

WHAT IS THE HAPPINESS CLUB?

How many people love their job and relationships? How many people are really happy in their life? My observations have led me to understand that very few people can say they are happy with their lives. I found that as much as I tried to change things and events outside of me, they could not change enough for me to feel happy on the inside. Eighteen years ago that changed and I have been happy 100% of the time. Sure things are not perfect, but I do the best I can with those things (called life) to change them if I can and being happy takes care of the rest.

The decision to become a happy person has not only benefited me, but many of the readers of the articles I've written and the people who come to Happiness Clubs. You can be miserable or you can be happy. The reasons don't matter, the results do. When you are happy everything works better. Your problems either get resolved or they no longer have a negative affect on you.

Why be happy? Why Not? Life is short...Be Happy! You will live ten years longer, reduce anger, have less stress and confusion, have better focus, better patience and self control, access greater intelligence, utilize wisdom, experience emotional competence, create inner peace, enhanced relationships, and enjoy your life while enriching others with your happiness. Learn to use happiness to make a positive difference in your life and in the life of others.

What is Happiness? My definition of happiness is an inner state of well being which enables you to profit from your highest: thoughts, wisdom, intelligence, common sense, emotions, health, and spiritual values in your life

The advantages of happiness are not well known or commonly understood. Although they are simple, they need to be practiced. They need to be gone over with some repetition so that people may keep it upper most in their mind. It is amazing how we let so much of the negative creep into our thinking. We can learn to put ourselves first by putting happiness first. It enables us to put our best foot forward with others; to experience the very best life has to offer. It enables us to analyze a problem or difficult situation in a whole new manner.

Why is unhappiness a problem? When you are unhappy you are at the mercy of the negative things in your life. You allow them to have power over you. Being unhappy produces negative effects in your life. You experience the unfairness of life in a state of confusion. You take loss to an unhealthy level. You hurt, you suffer, you worry, you become fearful, you become helpless, and you're unhappiness permeates your life.

What is the Happiness Club? It is an organization with the mission to promote the benefits of being happy through meetings, newsletters, happiness books and an informative web site, to the people in our community, and around the world.

When did the club start? Lionel Ketchian taught a course on happiness at Sacred Heart University in 1999. As a result of that first class, the group wanted to keep meeting to learn more about happiness and keep practicing. We started our first meeting in January 2000, and have met every single month since then. The Happiness Club has been written up in hundreds of newspapers and many magazines, we have appeared on television and live radio talk shows.

What is the cost? We do not have dues or any other charges. All it will cost you is the time you spend to go to a meeting and learn about happiness instead of watching television for the evening. It may cost you your unhappiness. What is your unhappiness costing you?

When do you have meetings? Meetings are once a month. You can do more or less; it's up to you. We have found that once a month is optimum. It helps people remember to be happy and keep practicing it, without burdening one's schedule.

Meeting duration. Meetings last an hour-and-a-half to two hours. Having meetings on a monthly basis is good thing for consistency. People can take the time in between meetings to practice the tools that are presented during meetings.

What are the benefits? Happiness club meetings give a rational, common sense approach to accept a positive view of life and deal with the things we cannot change. Making you more aware of the things you can control and choose helps you make wiser use of your energy and will make you a happier person. Happiness is the best self-improvement plan to become a better and friendlier person. It benefits your relationships and the world you live in. It has been proven that being happy also benefits your health, with the average happy person living 10 years longer.

What can you get out of it? You can get happier! It also provides you with the opportunity to socialize, meet new people and form friendships. You can have a wonderful time, smile, and laugh a lot! Nice people do so much for everyone around them; they need to become happy within themselves so they can better give to others. It's about time we spend more time connecting with one another face to face.

Why have a Happiness Club? When you're happy you can increase your endurance for dealing with life's problems. Happiness allows you to make decisions more easily, access the wisdom within you, become more loving, and experience greater peacefulness. Your entire attitude becomes one of greater strength. You become powerful and positive. People notice the change and it begins to positively affect them. Imagine happiness spreading like the common cold. It can, it does and you can make it happen even faster! Happiness is spreading like wildfire all around the globe and you can make it happen in your community by starting a club.

What do you get out of running a Happiness Club? You and the other people involved in the club will get happiness from it. You won't make money doing it but you do get to see old friends and meet new friends. You do it to help people overcome some really tough times. You do it because you care about yourself and others. You do it because you want your life and other people's lives to be better. You'll benefit from it by empowering yourself with the strength you gain from learning to control yourself.

The first thing you can do is to make the decision. Is this something you want to try? Sometimes you won't know, unless you do it. If you are so inclined, it will be well worth it. While giving happiness away to others you will be amazed with the positives, the opportunities, the rewards, and the joy that will come into your life. We will be right here to help you with your own club. We'll answer your questions, make suggestions, help you through the startup process, give you a steady stream of ideas, and provide you with materials for at least a year's worth of happiness club meetings.

Start a Happiness Club! If you're happy and you know it and you really want to show it, start a club! Around the country and around the world people have told me they wish they could come to Happiness Club meetings. Now there is nothing stopping you from going to your own Happiness Club meeting. This is a chance for you to make a real difference. You may never know what good you do, but you will feel really good about what you are doing by giving people a chance to be happy. This is the most important benefit of all. Haven't you always wanted to make a positive difference, and leave a positive lasting impact on the world? Start now by making a difference in yourself and other people will notice that difference.

Anybody can start a club and be a facilitator! If you're a good speaker and you want to lead your local Happiness Club, more power to you. You can express ideas and topics for discussion within the club. Your job is to keep it positive and keep uncovering the tools and benefits of happiness. Get people in touch with their thinking. Give them options for making better choices in dealing with life's problems. Since happiness is what everyone really wants, your contribution will be very important to them because that is what we are all striving for. We'll be right there to help you.

On the other hand, if you don't want to take a leading role, you can become the founder of a local Happiness Club and create great benefit for your community. You can find speakers to present their talks to your club. Authors, positive psychologists, positive people all make excellent speakers for your club. Work together with the most passionate people you can find and tell you are looking for ideal speakers. By doing this, you'll get to be the founder of a real positive club and you will have led your community to a higher place. Reach out to the most optimistic people in your life and community. You will find people who are passionate about happiness and they will champion the cause.

Thinking about how to start a Happiness Club? Here's how you can start one. The best reason to start one is for you to learn how to be happy. One good way for you to learn to be happy is to start teaching others how to do it. It becomes an upward spiral. You learn, you give, they learn, you get. It is not a numbers game. It's not about how many people come to a meeting, or how many come back. You could start your own Happiness Club meeting with just one other person. This is about giving people an opportunity to learn more about using and creating happiness as a means of choosing how they live and think back on your life. There's no good reason to live an unhappy life and you can play an important role in many people's lives. If you can help just one person, you have done a world of

good. Aymee Coget (pronounced Co jjaayy), is a Ph.D. Candidate studying leadership and positive psychology who started a happiness club in San Francisco, California in 2004. Aymee holds monthly calls to show you step-by-step how to start your happiness club and make it a success. Below, we'll tell you how to get on those calls.

You have our help and support! Learn the Teaching Activity: Listen to step-by-step instructions about how to run your Happiness Club with Happiness Expert Aymee Coget. Aymee shares simple steps to help your happiness club succeed. Join us on the first Wednesday of each month, for an hour-long happiness club leadership Teleconference. Listen on the phone, or watch and listen to Aymee while on your computer. Aymee discusses the happiness increase activities and people share information with each other regarding their experience as happiness club facilitators. If you want to be included in the next phone call, just send an e-mail to Narine at narine.psy@gmail.com. Narine will send you the date and time and also send you the access information and free conference materials.

You will be able to listen to Aymee Coget's monthly audio-video teleconferences by downloading them at www.happinessclub.com.

What is a meeting like? Each club presents strategies to live our lives to the fullest by understanding more about using and creating happiness. We have discussions during every meeting. You have a chance to learn from others and express your viewpoint if you choose. The meetings are educational, and everyone takes something home with them to use in their life in order to be a happier person.

Who comes to Happiness Club Meetings? Some of the people who come are happy and would like to meet others and become even happier, while others are looking for happiness. People from all walks of life and different backgrounds attend. We have people who are single, married, divorced, and widowed. We have people of all ages, with a range of ages from 12 to 104. We have a mixture of women and men. Many people come alone, but some bring friends. It is always a good place to meet new friends. Three generations, a grandmother, mother, and daughter have come to meetings. At one meeting we had a wonderful couple that were married for 50 years.

The wonderful thing about meetings is that they promote friendship and a greater understanding of one another. You give people an opportunity to be in a caring atmosphere so they can share their hopes, problems and strategies. Meetings help direct the focus away from the negatives and toward the truly wonderful uplifting ways for building happiness and one's sense of well being. The purpose of these meetings, like meditation, is to be in the moment, lighten up, and be more in tune with your innermost positive thoughts and feelings. We create wonderful evening experiences for people to take back into their personal, school and business lives. Many of them just can't wait for the next meeting. Many friendships have been formed from these meetings. You know what they say about your closest five friends being a strong determinant of your own life...so who ya' gonna surround yourself with? Why, happy people, of course!

Where will you hold meetings? The easiest place would be your own home, or a friend's home, but most of our Happiness Clubs are held in local libraries or Town Halls, which allow meetings for such purposes. You could also hold meetings at a place of business, after hours. The advantage of using a business is that it lets the community know about the business's location, and the positive impact they are having within the community. Since the medical profession is concerned with people's health, they should also be concerned with people's happiness as well. Many of our Happiness Club participants are doctors, psychologists, nurses, and so on. You can try your local hospitals, doctors and chiropractor's offices and health food stores. Anyone providing health care services may give you a meeting room and could offer to support you in many other positive ways.

Churches, Synagogues and other religious institutions are a good place to hold meetings. All religions want happiness for mankind because happiness promotes virtue. Our meetings are non-religious. This way, everyone better understands the benefits of happiness. Happiness is, indeed, a spiritual path.

Be creative; serve refreshments if you want or you can have a meeting in a coffee shop. You might want to have a meeting in a home, and then go out for coffee or a bite to eat afterwards. The meetings can also be held in a restaurant where dinner can be offered. People eat together, while sharing a meal and listening to a presentation on happiness. The first Happiness Club initially met at a restaurant for the first year, than moved their meetings to a public library.

Here in Fairfield, CT, USA, we have held meetings in our public library. We do not charge anything for our meetings. Our meetings are very informal, I have a number of handouts and free material for everyone to take. This enables people to read more about happiness and take it with them.

A Typical Meeting. I start a meeting by greeting everyone and welcome everyone to our meeting. You can share how you truly feel with the group. I might share something in the news about happiness with everyone. At this point I introduce the speaker to the group. The speaker gives their presentation and then we welcome questions and comments about the presentation from the audience. There are many people that are drawn to the club who are authors and professionals. They also contribute a great deal. Anyone who is using happiness in his or her life should be encouraged to make a presentation.

A very effective thing at each meeting is to speak about your personal experiences with happiness...your successes, and your failures. Tell people how you use the decision making process to enable happiness to work for you in making the best possible choices. This is a very simple matter but it is something we all need to learn and reinforce it until it becomes a habit. To make it an automatic response we need to practice it so we realize we can choose our response in any given situation, no matter what we are faced with. This is a really good point to talk about. It is at the core of understanding our human dilemma, as well as our human power in dealing with the problems that face us. Happiness becomes our wellspring of own Human Resources in dealing with problems.

All Participate – People can go around the group and introduce themselves and answer: “What excites me about the Happiness Club?” Welcome new people, volunteers give testimonials of happiness activities from the prior meeting.

Where can I learn more about Happiness? Come to meetings, read books, attend a free course given once a month by Aymee Coget on the phone. You can find out about these courses by subscribing to our free Happiness Newsletter. Send me, Lionel Ketchian, an e-mail at: PrintLRK@aol.com or go to the website: www.happinessclub.com and just click on the newsletter request.

The Happiness Newsletter. An e-mail newsletter that is sent out twice a month by HappinessClub.com, further enables you to understand happiness and is another good source of information. It can be used to foster discussions and answer questions regarding happiness. The many quotes in the newsletter can be read and discussed. Parts of the Be Happy Zone articles can be read and segments can be

used for further discussions at the meetings. The many questions that are asked and comments made by the group always fill the time at a meeting. These are all good reasons to have the meetings and will benefit all participants. We started The Happiness TV Show and these shows can be the topic for the evening. All the shows are available on your computer for free at the www.happinessclub.com website. If you bring your computer to the meeting, you can show them on your computer or project it on the wall if they have audio equipment available in your meeting room.

How do I get a free subscription to the Happiness Newsletter? On the website www.happinessclub.com or just send an e-mail to PRINTLRK@aol.com, just request the newsletter which is e-mailed twice a month.

What is on the www.happinessclub.com website? We have a large list of books to read on happiness and two free book downloads. It contains over 100 one half-hour TV shows on happiness that you can watch and show on your computer. It also includes information on upcoming meetings, seminars, and events. You can read over 200 articles on happiness that have been published in the newspapers. Listen to interviews with famous happiness experts and authors on our Virtual Happiness Club.

You have our help and support! Listen to step by step instructions about how to do it with Happiness Expert Aymee Coget. Aymee shares simple steps to help your happiness club succeed. Join us for our once a month hour-long happiness club leadership Video-Teleconference. Listen on the phone, or watch and listen to Aymee while on your computer. If you want to be included in the next phone call, just send an e-mail to Narine at narine.psy@gmail.com. Narine will send you the date and time and also send you the access information and free conference materials.

Happiness Books: During a meeting, a book could be discussed. We have a free book download of *Gateway to Happiness* by Rabbi Zelig Pliskin. We also have the 12 Happiness Keys from the book *Happy 4 Life* by Bob Nozik, M.D. Both these books are on our top 20-book list. We have 20 of the best books and almost 400 books on happiness listed on our website. If someone has read a book that is beneficial and relates well to understanding happiness, have people share some of those thoughts with others at the meeting.

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When did the club start? Lionel Ketchian taught a course on happiness at Sacred Heart University in 1999. As a result of that first class, the group wanted to keep meeting to learn more about happiness and keep practicing. We started our first meeting in January 2000, and have met every single month since then. The Happiness Club has been written up in hundreds of newspapers and many magazines, we have appeared on television and live radio talk shows. In February 29, 2001, on leap year day, the Happiness Club appeared on the front page of The Connecticut Post and since then has made the front cover of many newspapers.

You can promote the Happiness Club meetings by sending a fax or e-mail to your local newspapers. The newspapers can publish information about upcoming Happiness Club meetings that are open to the public. Send them the date of your meeting, the place of your meeting, the topic to be discussed, and your contact information. An advantage to having a free meeting is that the newspaper will run it at no charge as a public service announcement and place it under organization meeting information. This gives people an opportunity to find out about your meeting. If you want to charge for your Happiness Club meeting that would be alright because you are giving people a great benefit. Many organizations want to know when you start a Happiness Group so they can promote it for you. Make them aware of what you are doing, and give the public an opportunity to find out about the meetings.

Free Press Releases! You can promote the Happiness Club meetings by sending a fax or e-mail to your local newspapers. A few weeks before a meeting I send an e-mail to newspapers in Connecticut. I don't tell them I want to run an advertisement; they would charge you for that. I just ask them to please put a notice in their newspaper. Since you are not charging anything for the meeting, and they are open to the public, they will put your notice in the paper as a public service for their reader's benefit. They will probably list it under community activities. Send them the date of your meeting, the place of your meeting, the topic to be discussed, and your contact information. You can find out specifically whom to send it to at the newspaper and if it is okay for you to e-mail to them. Some may want it faxed. This will give people an opportunity to find out about your meeting. Many organizations want to know when you start a Happiness Group so they can promote it for you. Make them aware of what you are doing, and give the public an opportunity to find out about the meetings.

Here is an sample of a press release:

Fairfield Happiness Club Press Release

**Mr. John Jones
Calendar Editor
The XYZ Newspaper
100 Post Road
Westport, CT 06880**

Dear John,

Please put this notice for the Happiness Club meeting in your publication:

FAIRFIELD HAPPINESS CLUB MEETING

Our next Happiness Club meeting will have a presentation called: Creating Your World: A Proactive Approach for Achieving Happiness & Fulfillment by Dr. Marc J. Shulman, a Clinical Psychologist & Associate Research Scientist at the Veterans Administration of Connecticut Healthcare System and Yale University. Dr. Shulman is in private practice in Stamford, CT and is the founder of Positive Living, a program that offers a series of group and individual workshops rooted in the concepts of Positive Psychology, which provides people with practical tools to achieve happiness, success and fulfillment.

The meeting is on Thursday, June 5, from 7:00-9:00 P.M. at the Fairfield Public Library, at 1080 Old Post Road, Fairfield. Admission is free and everyone is welcome. For further info call Lionel Ketchian at (203) 258-7777 or www.happinessclub.com.

Thank you,
Lionel Ketchian
Fairfield Happiness Club
63 Unquowa Road
Fairfield, CT 06824
(203) 258-7777

If you follow the above Press Release and send it to newspapers in your community, you will attract many people to your meetings.

Where can I learn more about Happiness? Come to meetings, read books, attend a free course given on the first Wednesday of each month by Aymee Coget on the phone. You can find out about these courses by subscribing to our free Happiness Newsletter. The website: www.happinessclub.com Send me an e-mail to PrintLRK@aol.com.

Decided to start a Happiness Club? I want to congratulate you! Please get in touch with me by sending me an e-mail at PRINTLRK@aol.com so we can break the news and let everyone know about it so they can support you. We are eager to share everything we have about happiness with you. We want to enable you to have a happier and more fulfilled life and be able to spread it to others. We want your Happiness Club Meetings to be successful. You never need to walk alone on the Path to Happiness.

I am here to assist you in spreading your happiness experience to others!
Lionel Ketchian
PrintLRK@aol.com