

# WHY POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY?

How Creating a Culture  
of Happiness Can Accelerate  
Engagement and Performance in  
Pre K-12+ School Systems





# HAPPY SCHOOLS ARE FILLED WITH ENGAGED STUDENTS

We are now two decades into a new age of positive psychology research that pulls back the curtain on the power of positive psychology and its influence on engagement, performance, and well-being.

It's no longer a cast-off argument. Happy staff, teachers, and parents make for happy students. And happy students perform better, period! School systems across North America understand this and are taking advantage of it.

The question remaining is, "how will your school system capitalize on this knowledge to improve engagement, performance, academic outcomes, and well-being of your students?"

Enter The Orange Frog.



## IT'S SCIENCE!

# HAPPINESS AND ENGAGEMENT

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**“The fastest way to disengage an employee is to tell them their work is meaningful only because of the paycheck.”**

- Shawn Achor

In a global survey of over 230,000 employees in 142 countries: (Gallup, Inc., 2013)

**56%**

**Unhappy / Disengaged**

**Actively Unhappy / Disengaged**

**24%**

**13%**

**Happy / Engaged**

The importance of a strong workplace culture is universally understood. How to attain that culture is another question altogether. The advent of new research in positive psychology has opened the door for schools or school systems of any size to apply what we've learned through neuroscience and behavioral studies to create positive and more productive cultures.

The simple act of training our brains to be in a positive mindset starts chain reactions that generate new neural pathways. Each new pathway then leans towards seeing more and more of the positive in our lives, putting us in a happier state.

And happy people are more engaged, productive, and tend to make those they work with happier. When students work in happy, positive, environments, their outcomes almost always improve. (Jones, 2015)



# WHY HAPPINESS?

We're glad you asked!

**F**or decades marketers have used happiness to drive sales of their products and services. Let's face it, it's not often that you see sad or angry faces in advertising. There's a reason for this.

## Happiness sells!

Our brains are hard-wired to look for positive emotions as signs of welcome, safety, and shelter. Acting counter to this hardwiring comes at a cost and we see that in the lives of students who struggle in challenging environments.

Those school systems that choose to engage their teachers, staff, students, board, and community with a focus on positivity, tend to do better. Happy people are more engaged in what they do.

Positive environments are an important piece of the Social Emotional Learning (SEL) toolkit. We know that students feel better about themselves when they feel safe and are provided with a positive atmosphere while engaged at school.



### Success

Happy people are more likely to succeed at what they attempt to accomplish. (Lyubomirsky et al., 2013)



### Productivity

Happy people are **12% - 31%** more productive? (Oswald, et al., 2015) (Achor 2010)



### Pain

Positive emotions provide a marked improvement in the ability of people to manage pain. The effect is greater for women than men. (Ong, et al., 2010.)



### Resilience to Stress

A study from 2000 discovered that positive emotions have a measurable "undoing effect", helping to regulate stress-inducing negative emotions. (Fredrickson et al., 2000)



### Living Longer

Several studies indicate that happy people tend to live longer. In a 2015 study people who rated themselves as unhappy had a **14%** greater chance of death. (Lawrence et al., 2015)

**F**ocusing on the creation of positive workplaces has immediate benefits for schools. A positive environment translates into a positive culture. And culture is the the thing that students feel.

Happy people manage pain and stress better, live longer and are more successful. But they are also up to 31% more productive and stay on the job twice as long as their unhappy counterparts.

It doesn't stop there. Happy employees are almost 20% more accurate at daily tasks, work harder, and show higher job satisfaction.

# IT'S A SCIENCE THING

## PERSONAL BENEFITS



### Resistance to Colds

A study indicates that happy people are more resistant to symptoms of the common cold. And those expressing negative emotions are **3 times** more likely to show symptoms. (Cohen et al., 2003)



### Likelihood of Stroke

older adults with a higher reporting of positive well-being, had a **reduced likelihood** of experiencing a stroke by **26%** (Ostir G.V., et. al. 2001)



### Relationships and Life

Research from the Blue Zones Project estimate that being in a committed relationship can **add 3 years to your life** expectancy.(Buettner, 2017)

## ON THE JOB BENEFITS



### Accuracy on the Job

Research suggest that happy people are 19% more accurate in daily tasks. (Achor, 2010)



### Less Employee Turnover

A study from the Wall Street Journal shows that happy employees stay on the job twice as long as their least happy colleagues. (Pryce-Jones, 2011)



### Job Satisfaction

The annual Conference Board Survey for 2020 put employee satisfaction at its highest level in ten years, **56.3%** This is pre-pandemic data. Are we ready for the potential impacts of Covid 19? (Levanon et al., 2020)



# PROVEN TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

**The Happiness Advantage - Orange Frog Workshop** uses a set of tools and techniques based on the work of Shawn Achor, NY Times best-selling author and Harvard researcher, to engage schools in using the science of positive psychology to accelerate the performance of their teachers, staff, students, and communities.

**Joel Pederson is the superintendent of the Cardinal Community School District in Eldon, Iowa**, one of the poorest school districts in the state. In 2005, open enrollment numbers were dismal as the district was in the negative, sending students out of the district for better educational opportunities to the tune of  $-\$350,000$ . Dr. Pedersen discovered Shawn Achor's work in 2015 and started to employ the Happiness Advantage principles first in his leadership and then school-wide.



By 2017, the district had recaptured its lost open enrollment numbers and found themselves in the positive,  $\$1.2$  million. By 2018, as the community regained faith and trust in the district, that number had doubled to  $\$2.5$  million. Along with the open enrollment numbers, average ACT scores increased 3 composite points, average daily attendance increased from 92% to 95%, and the district was named as one of the Top 150 Workplaces in the state. **In 2019, Joel was named Iowa's Superintendent of the Year for 2019/2020.**

*"Orange Frog training has radically changed our school culture. Happiness is flowing through my school buildings while improving educational outcomes." (J.P.)*

**School District 54 (SD54)** in Schaumburg, Illinois committed heavily to the **Happiness Advantage - Orange Frog** approach as early as 2015 and have seen solid returns.



In 2020, the school system saw a 55% reduction in suspensions, a 5% increase in student attendance, a 92% retention rate, 3 times more engagement and

99% of staff agreed that the program prepared them for changes and challenges of Covid 19.

**This last result speaks to the power of positive emotions, happiness, and optimism in building our resilience.** We'd all like to imagine ourselves as building strong organizations. But strong and resilient aren't necessarily synonymous. The science of positive psychology is giving organizations everywhere a clear path to achieve both and offers the bonus of creating a happier workplace.

**We specialize in working with educators.** Contact us for a list of K-12 and university clients that are successfully implementing positive psychology efforts for their teachers, students, parents, and school communities.



# THE WORKSHOP

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**The Happiness Advantage - Orange Frog Workshop™** offers five elements to ensure an understanding of the fundamentals and create a task-oriented path forward for individuals and the organizations where they work. The workshop is delivered in an upbeat and interactive style whether done in-person or virtually.

1

## **PART ONE: POSITIVE EMOTIONS**

The workshop starts with learning how small positive interactions can have a huge impact on workshop participants and the people they interact with. And how making space for those emotions is a small investment that pays off immediately.

2

## **PART TWO: THE EDUCATION CASE**

All of this work is based on the science of positive psychology which has evidence to back up its claims of providing ROI to organizations. We learn some of the research and data that allows businesses to make sense of prioritizing happiness.

3

## **PART THREE: THE POWER OF POSITIVE OUTLIERS**

The Orange Frog parable, written by Shawn Achor, features a character who changes the course of his community by learning the power of being a positive outlier, The ripple effect this causes on others begins to impact how they succeed.

4

## **MODULE 4: SOCIAL SCRIPTS**

Social scripts are unwritten and unspoken rules that govern our everyday interactions at home, at school, and in our communities. Understanding how to spot them and put them to use for good is one of the key learnings of The Orange Frog workshop.

5

## **MODULE 5: PUTTING IT ALL INTO ACTION**

All of our Orange Frog Workshops end with each participant starting a 21-day action plan that engages them in new, positive, habits. It starts individually but has a big impact on the organization as the interconnecting activities begin to take hold.



# BUT DON'T TAKE OUR WORD FOR IT

"After finishing Shawn's book, I couldn't wait to share it with the District 54 staff and community. By implementing his work in our district, we are making our staff and our students know that we are committed to their happiness and their success."



Andy DuRoss  
Superintendent SD54  
Schaumburg, Illinois



Dr. Lisa Hagel  
Superintendent GISD  
Flint, Michigan

"It's about so much more than color, food, fun, or trinkets.

Our people are happier and it shows in their work. When we create a great place to work, great work takes place."

Justus Prentice Award for being named National ISD Superintendent of the Year in 2015



Aaron Sadoff  
Superintendent North  
Fond du Lac School  
District  
North Fond du Lac,  
Wisconsin

"Orange Frog provides the science, data, research, and curriculum for developing an upbeat, rationally optimistic culture. These tools make the desire for a more positive culture scalable and possible for everyone to influence relationships among staff."

Wisconsin Superintendent of the Year for 2019



# EXPERIENCE

## ITLN

### The International Thought Leader Network

INTERNATIONAL  
THOUGHT LEADER  
NETWORK

For nearly three decades, the principals of International Thought Leader Network (ITLN) have worked on the forefront of organizational advancement in collaboration with the world's most distinguished thought leaders to deliver big ideas and best practices to a global workforce.

ITLN has designed, developed, and delivered enterprise level training and implementation solutions for the world's most sought after thought leaders including Harvard's John Kotter, Shawn Achor, and Vijay Govindarajan, founding director of Tuck's Center for Global Leadership.

ITLN, in exclusive partnership with Shawn Achor, assists organizations around the world in bringing happiness research to life at work and in education...through research partnerships, training and large-scale interventions.



## BILL PALLADINO

### Principal Consultant

Bill has led change management, innovation, and positive psychology interventions in school systems, universities, companies, organizations, and governments around the globe. He is an expert in coaching leaders through meaningful and value-rich culture change and has worked with ITLN for fifteen years as a sought-after speaker, trainer, facilitator, and executive coach. Bill is the founder of Krios Consulting which operates out of offices in Traverse City, Michigan.

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## Devin C. Hughes

### Principal Consultant

Devin's experience working on employee engagement strategy, evolving corporate cultures, talent management, and diversity, equity & inclusion brings a unique perspective in helping his clients plan for positive growth and evolution. His approach which draws from the science of positive psychology, positive organizational research, appreciative inquiry, neuroscience, mindset and mindfulness. As a result, clients receive the cutting edge in research on well-being and flourishing. Devin is the author of 22 books and listed in the top 20 black authors.



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# THANK YOU!

We are grateful that you've taken the time to read our white paper on happiness and school performance.

To speak to one of our team and to find out more about our partnership with Shawn Achor, our keynote addresses, workshops, coaching, and other services in support of creating a positive school culture, visit our website.



**Contact Andrew Greatrex**  
andyg@ithoughtleader.com or call him directly (786) 253-7703

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