creating Happiness



- Mindfulness or flow (full immersion in the activity of the moment)
- Character development (value-based behavior)
- Constructive attitudes (gratitude, hopefulness, optimism, kindness, desire for knowledge)
- Positive, logical thinking (CBT)
- Relaxation techniques (centering activities)

Mindfulness

Jon Kabat-Zinn

Fundamentally mindfulness is a simple concept. Its power lies in its practice and its applications. Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally. This kind of attention nurtures greater awareness, clarity, and acceptance of present-moment reality.

Positive Psychology

Martin Seligman

PERMA: The five elements of the good life.

- **P**ositive emotion
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The Human Dilemma

People often believe that the only way to be happier is to have certain life conditions change.

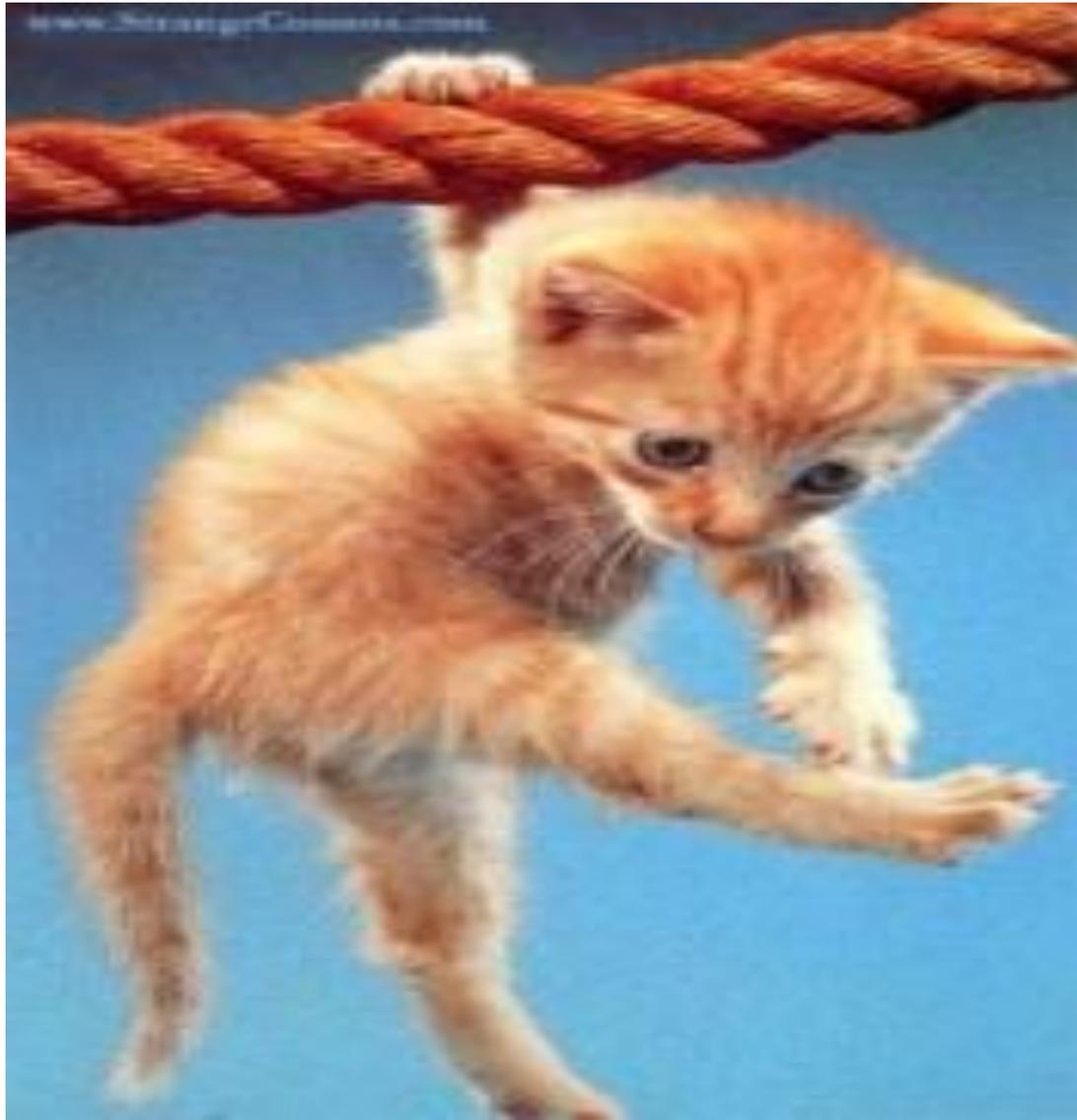
Holding onto the idea that “I will be happy when things change,” can prove to be an emotional trap.

Since there are so many life circumstances we have little control over, our ship may never steam into port.

Disappointment and discouragement can settle in if our dreams for “the good life” are not realized.

Our thoughts can become negative.

Life Can Be Stressful



Things Can Go Wrong



There is Temptation



Coping Skills Are Important



Staying in Touch



Locking up our emotions and continually using distraction to avoid thinking about what is bothering us is a faulty strategy. This approach can lead to tension, depression, physical illness, and increase symptoms of mental illness.

Emotions Must Be Expressed



We have to regularly express and process our thoughts and emotions in order to have inner peace. It is also beneficial to have an open attitude toward change and be a creative problem-solver.

The Contemplation Hour

People easily fall into a trap of feeling sad, angry, or guilty about the past and anxious or hopeless about the future. In short, they make themselves miserable by focusing on things they have little control over. We can change our lives by choosing how much time to spend dwelling on problems each day. One hour per day or less is recommended. The secret is to convince the emotional mind (the subconscious) to let go.

The Magic List Method

1. Tell your inner self you would like to know what the issues of concern are.
2. Write on a piece of paper the five greatest possibilities for what could be bothering you. Be creative and try to not censor anything.
3. Slowly read the list out loud to yourself.
4. As you read the list, note which issues bring forth the greatest levels of emotion. (This is how the inner self communicates about its troubles.)

Principle No. 4

Find Peace Through Acceptance

We can find greater peace by utilizing the wisdom of the Serenity Prayer from the 12-step model. The majority of negative emotions come from our resistance to accepting our present reality (truth). We can be fortified in pursuing righteous goals as we pray to the Lord for knowledge and spiritual strength.

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

Why Do People Suffer?



Buddha discovered that worldly desires were the main cause of human suffering. We make ourselves miserable mainly by trying to *control* our earthly reality.

Radical Acceptance

Accepting reality versus mentally struggling with the truth. Most negative thoughts come from lack of acceptance, trying to control things we have little or no control over.

Truth is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come. And whatsoever is more or less than this is the spirit of that wicked one who was a liar from the beginning. (D&C: 93:24-25)

Be a Cork in the River



By accepting reality we can graciously manage hardships, anger, self-esteem issues, and uncertainty about the future.

Judging Others

He shouldn't act that way, what a jerk!



Judging Ourselves



Alamy

Oh no, not another mistake! I am a horrible worker.

Peace and Happiness Come from Spiritual Living



*Seek first the kingdom of
God, and his
righteousness; and all
these things shall be
added unto you.
(Matthew 6:33)*

Obedience

Worship

Service

Spirituality