

Sarah Cirone:

Hi everyone, and welcome to today's webinar, A happier You: Workplace Habits to Enhance Performance and Well-being, hosted by HRDQ-U, and presented by Devin C. Hughes. My name is Sarah, and I will moderate today's webinar. The webinar will last around one hour. If you have any questions, just type them into the question area on your GoToWebinar control panel, and we'll answer as many as we can during today's session.

Sarah Cirone:

Today's webinar is sponsored by HRDQ's Assessment Center. The Assessment Center consists of 38 online assessments that deliver soft skills training to transform your workforce. HRDQ assessments are informative and powerful learning tools for employees at all organization levels, with the ability to complete assessments from any location, on any device, and at any time.

Sarah Cirone:

Learn more at [www.hrdqstore.com/hac](http://www.hrdqstore.com/hac). Our presenter today is Devin C. Hughes. Devin is an author, speaker, consultant, executive coach, and internationally recognized expert in the science of happiness, organizational culture change and leadership development. He has lectured and worked with a variety of Fortune 100 companies, as well as the Secret Service, the IRS, and assortment of profit and nonprofit organizations.

Sarah Cirone:

Devin is the author of 20 books, and has lectured in more than 15 countries. He lives in San Diego, California, with his wife, four daughters, and two rescue dogs. Thank you, Devin, for joining us today.

Devin C. Hughes:

Thank you for having me, Sarah. Well done. Well done. I'm delighted to be here, everybody. Super excited. Before we jump in, I want to get us grounded here. What I'd like you to do right now is to identify five things that you can see right now. It doesn't matter what it is. What are five things that you can see right now?

Devin C. Hughes:

I'll give you a couple seconds. All right, next question. Things that you can hear right now. Four things that you can hear right now. All right, next question. List three things that you can feel right now. Again, three things that you can feel. All right, next question. What are two things that you can smell right now? What do you smell right now?

Devin C. Hughes:

And last question, what is one thing you're grateful for or one thing you can taste? I'll share what I came up with. At the moment, I see my water bottle, a picture of my wife, a tree outside my window, a cup of coffee, and my two dogs. Four things I can hear: kid next door bouncing a basketball, the sound of music coming from my daughter's room, the TV downstairs, and the hum of my laptop.

Devin C. Hughes:

Three things that I can feel: I feel my high me on a squishy cushion here in my chair, my arms propped on the wood of my desk, and my legs are sore from my workout yesterday. Things I can smell, the bacon from the kitchen. And oh boy, do I love bacon. And the cinnamon in my coffee. And the thing I'm grateful for, they're my kids. These TikTok dancing videos that they make.

Devin C. Hughes:

Folks, if you were able to participate in this, this is a grounding technique. Why are grounding techniques so important? They bring you back to the present, route you where you are. Too often, we're either focused on where we were or where we're headed. All the stress of the news alerts, the anxiety, the emails, the text about the future, create anxiousness.

Devin C. Hughes:

And sometimes to be in a better place, you just need to start your day and be grounded. Wherever you are, just be there. There are a few ways to participate today. The first way is to be a prisoner, with the hope that we don't have any inmates on this webinar today. Second is to be a tourist. You stopping by, not engaging. Just here. I'm here.

Devin C. Hughes:

Or finally to be a partner, where we're actively going to participate to make this a great learning experience. So I have a question for all of you as we start in high then here. Got a poll for you. How happy would you say you are these days at work? So let's do that.

Sarah Cirone:

You should be able to see the results on your screen now.

Devin C. Hughes:

Do you mind sharing them aloud, Sarah?

Sarah Cirone:

Yes. We have 4% that said one. 14% said a two. We had 41% say a three. 32% responded in a four. We have 8% on high at five.

Devin C. Hughes:

All right. Fantastic. One more question. Are there specific things that often make you the happiest at work right now? So wherever you are, that's a quick diagnostic. Are there activities, people, experiences, right now during the pandemic, that put you in the best place in terms of work and/or home. What's going on? I'd love you to share a couple of responses. Again, are there specific things that often make you the happiest at work, and I'm going to add and/or home?

Sarah Cirone:

We had a response come in through. Elizabeth says interaction with others.

Devin C. Hughes:

Fantastic

Sarah Cirone:

People. Laurie says yoga breaks. Victoria says my coworkers. It's more good people I work with who care about me. Helping people. If I could work outside with the coworkers that I'm close to. I know I am safe at home. Engaging with friends. Serving on a team. Feeling effective. Family bike rides. Talking to people, a lot of the people and being with people.

Devin C. Hughes:

Yeah. So we're seven minutes into this webinar, and there's a common denominator. Either you're in a relationship with kids or a partner or coworkers. But invariably, based on those responses, or even in the bottom left, you feel like you're meaning, you're contributing. Folks, truth be told, although we may think we're different, we all share similar experiences, and invariably, connection matters.

Devin C. Hughes:

Our super power as a species is connection. We are at our best when we are together. But right now, though we are physically distant, we don't always have to be socially distant. So I'm going to give you a quick quiz. I know it's going to be a little challenging. But if you would, there's eight questions here, and I want you to total the results.

Devin C. Hughes:

Zero means yes, sometimes. And two means not at all. A quick diagnostic to where you are right now. I'll give you 45 seconds at the most, and then total up your results at the bottom. Just add them up. And no one's going to see this except you. So I'll give you another 15 seconds. And then once you're done, go ahead and total those up.

Devin C. Hughes:

All right. We should be about done. I'll give you five more seconds. All right. So what I just had you do is take an optimism quiz. There's no judgment in this, just a quick diagnostic and assessment where you are. Are you a struggling optimist? A hardworking optimist? What I mean by that is you're optimistic, but you have to work hard at it.

Devin C. Hughes:

It's maybe not natural for you. Cautious optimist. Optimistic, but always a little bit reticent or a raving optimist. What I want you to think about as we move through the rest of our program today, what actions can I take to be more optimistic at home and/or at work? And what can I do to help others be in a better place as well now?

Devin C. Hughes:

We've had a very interesting relationship with happiness if you look at history. I love this. To be stupid, selfish, and have good health are the three requirements for happiness, though if stupidity is lacking, all is lost. Wow. Or this German philosopher. Every happiness is but lent by chance for an uncertain time, and may therefore be demanded back the next hour.

Devin C. Hughes:

Or Freud. Freud thought the best we could hope for was ordinary misery. I don't know what ordinary misery is. He questioned the quest for happiness and indeed, all our motives, and ascribed dark impulses and infantile wishes to them. If you look at the research, where I spend a lot of time. If you look at psychology.

Devin C. Hughes:

Psychological publications and studies dealing with negative states outnumber positive states by a ratio of 17:1. What does this suggest? We have a predisposition to always look for the negative. Disease, problems, calamity, depression, fear, divorce, pandemic, calamity. You get it. Is that a bad thing? Not necessarily.

Devin C. Hughes:

Can it be a bad thing if all we do is study what's wrong and disease? If you look at the research. According to the research, this is pre pandemic. You can see the year. U.S. was 19th in the world in happiness. How could a country that has so much be so unhappy? Does that surprise you that we are that unhappy? And if so, why?

Devin C. Hughes:

I'll give you an opportunity, if you would, just quickly in the questions box. This is pre pandemic. Why are Americans so unhappy right now? What do you think? What are the reasons what's the causation in your opinion? What do you see? And I'll give you 30 seconds.

Sarah Cirone:

We have some responses rolling in. John says materialistic. Debt. Stress. We are disconnected. The quest for things. Isolation. Capitalism. We always want more. Entitlement. Selfishness. Media. Too much advertising trying to sell you a better life. We are isolated. Competition. They keep on feeling trapped. More things about the media. There's too much media and people being selfish.

Devin C. Hughes:

All right. Fantastic poll. Again, there's no right or wrong. Just interpretations of we're going to talk about that and then some as we move forward. So then the question is... And again, I love your participation. If you know this to be true, it says why, but it should say what. What have you done during the pandemic to improve or enhance your own well-being?

Devin C. Hughes:

Not to say you're in a bad place, but we're all in this situation together. Have you been more intentional about investing in your own well-being? And if so, what are you doing? I'd love to hear a couple of responses. If well-being matters during the pandemic, what are you doing to stay in a better place?

Sarah Cirone:

Yeah, we have responses coming in. People are saying they're taking more time outside, meditating, spending time with family, more exercise, having quiet time, daily yoga practice, cooking with family. So it seems like we have a lot of things about family and meditating and some mental health there.

Devin C. Hughes:

All right. Well, that's fantastic that you're doing, because we're going to talk about it. Because one of the things that's not being talked about a lot is we have a loneliness epidemic here in America. And again, folks, that was pre pandemic. All right? 46% of Gen Z, ages 18 to 22, almost 50% claim they're lonely.

Devin C. Hughes:

Think about that in context. As we go and look at the research, this was pre pandemic. We are in the world of social isolation, which isn't even exacerbated right now. I just want to give you context for this discussion. I don't know many of you. And again, I'll give you a little idea of how old I am. When I was a child, we had to play outside. And I'm sure many of you remember that day.

Devin C. Hughes:

We had to engage. Right now, a kid doesn't have to leave his bedroom, whether it's Netflix or Game Boy, et cetera. We didn't have email. We had to talk to each other. But again, we're going to talk about where we are and where we're headed here. But as we continue to look at the data, and this was in April, which was stress awareness month.

Devin C. Hughes:

According to the survey by LinkedIn, 49% of workers today reported feeling stressed in their jobs. 50% of the workers. Wow. And that was pre COVID-19. If you look at some of the reasons why they're stressed out, then break it down by generation, millennials, Gen X, and baby boomers, versus the drivers of the stress at work, whether it be work-life balance, confidence in the future direction, et cetera.

Devin C. Hughes:

Just context for our broader discussion. That indeed Gen X, which is the most stressed out generation ever, these 18 to 22-year-olds, are these kids in college and these kids coming into the workforce. Could you imagine graduating this month or next month from a four-year or a two-year university and trying to figure out what you wanted to do for the rest of your life?

Devin C. Hughes:

You think there might be a little bit of anxiety. Yeah. Again, it's not even by executive level. At different stratas along the ladder, we're all feeling a level of stress, depending on what's going on. Now, why you may be wondering? Yeah, certainly you could suggest the pandemic, and I would agree. What I'm talking about here was pre pandemic.

Devin C. Hughes:

Some might even suggest that it's going to be exacerbated. But let me share with you some data, which clearly is directional to where part of the corporate-wide. Shared family dinners and vacations are down over a third in the last 25 years. Having friends over the house is down by 45%. Participation in clubs and civic organizations, so volunteer, Rotary, Kiwanis, et cetera. I think you get the drift.

Devin C. Hughes:

Church attendance is down by a third since the 1960s, and I think it's probably even more exacerbated. Now, this isn't a religious discussion or a volunteer discussion. From a research standpoint, all four of these domains provide an opportunity for human beings to connect, to engage and to feel a sense of meaning, a part of something.

Devin C. Hughes:

But when we don't have this, you feel more isolated, alone, disconnected and anxious. 65% of Americans spend more time with their computer than with their spouses. Ouch. We've lost the art of the conversation. Again, as we continue to unpack this in our time here today, I just wanted you to see when we talk about the new normal, that's part of that discussion.

Devin C. Hughes:

One thing that's the culprit is a psychology called destination addiction. And I'll read it: a preoccupation with the idea that happiness is in the next place, the next job, and with the next partner. Until you give up the idea that happiness is somewhere else, it will never be where you are right now. Do you know many people right now in your small circle or larger circle that are afflicted by destination addiction?

Devin C. Hughes:

That there'll be happy when. It's always what's next. It's never actually right now. So if you have, and we see a lot of people who are upside down emotionally, they're not bad people. They're afflicted with what we call destination addiction. In other words, when you buy a new car, the new car smell goes away, but the car payment doesn't.

Devin C. Hughes:

You get that starter house, then you need to get the bigger house. You get the job, then you need to get the promotion. And it goes on and on and on. And this is highly wired into our ethos system here. Now, if you look at it, it's magnified by this. I'm not putting this up here to be bombastic, but this is a great example.

Devin C. Hughes:

You've got A list or B list movie stars, who are multimillionaires, and that was not good enough for their children. To be happy, they had to get into the right school, to play a sport that they don't even play, and then they will feel like they have arrived. If you wonder why there are so many teenagers and young people right now that are anxious, a big culprit is destination addiction and parents like me and others unintentionally are creating that drift.

Devin C. Hughes:

So I asked you, we've covered a lot already, what would be different if people were truly making well-being a priority at work and/or home? How would it show up? I want you to think about it right now. If we were intentional about all the things we've talked about today, what would be different if people were truly making well-being a priority at work and/or at home and/or in the community. I'll give you time to put some answers in the question box. What do you think?

Sarah Cirone:

Okay. So we have a response that came in from Christie and she says more concerned about the greater good and making true improvements. Coleen says less turnover. Ann says better sense of community and connections. They have less pressure. Health comes first. Not just improvements for themselves.

Sarah Cirone:

Focus on others instead of self. Less critical. More supportive and collaborative. Better physical and mental health. Blair said shortened workdays/work-life balance. More time off, more happiness, more fulfillment at work, a healthy life are some of the responses that we received.

Devin C. Hughes:

All right. And I had a conversation just before we started today. I saw a press release from the CEO of Twitter, which just announced that as long as he's CEO, everyone can permanently work from home. Wow. So think about that. Not that we all need to be Twitter, but if well-being matters, what could we do coming out of the pandemic to make well-being and be intentional about it?

Devin C. Hughes:

Who needs happiness? I mean, really? Who needs happiness? Well, they do. If you look at some of the preeminent people right now that have been studying it for the last 30 years. Traditional psychologists study what's wrong, positive psychologists study what's right. Now, they research happiness, but not exactly like that.

Devin C. Hughes:

What we've found for the last 500 or so years, we've been studying what's wrong with people. But what if we start studying how human beings flourish: what makes people happier, creates more satisfaction, meaning, help them function better? What we call is subjective well-being. Now, we're going to unpack that a little bit as we go forward.

Devin C. Hughes:

There are certainly a variety of different definitions of happiness. Aristotle: A life lived in virtue. Happiness is never simply a function of good feeling but rather of living good, lives that will almost certainly include a good of ideal pain. And I love this. The experience of joy, contentment or positive well-being, combined with a sense that one's life is good, meaningful, and worthwhile.

Devin C. Hughes:

So we're going to talk a little bit more about that as we unpack it. Is happiness a natural state? Yeah. It does not mean that having all our personal needs met all the time, feeling pleasurable all the time, feeling satisfied with life all the time, never having negative emotions or sadness or anger or being bulletproof.

Devin C. Hughes:

But what it does if you look at the research, there are three findings: Happiness is an advantage, happiness is a choice and happiness spreads. You combine all the research, it really comes down to this. So I ask you, do you think that you perform better when you feel better? I want you to think about that question.

Devin C. Hughes:

If I asked you right now, everybody here today, to think about a time at work, in athletics, in volunteer or whatever domain it is. I want you to think about a time when you were performing at an extremely high level. Is it safe to presume that while you were performing at a high level, you felt really good upstairs?

Devin C. Hughes:

So why don't you share that? Do you buy that, that I tend to perform better when I feel better? I brought in the question, is that a yes or no?

Sarah Cirone:

And it looks like we have 100% yes coming through.

Devin C. Hughes:

All right. So it's so intuitive. You're almost giving me like my kids give me like, duh, which is why athletes show up at a ball game. They don't show up five minutes before. No. When we did have sports, they showed up an hour or two before. Some listen to music, some do yoga, some check in with their teammates.

Devin C. Hughes:

Whether you realize it or not, and having played sport, what they're doing is, is trying to get in the right head space. Because if I get in the right head space, I tend to perform better. So we're going to talk about the connection between happiness and performance. Now, happiness has played a critical evolutionary role for human beings.

Devin C. Hughes:

Unlike negative emotions which narrow our actions towards fight or flight, positive emotions broaden the amount of possibilities we process, making us more thoughtful, creative, and open to new ideas. The challenge is, if we know that, why are we so bad at it? Well, guess what? We're going to get better at it today.

Devin C. Hughes:

We're going to have a little practice. What I want you to do, if you would. I know all of you have a device of some sort, whether it be an Android or an iPhone or something close. I want you to grab it. I assume it is proximal to you. And I want you to send an email or text to someone who's not expecting to hear from you today. And I want you to share some good news.

Devin C. Hughes:

I want you to tell them you care about them, you love them, you appreciate them or keep up the good work or you got this. In other words, I want you to be very intentional about sharing some gratitude with another human being. I got two minutes. I'll give you about a minute to do it right now, if you would, and then maybe share that experience in the question box.

Devin C. Hughes:

Who did you send it to? And maybe paraphrase what you said. I'll give you a minute or so right now to do that. Let's let another human being know that they matter. Let's do it as a group.

Sarah Cirone:

Maria said to the person she loves them and she misses them.

Devin C. Hughes:

Fantastic, Maria.

Sarah Cirone:

Laurie reached out to her high school friend who is a farmer and lost his mom about a year ago, just sent a text to tell him I was thinking of him and sending a virtual hug.

Devin C. Hughes:

Love that.

Sarah Cirone:

Ethan texted Ed and told him he's going to do more to a friend.

Devin C. Hughes:

All right.

Sarah Cirone:

Brittany said it to her person I love you and appreciate you so much. Wonderful. We had another. Alisha texted her mom and told her to stay strong. Another text to the mom to let her know that she hopes to see her very soon.

Devin C. Hughes:

All right. Is that about it?

Sarah Cirone:

Yeah, we have tons of them strolling in, but those seemed like some good ones that we had coming through. They texted a person and told them that they miss them and hope to see you soon.

Devin C. Hughes:

All right. So your challenge, if you accept it, for those of you on the webinar today, is [inaudible 00:27:47]. For the next 20 days, if you choose to accept this mission, we're going to call it Mission Possible, is for the next 20 days, today being day one, I want you to think of a different person every single day, starting tomorrow.

Devin C. Hughes:

And I want you to send him or her a text and let them know you're thinking about them and you love them and you appreciate them. In other words, if you look at the research, and then we're going to talk about it more. If you want to get in a good place, you need to be intentional about it. As you stare and think about and reflect as we talk about this, could you find 21 people in your world and let them know that you think about them and you love them and you appreciate them and do a good job.

Devin C. Hughes:

And I don't need to micromanage who it is. But if you're up for the challenge, I'd love you to commit to that. Because if they matter, then you need to let them know they matter. So, is this happiness? I sure

hope not. Is there a correlation between happiness and intelligence? Slightly. Some people think that happiness leads to laziness.

Devin C. Hughes:

I've talked to a lot of CEOs and go, "I don't need my people to be happy. It'll make them lazy and entitled and I don't want them. I don't care if they're happy. I just want them to work hard." And I'm sure some of you maybe work with bosses or organizations like that. But actually, happy people are more achievement oriented.

Devin C. Hughes:

If you look at the data, and this was in Harvard Business Review, every outcome that we can study based on science improves when people are in a better place. Happy people live longer than unhappy people. They're more productive, more engaged, more creative. They have more energy. A question for the group though. And I'm just curious.

Devin C. Hughes:

Why do you think that happy people tend to live longer than unhappy people? What are the culprits right there? Just a quick question. I'd just love to see your temperature check on that. Why do you think happy people live up to 40% longer than unhappy people? Let's put it in the questions.

Sarah Cirone:

We have a lot of comments coming through saying less stress. That's probably 80% of the comments. Sarah says that they take better care of themselves. Janice says they don't sweat the small stuff. Michael says they have a better outlook on life. They're more connected. They can sleep more. Their stress level is lower. They enjoy life more. Happy people treat themselves better. Optimistic. And lots and lots of less stress.

Devin C. Hughes:

All right. So all of those answers were correct. But when we look at the biology behind it, one of the reasons why happy people live a lot longer than unhappy people, we talk about stress. When we are in a chronic stress situation, the brain elicits the hormone cortisol, which is a stress hormone, which in essence breaks down every organ in the body.

Devin C. Hughes:

A great example of that is if you've ever seen Bill Clinton or Barack Obama pre and post presidency. Have you noticed the difference in how they look? I've just use Barack Obama, and this is not a political discussion, because it's near and dear to our hearts. Because he's closest to us right now as a post president.

Devin C. Hughes:

If you look at Barack pre president and post, you will invariably notice the difference in how he looks. Why? Presidents have the best healthcare on the planet. They have a doctor in the White House, but the sheer weight of the office. And you can see how he's aged. Now, again, certainly happy people tend to take care of themselves.

Devin C. Hughes:

So I just want you to think about that as we move forward. The reason why that is so powerful, because at the University of Kentucky, they had these young ladies join the convent. These are Catholic nuns. And they joined in the 1930s and 1940s. And unbeknownst to them, researchers at the time, it happened 50 years later, they found cardboard boxes in the basement of the rectory, which again, I think it was news to the researchers.

Devin C. Hughes:

Why was that so powerful? Well, because these young ladies were keeping diaries, writing about their experiences of being nuns. Clearly and early on, the researchers were able to discern there were some happy nuns and some not so happy nuns sharing their experiences of being a nun. Okay? So you had a happy group and an unhappy group.

Devin C. Hughes:

From a research standpoint, that's really compelling, maybe obvious. Well, they wear the same thing. They don't get married. They don't have kids. They have very similar routines. So why does that matter? The happier nuns lived 10 years longer than the less happy nuns. By age 80, the happy group had lost only 25% of its population, whereas the less happy group had lost 60%.

Devin C. Hughes:

54% of the happy nuns reached the age of 94 compared to only 15% of the less happy nuns. Called the Nun Study. At the time, the longest longitudinal study clearly showing that there's a connection between well-being and longevity. So whatever your motivation is going forward at home or wherever domain, I want you to think about what you are doing and who you surround yourself with, because you are absolutely effecting your health.

Devin C. Hughes:

So I often get this question: does money bring happiness? Does money bring happiness? Well, to some extent, yes. If you look at the research typically, and it depends where you live. But right now the tipping point is up to \$75,000 in the U.S. makes people happier. But when that level is reached, our happiness seems to be unaffected with more income.

Devin C. Hughes:

And this certainly could be adjusted to cost to living, depending where you are. So even in that, there's a tipping point. At a certain point, when we have enough resources or money to take care of our responsibilities, to maybe eat out occasionally, to maybe go on a vacation or two, to put a little bit money away.

Devin C. Hughes:

Once most of that is handled, an exorbitant amount of money typically does not make people exponentially more happier. So if you're concerned with money, you're more likely to be unhappy. And I'm sure we know a lot of people like that. But what makes us happy? Again, maybe it's obvious. Good sleep. And someone mentioned that before.

Devin C. Hughes:

Regular exercise, achievements, winning, good health, social connections, romantic relationships, family, friends, compassion, kindness, forgiveness, mindfulness, all these things. Some of it's intuitive, some of it's not. But the challenge is we know this to be true. But there's a lot of things we know to be true, but we don't do.

Devin C. Hughes:

So there's four keys to unlock happiness, which I'm going to share with you today. Number one is social connections. Do you have folks in your inner circle that you feel alive and connected to, friends or family? Are you connected to people? Do you have deep, meaningful relationships? Optimism. That you're optimistic about the future.

Devin C. Hughes:

Happiness does not mean that we don't have any problems. Happiness means that I'm going to be okay regardless of the problems. Appreciation or gratitude. Could you be more intentional about being grateful for what you have? Not that you have everything, but in context, you're okay. And purpose. Greater than oneself.

Devin C. Hughes:

Some people find purpose at work. Some people find it at home. Some people find it via religious traditions. There's a variety of different ways. But when you boil it all down, the happiest people tend to experience or play in these sandboxes. Does pleasure bring happiness? Most people do. We either drink it, eat it or watch it.

Devin C. Hughes:

The purchases don't bring happiness, but the activities do. So you wonder when you look back at the totality of your life, do you remember the stuff or do you remember the experiences? Most of the time you remember the experiences. You don't remember the individual gifts, you remember how you felt doing it. So I would highly encourage you as you continue to move along with your life and you invest and creating more wellbeing, don't buy stuff, create experiences.

Devin C. Hughes:

If you have kids or grandkids, take them on trips. Do stuff because that, again, will create positive emotions and that's the stuff that they'll remember. Does your life have meaning? If it does, you tend to be happier. If it doesn't, you don't. And we can certainly parse what meaning looks like. Again, do you have meaning in your life?

Devin C. Hughes:

Do you feel like your life is significant? Are you creating something? Are you a part of something either at work, at home, in the community? People who have a sense of meaning tend to be in a better place emotionally. Social connections. Everyone knows Brene Brown. He's fantastic. We know Brene Brown. But I love this.

Devin C. Hughes:

When people are actually excluded from a game, I love this research, the same regions of their brain light up when they're undergoing physically painful experiences. So to be excluded, not invited, left out,

creates the same level of pain as if its physical pain, which clearly shows we are so hardwired to be a part of a group.

Devin C. Hughes:

And again, I want you to think about, as we are distant right now, at work, what are you intentionally doing to make people feel like they matter? Now, more reliable. If you can name five or more close friends, you are 60 times more likely to be happy. There's no judgment in this statement. But do you have five or more close friends right now that you have a conversation with, you can do a Zoom call with, you could talk to.

Devin C. Hughes:

I'm not going to parse here. But again, this is part of the dynamic of social connection. The benefits of touch. We're not touching too many people now because of COVID-19, but touch matters. It activates feelings of reward and compassion. Appropriate touch by teachers resulted in higher class participation among students, which is why, for you sports fans, and I played college basketball, there's a reason why we high five.

Devin C. Hughes:

We smack people on the rear end. If you notice any sport, whether it's football, basketball, they're all touching, and that's a ritual. Why? Most people don't realize, because it's been baked in the sports. It makes them feel like they matter. It creates a sense of connection and hope. Now we're going the other way.

Devin C. Hughes:

If you look at this, and this is was pre pandemic. Psychologist observed friends having conversations in cafes how many times they touched each other in an hour. Now, again, this is pre pandemic. But in Costa Rica, 180 times they touched each other in an hour. I don't know if I want someone to touch me that much. But just look at the contrast in France, in the U.S. and the UK.

Devin C. Hughes:

When we talk about connection and being starved for connection, just interested, and especially where we are right now in the new normal. So you've all heard mindfulness. It's a big buzz word; has been for the last couple of years. Most people struggle with this. The key thing with mindfulness is just to get present, which is what we did at the beginning of this webinar.

Devin C. Hughes:

Wherever you are, just be there. Too often we're focused on the past or the future, and we need to just be where we are right now. And if we can stay present, it lowers anxiety. We're in a better mood. Now, when we are mindful and deeply in touch with the present moment, our understanding of what's going on deepens, and we begin to be filled with acceptance, joy, peace, and love, which seems so hard for us, especially right now.

Devin C. Hughes:

I'm sharing a lot of data with you, but I think data matters. 47% of the time we're thinking about something else than what we are currently doing. People are substantially less happy when their minds

are wandering than when they're not. There's a strong relationship between mind wandering now and being unhappy a short time later.

Devin C. Hughes:

Mindfulness or being present matters, which is why I had you do it. Hedonic adaptation. It's our ability to adapt to changes in our life circumstance. This is fascinating. Human beings are remarkable at getting used to changes in their lives. New things boost our happiness for a short while, but then we go back to our baseline, which is why I mentioned the car.

Devin C. Hughes:

You buy the car and you feel good. And then after a while, that goes away. And we tend to fill our cup with extrinsic stuff like cars and clothes and other stuff, thinking that it's going to boost our happiness. But there's no meaning in any of that stuff and invariably, we bounce back. I'll tell you a story. Earlier in my career, my stretch car was to buy a Porsche.

Devin C. Hughes:

It wasn't a new Porsche, but it was a pretty good. And I invested a lot of money and bought a Porsche. I was pretty high on the hog. I pulled up to a stoplight, I look to my right and to the right of me was a Ferrari. Invariably, I felt less then literally within a month. So again, how many people do you know right now are attempting to fill their cup up with stuff? The size of the house, the car, and all this stuff. And invariably, you bounce back.

Devin C. Hughes:

Now, we mentioned the set point. 50% of your current level of happiness right now, according to the research, is in your genes. You inherited it from mommy or daddy. So if you're struggling, don't text me. Get in touch with mom. I'm kidding. 10% is circumstances. Things that you can do, or circumstances mean things you can't control or influence like the pandemic. Life happens. Situations.

Devin C. Hughes:

Does it affect your well-being and your mood? Absolutely. You're human. But based on the current research, 40% of it is based on intentional activity. Things that you can do to be in a better place. Now, if you look at the research, some of the most happy people on the planet tend to experience these emotions. Now, you'll notice here, there are more emotions than just joy.

Devin C. Hughes:

These are deep meaning, powerful emotions, depending on where you are. Some of us get lit up different ways. Every day is not joyful. Some days we need to pull on the hope thread. Interest is curious. Inspiration, awe, serenity. I heard someone say yoga. Get into that place. Amusement, pride. I ask you now, could you be more intentional about trying to elicit these emotions at home and/or at work?

Devin C. Hughes:

Because what we find it's some of the happiest people on the planet weren't born that way. They've just begun to rewire their brain on this concept called neuroplasticity. What does that mean for us? That you

literally can rewire your brain, again, to change your happiness set point. So how many of us brushed our teeth today? I imagine or hopefully all of you.

Devin C. Hughes:

Why? Because there's this thing called hygiene. We don't brush our teeth every other day. At least I hope not. You do a lot of things that matter because it's hygiene. Well, I would argue and I would suggest, if well-being matters, then you need to have some happiness hygiene. For those of you who are workout aficionados.

Devin C. Hughes:

If you're trying to run a marathon or lift weights or lose weight, you change behavior modification. So what I'm suggesting to you here, if you want to be in a better place, then you need to think about some happiness hygiene. Here are some interventions or practices with what I'm referring to. Some things that you can do to work on you. Celebrating small wins.

Devin C. Hughes:

Are there small wins that happen in your personal and professional life? Could you savor positive memories? Journaling about positive experiences. Yoga is a great one. I know that's been mentioned, and I'll throw that in there with meditation. Being more intentional about being grateful. Surround yourself again.

Devin C. Hughes:

These are things, again, what we find, that you can start to rewire your brain and as I call it, some happiness hygiene. So these are some tips. Again, I just talked about these that you can start to do to be in a better place more often and start to savor some of these experiences. And what we find, it's some of the happiest people on the planet just have happiness habits.

Devin C. Hughes:

If being in a good place matters, then you need to be more intentional about doing it routinely. So I ask you, and I've been talking here for a few minutes, what are you doing right now intentionally? Do you have any happiness habits? What does your happiness hygiene look like during the pandemic? I'll give you a minute to share it in the questions area.

Sarah Cirone:

We have responses coming. Meditation, take time to pet the cat, cooking, journaling, exercise, yard work, some more exercise. We have a lot of exercise and meditation. Reading, being more mindful, taking family walks and laughing. I think that's a good one to end it on.

Devin C. Hughes:

All right. I'm curious, because we have short time left. Has anyone here today started anything new during the pandemic that you hope will continue when we get on the other side of this? What have you started during the pandemic to create more well-being that you hope you can continue?

Sarah Cirone:

We have some responses coming in. Online workout classes, a gratitude log, quilting, home cooking, Zoom calls, walking more, a lot less shopping, exercise is coming through, planting, and we have a lot of cooking and saving money too.

Devin C. Hughes:

It's fascinating that you said cooking. I have eaten more. I've cooked more with my family in the last eight weeks than I've done in the last 18 years. So I actually look forward to... I'll give you a small story. So I have four kids and I've been married for 20 plus years. So what we decided to do to make cooking fun is everybody picked a country.

Devin C. Hughes:

So you could pick French food or Cuban food or wherever. And for that night we're having themed dinners. And so if I'm tasked to do French food, for example, I have to come up with a French menu, what we would have in a French cafe and then that's the menu. And we rotate. Each person owns the menu. And we've gone from countries now to the U.S. from barbecue to Cuban the other night.

Devin C. Hughes:

And these are those little subtleties, even around dinner. We're creating themes and an opportunity to share and connect over food, to create a little bit more joy around it, which has been fantastic. So these are just subtleties. Now, we've got our short time left. I wanted to open it up for some questions. Because I covered a lot, shared a lot of research, and I want to make sure we have some time if there's anything I can answer about what we discussed or anything else related to the topic.

Sarah Cirone:

Yeah. So you can type your question into the questions box, and we have some time here to answer those for you. I'll give people a moment to jot their question down. Let's see here. We have a question come through from Rhonda, and Rhonda asks, how can we encourage some of these and others for those who may see the glass as empty?

Devin C. Hughes:

Okay. So I always get this, is the glass half full or the glass half empty? I would say this, it doesn't really matter if the glass is half full or half empty if there's a pitcher on the table, meaning the important part of that is the glass is refillable. Now, human beings are not necessarily born negative. We do have a negativity bias because it keeps us alive.

Devin C. Hughes:

In other words, the brain is always scanning for threats. It's a good thing, survival. But most of the behaviors that human beings adopt are learned behaviors, especially negativity. And if it's learned, it can be unlearned, like in a work context, gossip. You don't need me to tell you that that's not a great behavior. Does it happen? Yes.

Devin C. Hughes:

Is it learned? Yes. Sarcasm. So as I'm thinking here about your question, what if someone you say tends to be pessimistic, cynical, salty, whatever. Not very optimistic. Now, if you confront them and say, "Hey,

negative Nathan here, you're a little bit..." That's probably not going to go over well. What I would suggest is everyone is motivated by something.

Devin C. Hughes:

One way that you could do it is you could say, hey, I attended this webinar, looking at happiness. It shed a lot of research in science. I'm going to commit to doing some of these things or one of these things for the next 21 to 30 days. And I need an accountability partner. I need someone to help me stay on the yellow brick road.

Devin C. Hughes:

I've come to you because I respect and trust you. What I'm asking you to do is could you check in on me every other day or two days and make sure that I'm doing this, but I need your support. In other words, elicit their help. And invariably, what I've seen is when you do that, when you ask someone for help to support you, sometimes people will step up.

Devin C. Hughes:

They'll ask more. They'll be curious why you're doing it. You tell them your why and then invariably you may elicit them to do it with you. Just show and tell them why you're doing it. Like, why are you doing it? Not that you're negative, but you just want to be for health reasons or work reasons or whatever. And that's one tactical way that you may do it.

Devin C. Hughes:

And that's a way that I would suggest that all of you think about as you move forward. Who in your inner circle right now could be your wing man, your copilot, to help you, to help others? So hope that helps.

Sarah Cirone:

Wonderful. We had another question come through from Charles, and Charles would like to know as a leader, where would you start to infuse happiness into a staff?

Devin C. Hughes:

All right. That's a great question. So, number one, if you're going to do this, Charles, I would share people why you're doing it, individually. Start with yourself. Say, hey, for whatever reason, wordsmith that however you like. Hey, one of things that I've figured out during the eight weeks or 10 weeks in the pandemic, that I need to be more intentional about well-being.

Devin C. Hughes:

This is what I've learned and this is what I'm doing. And I want to share it with you. And then I want to offer it up for any of you that like to do it, too. Not suggesting that you're in a bad place. But if we look at it, again, we all need to be in a better place. Even when we go back to the office, what's that going to be like. There's still going to be a level of anxiety.

Devin C. Hughes:

So in other words, share your story. Maybe elicit some people. Second, I would say this. If happiness is an expected work practice, or it should be. In other words, if happiness is a precursor to performance,

which you all said you believe, that happier people perform better. Well, then you need to embed some of these practices into work.

Devin C. Hughes:

Well, the best way to do that, which is why I do a lot of work with organizations, is to identify all the routines that you have at work, Charlie. What are all the things that are on your Outlook calendar? What are all the things that are crew-based routines? How many calls or WebEx's or Zoom meetings do you have?

Devin C. Hughes:

And is there an opportunity to embed some positive practices into those routines? In other words, if happiness matters, then you need to embed it into the work itself. Too often people think happiness is leaving work or it's free food or Uber or perks and parties. Well, deep, meaningful happiness means maybe I'm going to start my next staff meeting, and before we dive in, I'm going to have everyone take two minutes and meditate or watch a Ted Talk.

Devin C. Hughes:

Or I'm going to hand out a gratitude journal and say, hey, what's been the biggest lesson you've learned this week? What's been your biggest success? Maybe they walk in and there's music playing. Again, these are practical things that you can do. But what you'd need to do is make happiness an expected work practice, not helpful happenstance.

Devin C. Hughes:

And I certainly could talk to you offline, but there's a lot of things you can do that are practical that you don't need to need budget. That you can change the environment clearly and put people in a better place emotionally.

Sarah Cirone:

Great. We had another question come through from Olivia, and Olivia would like to know, what's your advice for people who struggle with severe procrastination?

Devin C. Hughes:

Yeah. So there's a lot of, again, this variance. And I don't know what severe looks like, but let's just say for whatever reason it's habitual. So it's repeatable. So a lot of people are unsure. And again, one thing is to have a conversation. I don't know whether or not you've talked to him or her about it, but is it self-doubt?

Devin C. Hughes:

Is there a reason why they're not doing it? They feel less than. Most of the mindsets that we have right now, they don't just show up. They've been hard developed over years and years. And not that you have to be a therapist, but I wonder where he or she has started to pick this up. But I'll say this, taking off my therapist hat for a second, everyone is motivated by something.

Devin C. Hughes:

What you need to do is find out what their why is? Do they want to move on in their career? Do they want a promotion? Do they want to leave the office? You need to unpack their why. And once you figure out what motivates them or what's important, now you're open to have a conversation to clearly say, look, I want to help you to go from here to there.

Devin C. Hughes:

But in order to do that, we've got to be honest and put some sunshine on some things that are impediments for you to reaching your goals. And one of these things is... And have that conversation. And then be a copilot. You need to tie it to something they care about, because otherwise it seems tangential and abstract. We all care about something, you just need to figure out what that is, and help them to get there and tie it to that.

Sarah Cirone:

Great. We had another question come through from Lori, and she said that working from home is more stressful and the days are longer. How do we set boundaries?

Devin C. Hughes:

So it's funny you say that, because I've worked for home most of my career. Again, you need to have some routines; meaning, and I'm not getting in your personal life, but it's too often to roll out of bed, roll over to the desk, the laptop in your sweats or jammies and just start jamming at 6:30 with a coffee.

Devin C. Hughes:

And next thing you know it's 11:30 and you've barely combed your hair and you are upside down already. You need to put some structure in your day; meaning, get up roughly about the same time you normally would, even though you have less of a commute. Get dressed, be ready to go, and create some opportunities in throughout your day to create some practices.

Devin C. Hughes:

For example, take a lunch, go for a walk, create some opportunities. Do some mindfulness practice. Take some time to reflect on gratitude. And I talked about happiness hygiene. If I looked at your calendar, I would literally offer that you schedule some time on your calendar for me time, some self care.

Devin C. Hughes:

What are you doing in the 8 or 10 hours a day that you're working for self care. It doesn't have to be 55 minutes. It could be five minutes. It could be a Zoom call with your sister. It could be a walk. It could be play with your dogs. These little interventions or practices to reset yourself will matter. If you look at the research, 50 minutes is about the maximum time that you can engage anything before we start to have diminishing returns.

Devin C. Hughes:

After 50 minutes, the brain starts to disengage. So my challenge to you is find out what lights your campfire, and literally schedule it on your calendar, even if it's five minutes, multiple times a day. You'll feel better about it.

Sarah Cirone:

Great. And I think that'll lead us to this last question here from Sarah. And Sarah says when she tries to start initiatives like this, either whether it's at home or at work, people don't want to participate. It's too perky for them. How can you convince people to go along?

Devin C. Hughes:

Again, you think that people would run their happiness, but they even push back on it, because then, "Ah, that's not me." I get it. So what I would find is they're always haters, as my kids say, everywhere. They're not bad people. They're just skeptical. They're cynical. They're salty. They're whatever may be.

Devin C. Hughes:

I would look for the yes's not the no's. Invariably, you're going to have one or two people on your team that are like-minded like you. Tell them the why, why you're doing it, for health reasons or performance reasons or for cultural reasons. Elicit their support and gradually build up a groundswell like that invariably.

Devin C. Hughes:

Again, the bus doesn't wait for people if you're not at the bus stop. All great people who've changed anything started in a small group and move out and you could certainly do it. And one of the things that I would offer up for all of you is I have this eBook that I'm happy to share and it's free. It's a seven-day journey to make gratitude and expected work practice. It's a download. I think we're going to put the link in chat.

Sarah Cirone:

Yes, right now.

Devin C. Hughes:

Or could download it yourself from Google Drive. And this would be a tool that maybe you have a conversation with your team or others and start to share what you're doing individually. But you have to speak from a place of authenticity. You have to have gone through it and you need to tell people why. Not that you're negative or salty or cynical.

Devin C. Hughes:

Mindset matters going forward. If you want to stay in touch with me, happy to do it. There are a lot of different ways: my website, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook. I create a lot of resources, tools, and other practices that you can make happiness and expected work practice.

Sarah Cirone:

Wonderful. And thank you so much, Devin. This was a great presentation. That's all the time that we have for today. And thank you to our sponsor, the Assessment Center from HRDQ, providers of information and powerful learning tools online, anywhere, anytime. Learn more at [www.hrdqstore.com/hac](http://www.hrdqstore.com/hac). This is all the time that we have for today. Thank you very much, Devin.

Devin C. Hughes:

Thank you for having me. It was great.

Sarah Cirone:

And thank you all for participating in today's webinar. Happy training.