

Lessons In Happiness

Hello, nice to see you here!

This script is meant for everyone that wants to make others happy.

The exercises described here can be used for several audiences, like primary schools, secondary school, universities, but also at old people's homes. You don't need any prior knowledge to give these lessons, you can just follow the exercises in this script. I would like to encourage you to give this lesson your own personal touch!

I am just one person and I definitely do not know everything so it would be amazing if you would like to contribute to these lessons by thinking of improvement points and maybe even sending exercises that you think will be a great addition. I would love to see this website grow into a place filled with happiness and life lessons from people all over the world. This could for example also be topics like healthy eating and relationships.

If you know any other nice exercises or if you have any questions or remarks or want to translate this lesson to your own language, you can always send an e-mail to merijn@brightvibes.com.

Let's make a happy, loving world together.
Have fun and good luck!

- Merijn Ruis

Duration of the workshop: +- 3 hours.

Beforehand: 5 minutes.

Everyone gets a big sheet of paper for a couple of exercises. The participants are also allowed to draw whatever they like on it. When a participant does not feel like doing the exercises, he/she is also allowed to just draw on the paper. In these lessons it is important that there are a lot of physical activities and games, as physical exercise is a key element in learning, and it makes the lessons more fun (Hawley, R., & Reichert, M. 2009).

There are a couple of rules: Everyone will listen to each other and treat each other respectfully. The trainer only continues the story when everyone is quiet. When the trainer raises his/her hand it means everyone should get quiet. The participants can also raise their hand to ask for silence. When the participants feel out of energy, they can raise their finger and say so. Then a fun energizer will be started.

In the beginning the trainer asks the participants to write down how happy they feel on a scale from 1 to 10.

Aim of the training: Give the children guidelines on how to be happy and have them leave the classroom happier than at the beginning of the workshop.

Introductory exercise

Time: 10 minutes

Aim: Participants and trainer get acquainted

Execution: Everyone stands in a circle and the trainer tells:

'Step into the circle if my statement applies to you:

Who loves sport?

Who makes music?

Who was on Whatsapp yesterday late in the evening?

Who is excited about this workshop?

Who is in love?

Who is insecure sometimes?

Who here eats vegetarian food?

Who sometimes takes a shower for half an hour?

Who is sad sometimes?

Who feels happy today?

Who here is very strong?

Who becomes happy by making others happy?'

Also ask the children to come up with some questions.



What is happiness?

Time: 7 minutes

Aim: Give insight on what happiness is

Execution: Trainer asks the children what happiness is. He lets some children tell their vision.

Trainer tells: 'Happiness is a feeling of meaning and satisfaction about your life in general. Happiness does not mean you have to be cheerful all the time. It is no problem to feel insecure or sad sometimes. We all do sometimes. (I think it's important to give some extra attention to this idea. What you don't want is that the participants get the feeling that they have to be cheerful all the time.)

Trainer asks: 'Who wants to become rich? Who wants to become famous? Do you think you will be happy if you are famous and rich?' Often children will tell that this is not the case. Trainer can tell: 'There are a lot of people that walk around with angry faces while they are rich and famous. Many people think they have to get rich and famous to become happy, but you need different things to be happy.'

Trainer asks the children what they need to be happy. Often the children have a pretty good idea of things that make them happy.

The following subjects are scientifically proven to make you happy:

Gratitude

Positivity

Good relationships

Giving/being kind

Meditation and yoga

Experiencing flow: losing yourself in something you love to do.

Sports and exercise

Self-confidence and knowing your strengths

Contact with nature (*If you have the possibility as a teacher to go outside in nature sometime during or after the lesson this is definitely recommended!*)

Most of these subjects will be talked about more excessively during the training.

Source: Bohlmeijer, 2013, Seligman, 2013, Achor, 2010, Boniwell, 2012, Algoe, & Haidt, 2009, Zelenski & Nisbet, 2014.

Positive gossip about your classmate

Time: 15 minutes

Aim: Give participants insight about their own qualities and have them experience what it's like to be kind to someone else.

Execution: Trainer Tells: 'It is nice to discover your strengths and qualities. Also, it is very important to give. We will do both with the next exercise. We'll make groups of four and three of the group members talk about the fourth person. That person looks and listens from a small distance. There is one rule: you can only say positive things about the others. Switch between gossip-subjects every two minutes.'

Source: Seligman, 2009, 2013.



This too will pass

Time: 1 minute

Aim: Give the participants insight in the constantly changing nature of reality and give them insight in how they can deal with this.

Execution: The trainer tells the participants to write down: 'This too, will pass.' Trainer tells: 'Everything in life changes and passes. Remember this whenever you feel bothered by something or when you don't feel like doing something. And when life is very beautiful, you will enjoy it even more knowing it will pass. Just think about this.'

Dilemmas

Time: 10 minutes

Aim: Talking with children about different themes. Giving children insight in what's really important.

Execution: Trainer asks children to stand up and come in front of the classroom. Trainer tells: 'I will ask a few questions, there are no right or wrong answers. If you like the first option best you can walk to the right of the classroom and if you like the second option best you can walk to the left of the classroom'. After each of the questions the trainer asks some reactions of children why they choose for this particular side. The trainer can pose the following dilemmas.

- Would you rather be an unhappy millionaire who made all his dreams come true or would you rather be a happy hobo?
- Is it more convenient to be friendly or is it more convenient to be a bully?
- Would you rather do what everyone does or rather do what you believe is right, even if it means standing alone sometimes?
- Is it more fun to give or to get?
- Would you rather have all the toys you want and not feel so good about yourself or would you rather feel good about yourself?

Love yourself/Energizer

Time: 15 minutes.

Aim: Participants will know the importance of loving themselves. They will be able to say something positive about themselves.

Execution: Trainer asks: 'Who here loves him/herself? Why is it important to love yourself?' 'Because you will be with yourself for the rest of your life. It's amazing if you have a great relationship with you and like to be with yourself.'

If you know how to play an instrument you could use two simple chords for this song. For example Am and C. If you don't, you can just sing acapella.

'We are going to sing a song and I like you to sing along. Everyone says a positive sentence about themselves. After someone said a sentence, we will applaud and cheer. If you cannot come up with a sentence, that's no problem. In that case we will also just applaud and cheer. This is the chorus that we will all sing together.' The first time the trainer shares one sentence at the time and asks the children to repeat the sentence.

It's oke to be me

And I am free

To be who I want to be

And I love me

Source: Neff, 2003.

Gratitude

Time: 15 minutes

Aim: Participants will know the importance of gratitude. They will be able to name at least five things they are grateful for.

Execution: Trainer writes on purpose on the blackboard: 'Thak you'. Probably one of the children will already read the word out loud and say that it's spelled wrong. The teacher tells: 'People tend to focus on what they don't have instead of what they do have. Even though I wrote down Thak you. You can still understand what I meant right? So why do we always focus on the missing letter? Instead of the 7 letters that are spelled right.'

'Can you all write down at least five things you are thankful for?' The trainer lets the participants tell what they wrote down and asks: 'What is the importance of gratitude?'

Trainer tells at the end: 'By looking at what you do have you can see you are actually doing quite good.'

Are there people that do not have the same things as you? Look at other countries for example: we have clean drinking water and food every day. Studies show that when people write what they're thankful for every day, they are a lot happier. Often, they are also healthier and live longer.'

Sources: Emmons & McCullough, 2003, Algoe & Haidt, 2009, Chan, 2010 Fox, Kaplan, Damasio, Damasio, 2015.

Gratitude exercise

Time: 10 minutes

Aim: Make the participants see that there are many things to be thankful for and that being grateful can be easy

Execution: Divide the class in groups of 6 to 8 participants. Ask every group to stand in a circle. One of the person of the group gets the first letter. The person who's turn it is has to name something he/she is thankful for that has to start with the letter. The person also states the reason why he/she is thankful for this thing. After this they make up a new letter for the next person. For example the letter H. The participant could say: House, because it's nice and warm. And than he gives a new letter to the next person. This way gratitude will go a few times through the whole circle.

As a teacher it's wise to say in advance that it's not allowed to say difficult letters like x or q.

Sources: Emmons & McCullough, 2003, Algoe & Haidt, 2009, Chan, 2010 Fox, Kaplan, Damasio, Damasio, 2015.

You can do it

Time: 5 minutes

Aim: Show participants the power of believing in yourself.

Execution: The class divides in couples of two. The first child stretches his/her hands to the front and says ten times: 'I am weak and I cannot do it.' Then the other tries to push the arms down. Then the first child says ten times: 'I am strong and I can do it'. The second child tries to push the arms down again. Do they notice the difference? Switch roles. What happens most of the time is that there is a very big difference between saying you can and saying you can't.

Conclusion: When you believe you can do it you are more successful than when you don't.

Source: Jeffers, 2007.

Positivity cap

Time: 15 minutes

Material: For this exercise you are going to need a happy cap. I made mine with paper mache and painted a smiley face on it. You can be as creative as you want with this.

Aim: Participants will understand that the way they look at the world has influence on how they feel. They will be able to see a difficult situation in a positive way.

Execution: Trainer tells: 'Maybe you know people that always complain. Complaining does not make us very happy. Being positive does make us happy. People can choose how they look at the world. Today I brought a happy cap and I want to see how good you guys are in thinking positive thoughts. Positivity is like a muscle you can train, the more you do it the easier it gets.' The trainer writes a few examples on the blackboard:

'It is raining outside.

I ate too many sandwiches

I got two bad grades.

I feel really insecure.

My phone fell in the toilet and now it's broken.

I feel sad.

I can only eat broccoli for the rest of my life.

I am really bad in positive thinking

I stepped in dog poo.

My pillow is made of stinky cheese.'

The trainer makes a few groups and takes turns by asking every group to name one positive thing about the given situations. This process repeats itself until just one group is left. If a group can not think of anything positive anymore or if someone in a group names something negative the group is out. The last group standing get's the happy cap and may defend their title with the next situation.

Sources: Clore, Huntsinger, 2008. Seligman, 2009, Seligman, 2013.

Self-confidence

Time: 5 minutes

Aim: Present participants ways to be confident about themselves.

Execution: Trainer tells: 'A study has shown that if you have a victorious attitude, you seem way more confident. If you are ever nervous about a class presentation for example, you could take on a powerful pose and you will look a lot more positive and confident. The same applies to laughing before you are even happy. You will become happy automatically. Let's try this: Go stand or sit in a powerful pose, for example with your legs on the table or with your hands in the air. When you do this two minutes before something that you are scared of you will feel less nervous and you will be better at it!

Source: Cuddy, (2012). For examples of powerful poses watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ks-Mh1QhMc>

The here and now/ Mindfulness meditation

Time: 15 minutes

Aim: Participants will get insight about the here and now.

Execution: Trainer tells: 'When we experience problems in our lives this is often because we are in the future or in the past with our head. Maybe you are worried about something wrong you said the other day or you still have to make some homework and don't want to. In reality there is only one moment we are always living in. What moment is this? It is always the NOW'

The trainer will write the word 'now' on the blackboard.

The trainer tells: 'Meditation helps us to live in the moment and it benefits you in many ways. For example, it will help you sleep better, you will be less worried and have less stress and it has many many other benefits for your health!'

'We will all meditate for a moment.' This exercise can be difficult for children. People that find it difficult often start laughing. The trainer can tell in advance that if the children can't hold their laughing they will have to leave the class for a little while so they won't interrupt the other participants.'

The trainer asks the participants to put their feet firmly on the ground, maybe close their eyes and focus on their breathing. 'Notice that your breathing happens naturally, you don't have to do anything for it.' 'From there you continue to bring your attention to your feet, and slowly upwards towards your legs, stomach, chest, back, neck and finally your head.' Try as a trainer to move slowly from body part to body part. Afterwards you reflect on the exercise by asking the participants to their reactions.

Source: Spijkerman, Pots & Bohlmeijer, 2016
Achor, 2010, 2012

Flow

Time: 3 minutes

Aim: Inspire participants to learn something they would like to learn.

Execution: Trainer tells: 'Do you know the feeling of forgetting the time when you are doing something? When you are playing or drawing for example? This is called flow. People that have a hobby or a job that can completely absorb them are often happier than people who don't have this. What activities give you this feeling? Write them down.'

'If you could pick something to be really great at, what would it be?

If you want to learn something, you'd better start now. Not only will this make it easier to reach a flow state with this particular thing. But the more your practice something the better you become at it!'

Source: Csikszentmihalyi, 2007.

Your ideal situation

Time: 20 minutes

Aim: Participants get insight on what they want. They will take a step towards their own dream.

Execution: Trainer asks the participants: 'Close your eyes for a while and visualise yourself in the ideal situation. Where are you now? With whom are you and what are you doing? What skills do you have? How does the most fantastic life you can imagine for yourself look like? If you see it clearly, you may make a drawing of what your ideal life is like.'

Afterwards some children will be asked to talk about their dreams and show the drawing they made.

Source: Lyobomirsky, 2008.



Making mistakes is alright!

Time: 10 minutes

Aim: Participants learn to make mistakes

Execution: Trainer tells: 'It is alright to make mistakes. Whatever you want to learn, you will make mistakes. Making a mistake is actually a great thing because you will learn very much from those mistakes.'

The trainer asks the participants to form a circle and makes them count. The first child will say one, the second says two etc. But instead of the number four or any given number that is part of the table of four, the rule is to say the word 'smile'. If the game isn't difficult enough the teacher can bring in new rules like: instead of 'three' the children should clap their hands and instead of 'five' they stamp their feet. When someone makes a mistake, the others applaud and the child that made the mistake gets to walk around victorious in the circle. This way the participants are stimulated to make mistakes.

Sources: Moser, Schroder, Heeter, Moran, Lee, 2011.

Downar, Bhatt, Montague, 2011.

Explanation about giving

Time: 10 minutes

Aim: Give the children insight on the importance of giving.

Execution: Trainer asks: 'Why would you be kind to others? Why would you give something away to a stranger, if you could also keep it for yourself?' Children will probably respond by saying that it makes someone else happy. Trainers asks: 'and what happens with you when you make someone else happy?' Often one of the children will say: 'I will become happy as well.'

Trainer tells: 'Exactly giving makes you happy. So, if you give something to a stranger, you make two people happy at once.'

'Of course there are boundaries, since this should not happen at the expense of yourself. When you give away more than you can miss, you will not be happy anymore.'

'Who knows a nice good deed we could do this week? Who did something kind to someone recently?'

You can give by doing chores at home like washing the dishes or by drinking tea with a lonely neighbour. Possibilities are endless and maybe during lunchtime you will think about giving something to someone!'

Sources: Post, 2005. Algoe & Haidt, J. 2009.

Lyobomirsky, S. 2008.

Write a postcard and give it away

Time: 20 minutes

Materials: Colored paper cut in postcard size. Make sure you have more than enough of them.

Aim: Participants give something positive to themselves. They share happiness with someone else and notice how this makes them feel.

Execution: Trainer tells: 'Finally we will write a postcard to ourselves. What did you learn during this workshop and what would you like to say to yourself for whenever you feel sad? When you are sad you can read this postcard and hopefully you'll feel better.'

'We will also write a kind postcard to someone else you want to be kind to. This could be someone at home, in your class or you can even leave it on a bench outside to have a stranger find it.' This is an exercise children really like. Most children will want to write a lot of post cards.

Sources: Post, 2005. Algoe & Haidt, J. 2009.
Lyobomirsky, S. 2008.

End

Time: 10 minutes

Aim: Let the participants cool down and let the trainer get insight in how the children experienced the workshop.

Make the participants remember the things they learned better by talking about it again.

Execution: The trainer asks the participants to grade their happiness again. If the grade went up. The trainer reached his goal. The trainer thanks all the children for their participation and asks a few children how the children experienced it, what they have learned and if they will use something from the course in day to day life. The trainer also asks for feedback on the workshop. So he/she can make it even more fun and insightful for the children the next time!



Extra exercises

Gossip

Time: 5 minutes

Aim: Participants understand that gossip will also hurt yourself.

Execution: Trainer tells: 'Who of you likes to gossip? Gossiping says more about yourself than about someone else.'

A child will be asked to come forward and read a note with a negative gossip about someone imaginary, like: 'Jacob is stupid. He never says anything in class.' Another child will come forward and says something kind: 'Jacob is really nice.'

The trainer asks the group how they liked both children. 'Who would you trust? Who seems most kind?'

Conclusion: Gossip will hurt yourself! You should say kind things.

Mirror

Time: 2 minutes

Aim: Show children that you will get back what you radiate.

Material: Mirror

Execution: Trainer asks: 'Who ever looks in the mirror? What happens when you smile? What happens when you look angry?' The trainer will make the mirror go round in the class. So the children can look in it and experience this insight.

Conclusion: 'You will see a happy face or an angry face. Often the feeling you radiate works contagious. When you radiate friendliness, others will be more friendly to you. Think about this: What do you usually radiate yourself?'

Sunshine of the day/week

Time: 10 minutes

Aim: Participants are friendly to each other and giving the other participant insight in his/her talents.

Preparation: Cut strokes from yellow paper. These will become the sun-rays. Every participant gets one. Also cut a circle from the yellow paper. This will be the sun itself.

Execution: Someone in the class will be chosen to become the sunshine of the day/week. His/her name will be written on the sun. The other children will be asked to write a compliment on the sun-rays.

Afterwards all the sun-rays will be added to the sun.

Exercise by: Stephanie de Jong



Interesting ideas

Playing outside

The Finnish schoolsystem is the best performing school system in Europe. In Finland children have lessons of 45 minutes and after each lesson a 15 minutes break. They also just get three or four lessons a day. Exactly because this alternation it seems that children are better at reminding things. Even though children seem less efficient when they are playing outside because they are not actively working with the things they learned. The learning and reminding happens passively.

There are many positive effects of going outside. Because of movement the brains and physiology of children will be more developed. Playing outside also helps children get a better spacial awareness. In short: Playing outside is not just fun for children. It also indirectly helps children remind more and perform better.

Source: <https://www.mieras.nl/schrijven/buitentijd-leertijd/>

Energizers for when energy is low:

Time: 5 minutes per energizer

Aim: Raise the energy levels of the participants.

Different characters

The trainer says something and the children will imitate. For example: everyone is grumpy, or very happy, everyone is a mouse, or an old man, or a formula 1 driver. All children can walk around the classroom when playing their character.

Walking and standing still

The children all walk around in the classroom and together they will decide without talking when to stand still.

Toss a ball

The children toss a ball to each other. When you get it, you will have to name something you're grateful for as quick as possible.

Expression

The children stand in a circle. The first person starts with a sentence that expresses a feeling. For example, if this feeling is enthusiasm, the person could say: 'I'm excited to do this'. The next people will repeat the sentence, but with more expression every time it is repeated. You continue until all the children in the circle have said the sentence.

Inspiring stories

I found these stories multiple times at different locations on the internet. I think the morals of some of them are phenomenal and I personally really believe in the power of stories. I do not own any of these and I don't know their real sources. If you happen to know them, be sure to let me know!

The Donkey

Once there were an old man, a boy and a donkey. They were going to town and the boy was riding the donkey, with the old man walking alongside.

As they rambled along, they passed some old women sitting in the shade. One of the women called out, "Shame on you, a great lump of a boy, riding while your old father is walking."

The man and boy decided that maybe the critics were right so they changed positions.

Later they ambled by a group of mothers watching their young children play by the river. One cried out in protest, "How could you make your little boy walk in the hot sun while you ride!"

The two travellers decided that maybe they both should walk. Next they met some young men out for a stroll.

"How stupid you are to walk when you have a perfectly good donkey to ride!" one yelled derisively.

So both father and son clambered onto the donkey, deciding they both should ride.

They were soon settled and underway again. They next encountered some children who were on their way home from school.

One girl shouted, "How mean to put such a load on a poor little animal." The old man and the boy saw no alternative. Maybe the critics were right. They now struggled to carry the donkey.

The father pushed the donkey a handful of straw into his mouth and laid his hand on his son's shoulder. "Regardless of what we do," he said, "there is someone who does not agree. I think we just need to decide what we think is right."

Socrates and the three filters

One day, a student came up to the great greek philosopher. "Socrates, I have just heard some news about one of your friends." he excitedly exclaimed. "Before you tell me this news, we need to make sure that it passes the triple filter test," responded Socrates.

"What's the triple filter test?" the man asked.

"The first test is that of **truth**. Tell me, do you know that what you're going to tell me is absolutely true?" asked Socrates.

After thinking for a moment, the man said, "I heard this news from someone else, so I'm not 100% sure if it's true."

"The second test is that of **goodness**," Socrates continued, "Is what you're about to tell me something good?"

"No, actually it's the opposite..."

Socrates interrupted the man, "So what you're going to tell me is neither true, nor good?"

The man was slightly embarrassed and shrugged his shoulders.

Socrates continued, "There is one final test which is **usefulness**. Is what you're about to tell me going to be useful?"

"Probably not," the man replied.

"Well, if you're going to tell me something that's not true, good or useful, then why tell me at all?" responded the philosopher.

The next time you gossip, pass the information through the triple filter test to see if you really should be telling others.

The art of letting go

A senior monk and a junior monk were traveling together. At one point, they came to a river with a strong current. As the monks were preparing to cross the river, they saw a very young and beautiful woman also attempting to cross. The young woman asked if they could help her cross to the other side.

The two monks glanced at one another because they had taken vows not to touch a woman.

Then, without a word, the older monk picked up the woman, carried her across the river, placed her gently on the other side, and carried on his journey.

The younger monk couldn't believe what had just happened. After rejoining his companion, he was speechless, and an hour passed without a word between them.

Two more hours passed, then three, finally the younger monk could contain himself any longer, and blurted out "As monks, we are not permitted a woman, how could you then carry that woman on your shoulders?"

The older monk looked at him and replied, "Brother, I set her down on the other side of the river, why are you still carrying her?"

The story of the stonecutter

“There was once a stonecutter who was dissatisfied with himself and with his position in life. One day the king passed by, carried in a sedan chair, accompanied by attendants and escorted by soldiers beating gongs. Everyone, no matter how wealthy, had to bow low before the procession. “How powerful that king is!” he thought. “I wish that I could be a king!”

Then he became the king, carried everywhere in his embroidered sedan chair. It was a hot summer day, so the king felt very uncomfortable in the sticky sedan chair. He looked up at the sun. It shone proudly in the sky, unaffected by his presence. “How powerful the sun is!” he thought. “I wish that I could be the sun!”

Then he became the sun, shining fiercely down on everyone, scorching the fields, cursed by the farmers and laborers. But a huge black cloud moved between him and the earth, so that his light could no longer shine on everything below. “How powerful that storm cloud is!” he thought. “I wish that I could be a cloud!”

Then he became the cloud, flooding the fields and villages, shouted at by everyone. But soon he found that he was being pushed away by some great force, and realized that it was the wind. “How powerful it is!” he thought. “I wish that I could be the wind!”

Then he became the wind, blowing tiles off the roofs of houses, uprooting trees, feared and hated by all below him. But after a while, he ran up against something that would not move, no matter how forcefully he blew against it – a huge, towering rock. “How powerful that rock is!” he thought. “I wish that I could be a rock!”

Then he became the rock, more powerful than anything else on earth. But as he stood there, he heard the sound of a hammer pounding a chisel into the hard surface, and felt himself being changed. “What could be more powerful than I, the rock?” he thought.

He looked down and saw far below him the figure of a stonecutter. He wished for himself to be this stonecutter. Once he became the stonecutter he had learned his lesson. The rest of his life he lived in peace, enjoying his life, just the way things were.’

The House of 1000 Mirrors

Long ago in a small, far away village, there was a place known as the House of 1000 Mirrors. A small, happy little dog learned of this place and decided to visit. When he arrived, he bounced happily up the stairs to the doorway of the house. He looked through the doorway with his ears lifted high and his tail wagging as fast as it could. To his great surprise, he found himself staring at 1000 other happy little dogs with their tails wagging just as fast as his. He smiled a great smile, and was answered with 1000 great smiles just as warm and friendly. As he left the house, he thought to himself, "This is a wonderful place. I will come back and visit it often."

In this same village, another little dog, who was not quite as happy as the first one, decided to visit the house. He slowly climbed the stairs and hung his head low as he looked into the door. When he saw the 1000 unfriendly looking dogs staring back at him, he growled at them and was horrified to see 1000 little dogs growling back at him. As he left, he thought to himself, "That is a horrible place, and I will never go back there again."

Judgement

A farmer and his son had a beloved stallion who helped the family earn a living. One day, the horse ran away and their neighbors exclaimed, "Your horse ran away, what terrible luck!"

The farmer replied, "Maybe so, maybe not. We'll see."

A few days later, the horse returned home, leading a few wild mares back to the farm as well. The neighbors shouted out, "Your horse has returned, and brought several horses home with him. What great luck!"

The farmer replied, "Maybe so, maybe not. We'll see."

Later that week, the farmer's son was trying to break one of the mares and she threw him to the ground, breaking his leg. The villagers cried, "Your son broke his leg, what terrible luck!"

The farmer replied, "Maybe so, maybe not. We'll see."

A few weeks later, soldiers from the national army marched through town, recruiting all the able-bodied boys for the army. They did not take the farmer's son, still recovering from his injury. Friends shouted, "Your boy is spared, what tremendous luck!" To which the farmer replied, "Maybe so, maybe not. We'll see."

The Mexican fisher

An American investment banker was at the pier of a small coastal Mexican village when a small boat with just one fisherman docked. Inside the small boat were several large yellowfin tuna. The American complimented the Mexican on the quality of his fish and asked how long it took to catch them. The Mexican replied, "only a little while. The American then asked why didn't he stay out longer and catch more fish? The Mexican said he had enough to support his family's immediate needs. The American then asked, "but what do you do with the rest of your time?"

The Mexican fisherman said, "I sleep late, fish a little, play with my children, take siestas with my wife, Maria, stroll into the village each evening where I sip wine, and play guitar with my amigos. I have a full and busy life."

The American scoffed, "I am a Harvard MBA and could help you. You should spend more time fishing and with the proceeds, buy a bigger boat. With the proceeds from the bigger boat, you could buy several boats, eventually you would have a fleet of fishing boats. Instead of selling your catch to a middleman you would sell directly to the processor, eventually opening your own cannery. You would control the product, processing, and distribution. You would need to leave this small coastal fishing village and move to Mexico City, then LA and eventually New York City, where you will run your expanding enterprise."

The Mexican fisherman asked, "But, how long will this all take?"

To which the American replied, "15 - 20 years."

"But what then?" Asked the Mexican.

The American laughed and said, "That's the best part. When the time is right you would announce an IPO and sell your company stock to the public and become very rich, you would make millions!"

"Millions - then what?"

The American said, "Then you would retire. Move to a small coastal fishing village where you would sleep late, fish a little, play with your kids, take siestas with your wife, stroll to the village in the evenings where you could sip wine and play your guitar with your amigos."

Sources

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