

# The Science of Happiness Workbook: 10 Practices for a Meaningful Life



**Kira M. Newman, Jill Suttie, Shuka Kalantari**

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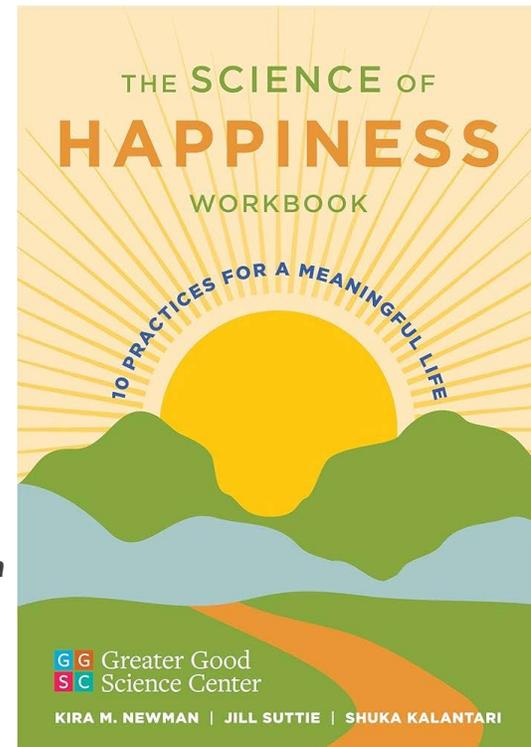
Reviewed by **Johny Van Aerde**, MD, PhD

*The Science of Happiness Workbook is a practical, evidence-based guide from the Greater Good Science Center (GGSC) at the University of California, Berkeley. It offers short and actionable daily exercises to develop habits for building happiness and meaning. The 160-page self-help book, based on studies and courses generated at GGSC,<sup>1</sup> doesn't just make promises, it also delivers results by turning research into action in a positive yet realistic way.*

The content is based on behavioural science and positive psychology, with a focus on cultivating a resilient life. The values and skills covered are connection, kindness, empathy, compassion, awe, mindfulness, gratitude, and self-compassion, coming together in the final two chapters on emotion regulation and purpose.

The identical structure of each of the ten chapters adds to the practicality of the book. Each starts with a section on the benefits of a value or behaviour, supported by science and a few narratives and followed by a survey to measure the present and future skill level of the learner. Several simple and actionable practices follow, and the chapter ends with a section on how to put that specific topic into practice.

For each value or behaviour, the reader learns not only what to do and how to practise it, but also why it works. The combination of what, how, and why entices the reader to engage in the practices and makes the workbook feel more like a supportive companion rather than a textbook full of prescriptions.



The authors are realistic in acknowledging discomfort, stress, and uncertainty as part of the human experience, but they also maintain a positive undertone in the carefully designed exercises that emphasize small, repeatable habits.

The book is of value not only to those who live and work under stressful conditions, but also to each of us when dealing with difficult transitions in our personal life. The practices can take as little as 15 minutes once or twice a day. As a matter of fact, this book cannot and should not be studied and practised in big chunks. For leaders in the health care system who use the LEADS framework, the book aligns closely with all four capabilities of the Lead Self domain.<sup>2</sup> In short, *The Science of Happiness Workbook* is a comprehensive, actionable, easy, and evidence-based workbook, providing short step-by-step practices that can fit easily into the busy-ness of daily life. It's worth trying!

## References

1. The science of happiness course. Berkley, Calif.: Greater Good Science Center; n.d. Available: <https://tinyurl.com/43wdj56f>
2. Dickson G, Tholl. Bringing LEADS to life in health: LEADS in a caring environment (2nd ed.). Cham, Switzerland: Springer; 2020.

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