

**Two Most Important Days:  
Reflections on Happiness  
and  
Living with Purpose**

**Sanjiv Chopra, M.D., MACP**

**Professor of Medicine  
Harvard Medical School**

**Editor in Chief Hepatology Section  
Up To Date**

**Marshall Wolf Master Clinician Educator  
Brigham and Women's Hospital**



**Happiness:** The sensation of feeling good, being pleased, an internal experience in which the good will is expressed outwardly, extending the positive feeling towards others.

**Joy:** Experience of extreme happiness, euphoria, a temporary but intense and exuberant sensation.

**Bliss:** The experience of intense joy, anchored by a sense of connectedness with others and with nature (perfect **happiness**, great **joy**)

# Happiness

## Meaningful Experiences Surpass Expensive Possessions



**HARVARD**  
MEDICAL SCHOOL

# Future, Present, and Past

- Anticipating an upcoming vacation
- While on vacation, being in the present and enjoying every moment
- Reminiscing about a meaningful experience from the vacation: awe of natural beauty, connectedness with friends, laughter

## **Lottery winners...**

What happens to them a year later?

## **Spinal cord injury and paraplegics...**

What happens to them a year later?

I'm not living the life I thought I would lead...but it does have meaning, purpose. There is love. There is joy, there is laughter.

**Christopher Reeve**



# Joy

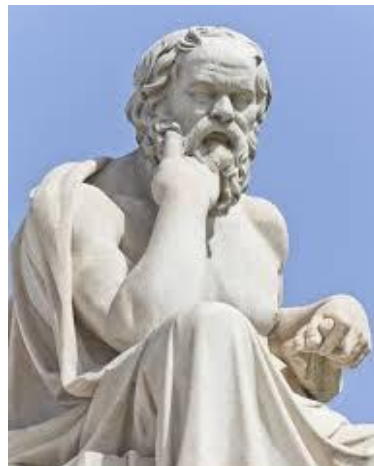
I slept and dreamt that life was joy.  
I awoke and saw that life was service.  
I acted and behold, service was joy.



Rabindranath Tagore

# Socrates (469 – 399 BC)

- Claimed that his wisdom and insights arose merely in “knowing that he knew nothing.”
- Argued that **happiness** is not just bestowed on a select few but could actually be begotten by human endeavor.
- **Happiness** and virtue are inextricably linked.
- Eudaimonia in Greek means “human flourishing”

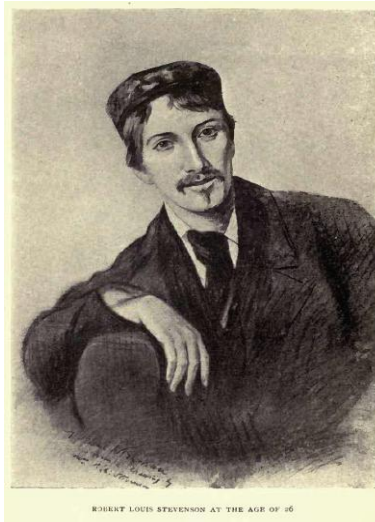




# Traits of Happy People

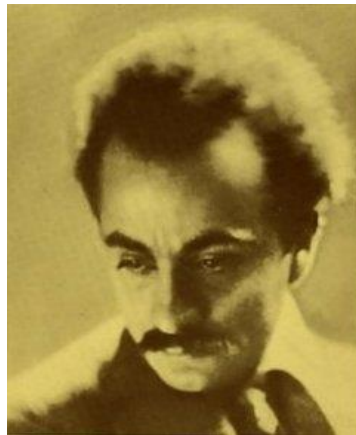
1. Happy people have a cadre of good **Friends**  
(chosen family).

**“A friend is a gift you give yourself.”**



Robert Louis Stevenson

**Friendship is always a sweet responsibility, never an opportunity.**



Khalil Gibran

# The Happiness Grant Study

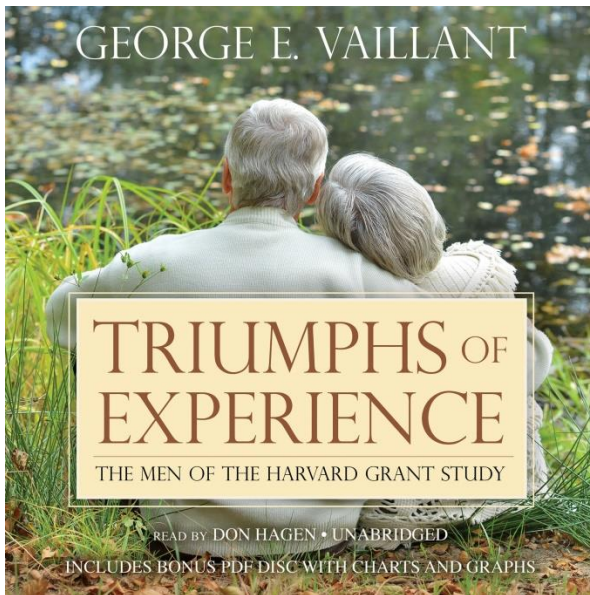
**75 years in the making and still ongoing...**

- Social connectedness brings forth joy
- Close relationships equate with health, longevity, and happiness
- Satisfaction with relationship at age 50 are correlated with health and happiness at age 80

George Valiant

Triumph of Experience 2012

# The Longest Study on Happiness



**What makes a good life? Lessons from the longest study on happiness.**

**Robert Waldinger MD**

**TED Talk**

# Traits of Happy People

2. Happy people have the ability to **Forgive**.

# You Can't Be Happy if You Harbor Resentment

- When asked if he harbored resentment against his captors, Nelson Mandela, who had been imprisoned for 27 years, answered:

*Resentment is like drinking poison  
and then hoping it will kill your enemies.*



**“As I walked out the door toward the gate that would lead to my freedom, I knew if I didn't leave my bitterness and hatred behind, I'd still be in prison.”**





## A Third Trait

I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I am certain of. The ones amongst you who will be truly happy are those who have sought and found how to serve.

Albert Schweitzer



# The Three F's for Being Happy

Friends

Forgiveness

For others

# Three F's But **G**, There is a Fourth

## **G**ratITUDE

The word gratitude is derived from the Latin root *gratia* meaning grace, graciousness, or gratefulness.

Gratitude is a highly prized tenet in Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist teachings.

I am defining gratitude as the experience of something positive gained, coupled with the realization that someone else was responsible for that gain.

I strongly believe that gratitude and compassion can be cultivated.

## **Sister 1 (low positive emotion)**

*With God's grace, I intend to do my best for our order, for the spread of religion and for my personal satisfaction.*

## **Sister 2 (high positive emotion)**

*The past year has been a very happy one. Now I look forward with eager joy to receiving the Holy Habit of Our Lady and to a life of union with Love Divine.*

# Positive Emotions in Early Life and Longevity: Findings from the Nun Study

Handwritten autobiographies from 180 Catholic nuns (at mean age of 22 years) was scored for emotional content and related to survival during ages 75-95. *Positive emotional content in early-life autobiographies was strongly associated with longevity 6 decades later.*

Danner DD, et al.

Journal of Personality and Social Psychology;  
Volume 80:5;2001

**2.9013**

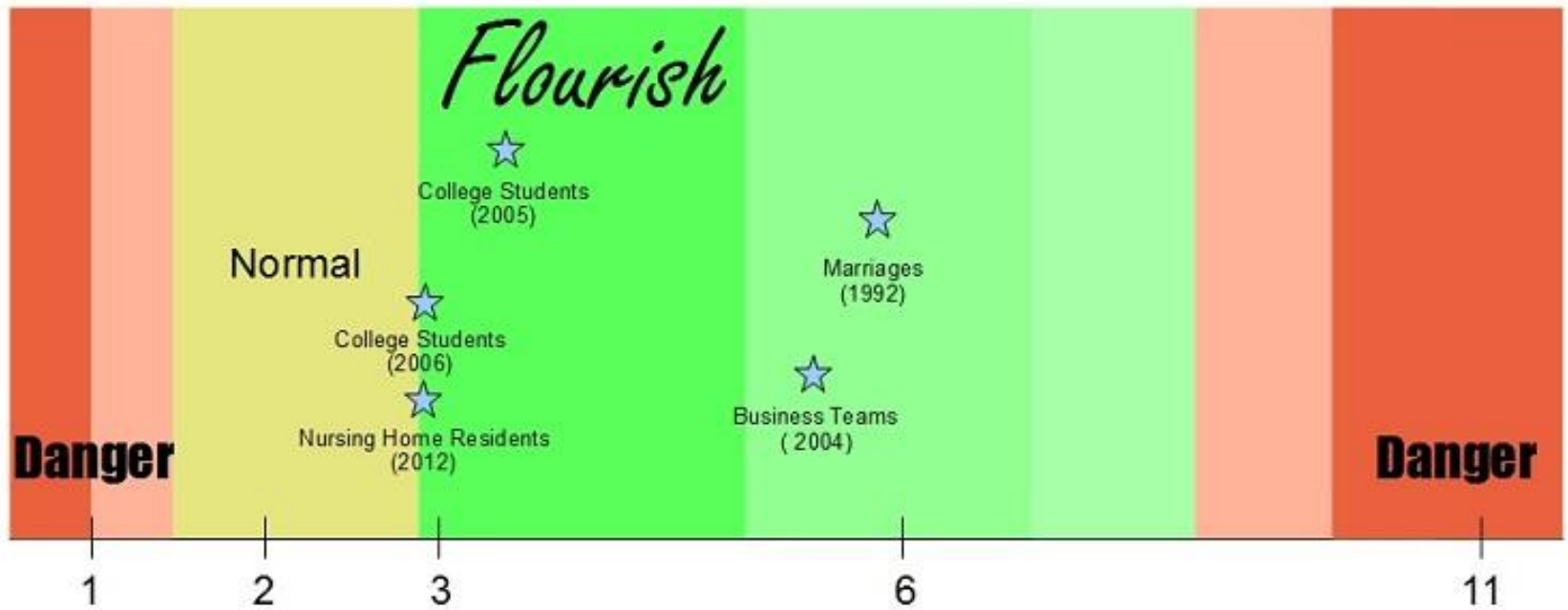
# **Losada Ratio**

# The Power of Positivity: The Losada Ratio

Marcial Losada's research led to the Losada Ratio which refers to the ratio of positive expressions to negative expressions.

This ratio has been found to be highly predictive of success as judged by metrics such as profitability.

A ratio between 3 to 6 has been shown to be beneficial (greater positivity is required to counter the weighted power of negativity).

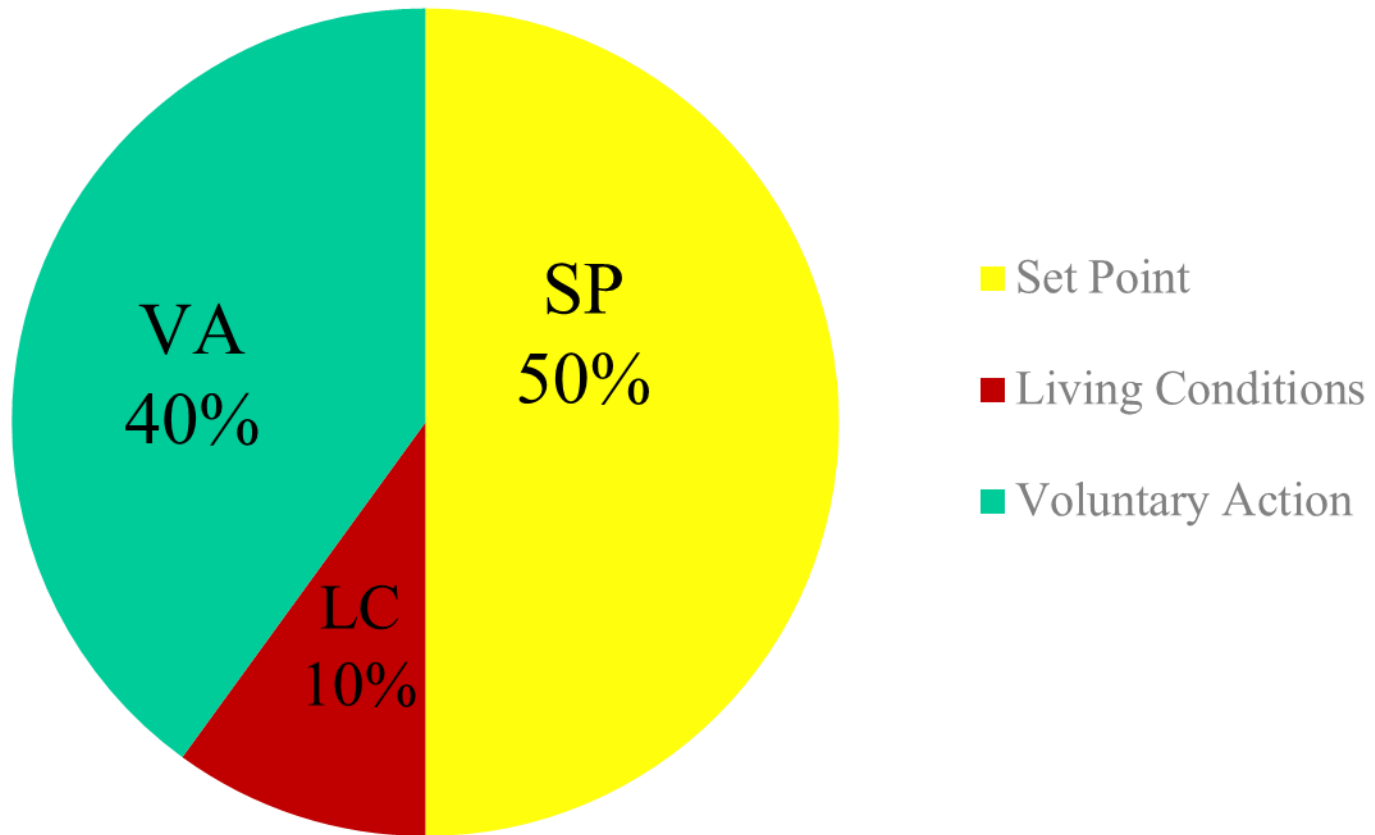




## Ancient Reflections and Emerging Science About Gratitude and Happiness

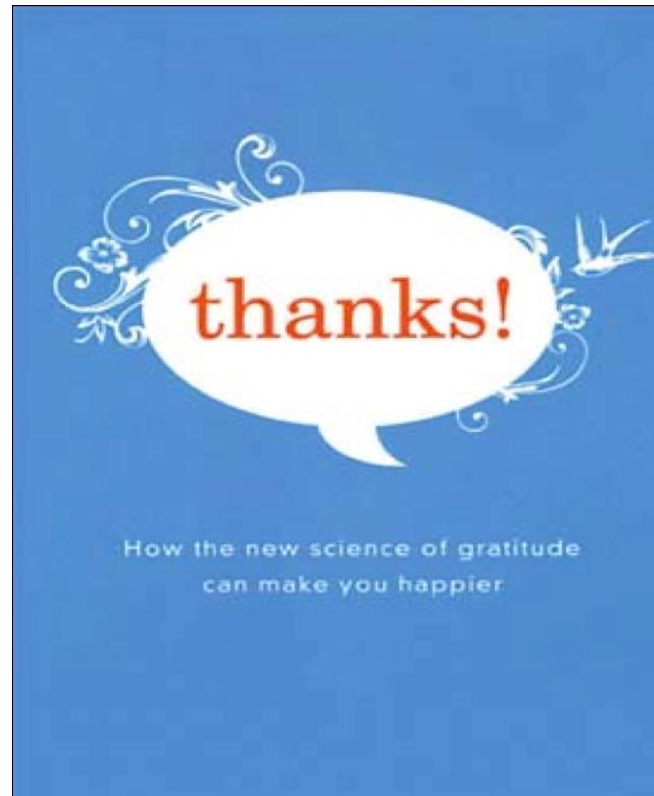
- Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all the others. **Cicero**
- To speak gratitude is courteous and pleasant, to enact gratitude is generous and noble, but to live gratitude is to touch heaven. **Johannes A. Gaertner**

# The Happiness Formula



**This formula is dynamic and fluid**

# People Who Regularly Practice Grateful Thinking Can Increase Their “Set-Point” for Happiness by 25%



Robert A. Emmons, Ph.D.

Transform Your Culture and Talent into a Competitive Advantage!

*"Eric and Derek offer practical guidance on how to create  
a company culture that feeds our true motivators."*

Daniel H. Pink, bestselling author of  
*"Drive and To Sell Is Human"*

# THE POWER OF THANKS

How Social Recognition Empowers Employees  
and Creates a Best Place to Work

ERIC MOSLEY & DEREK IRVINE



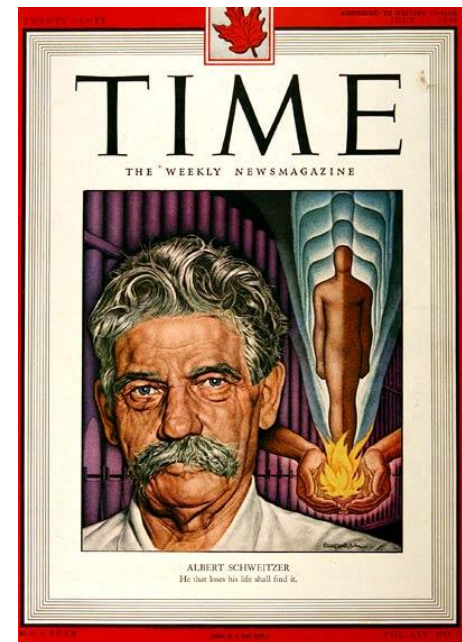
**HARVARD**  
MEDICAL SCHOOL

**Happiness cannot be pursued; it must ensue ...  
as the unintended side-effect  
of one's personal dedication to a cause  
greater than one's self.**



**Victor Frankl**

Success is not the key to happiness.  
Happiness is the key to success.



# What is Happiness?

## The Wisdom of Children

- Mommy, it's when my heart feels bigger. (**5 year old girl**)
- Daddy, I am most happy when sharing my toys with my friends. (**3 year old boy**)

# John Lennon, Age 5 Goes to School





Teacher gives an assignment to the kids: Write down what you want to be when you grow up.

John writes: **Happy** and hands the paper to the teacher

The teacher says: **John, you did not understand the assignment.**

John Lennon replies: **And you don't understand life**

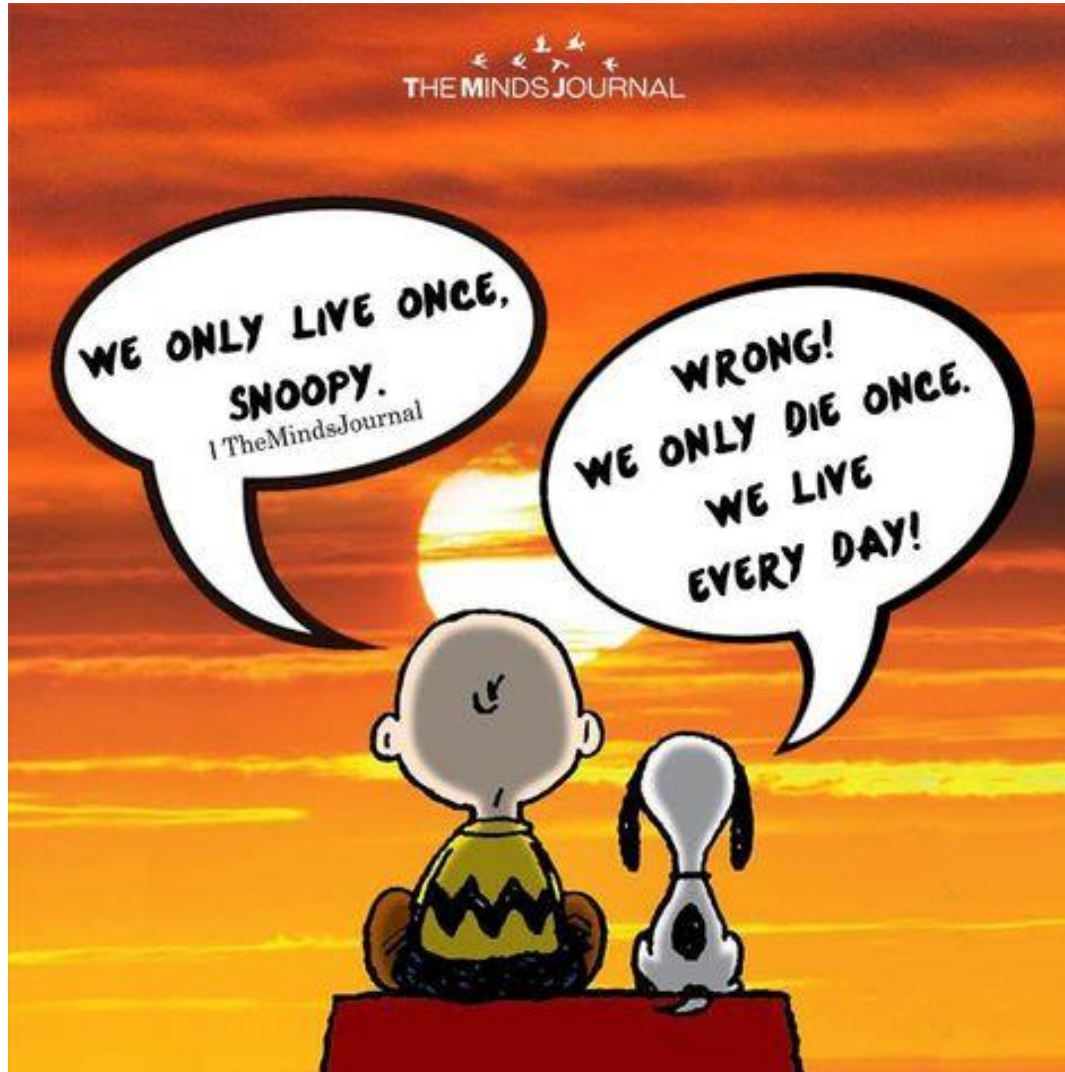
Just as I consider children to be modern day philosophers. We can also learn immeasurably from the wisdom of beloved cartoon and fictional characters.

THE MINDS JOURNAL

WE ONLY LIVE ONCE,  
SNOOPY.

! TheMindsJournal

WRONG!  
WE ONLY DIE ONCE.  
WE LIVE  
EVERY DAY!



HARVARD  
MEDICAL SCHOOL

If you live to be a hundred,  
I want to live to be a hundred minus one day  
**So I never have to live without you.**



# Thorns, Buds and Roses





# iPhone 5S

with **iOS 7**

Question to Siri: What is the secret of happiness?

Siri: It is unequivocally chocolate !

## Sign in a Chocolate Shop in Rochester, MN



Money can't buy happiness but it can buy chocolate,  
which is kinda like happiness



## Amongst the Happiest Countries (2013)

Denmark

Norway

Australia

Bhutan

Austria

Costa Rica

Singapore

Switzerland

Sweden

Canada

Iceland

New Zealand

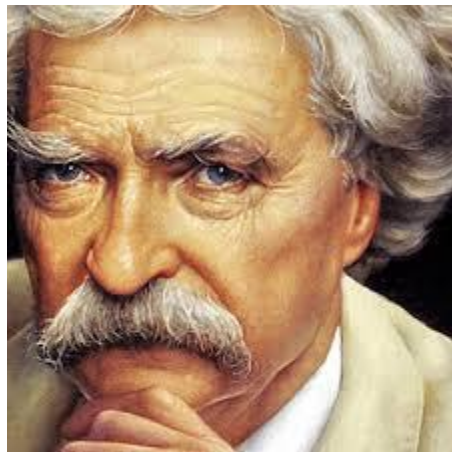
# Hygge Denmark



- Informal gathering of friends.
- In a setting that is cozy, comfortable and convivial.

# Living With Purpose

**The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why.**



**Mark Twain**

## Defining Your Purpose Can Come by Reflecting on it or By Virtue of a Key Moment in your Life

Great leaders often reflect on key events in their life or a single transformative or ‘magical’ moment. The moment can be jolting and starkly negative, yet it is momentous.

From it emerges a burning desire to have a laser-like focus and passion to make that dream a reality.

# Experiencing Sorrow Has Its Own Reward

**Most of us will experience sorrow.**

**When you experience the abyss of sorrow and emerge stronger and with a clear purpose, you will have triumphed.**

# One Can Find A Purpose in the Most Horrific Circumstances

**“We who lived in concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms – to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one’s own way.”**



**Victor Frankl**

“Every life has a measure of sorrow.  
Sometimes it is this that awakens us.”



**Buddha**





Papa Jaime

“Follow your bliss and  
doors will open where  
there were no doors  
before.”



**Joseph Campbell**

Some of you have undoubtedly heard of this remarkable individual.



**Jose Antonio Abreu**

# El Sistema

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_43tqQhOTCgQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_43tqQhOTCgQ)



**HARVARD**  
MEDICAL SCHOOL

# The Story of El Sistema



I should have said, “I love you,” more often.

I should have had the courage to pursue my dreams and aspirations.

I should have traveled more.

I should have been the bigger person and said, “I am sorry.”

I should have spent more time with my friends.

**Who says this?**

**This Young Lady is 16 Years Old.  
Do you know her name and what she stands for?**



**Greta Thunberg**

- Political Activist seeking to stop Global Warming and Climate Change
- She has spoken at TED x Stockholm
- She has addressed the UN Climate Change Conference
- She was invited to talk to the World Economic Forum at Davos
- Youth Climate Strikes held in 100 Countries on Friday March 15, 2019



**Greta Thunberg**





Adults keep saying we owe it to the young people, to give them **hope**,” **Thunberg** said, “But I don’t want your **hope**. I don’t want you to be **hopeful**.

I want you **to panic**. I want you to **feel the fear** I feel every day. I want you **to act**. I want you to act as you would in a crisis. **I want you to act as if the house is on fire, because it is.**”

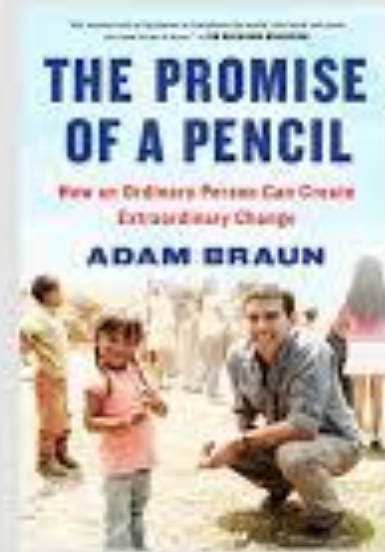
# Another Young Person who has found her Purpose

**Unite For Sight:**

**As a Yale Pre-Med student, Jennifer Staple was shocked to see so many cases of preventable blindness.**



**Jennifer Staple**  
Unite For Sight



# **If You Could Have One Wish What Would You Wish For ?**

- To dance (8 year old girl)
- For my mother to get better, hold my hand and take me to school (8 year old girl)
- A pencil

# **No, No, You Don't Understand You Can Wish for Anything in the World !**

- To dance
- To hold my mother's hand and go to school
- A pencil

## PoP Founded With \$25.

- **200 schools** built across Africa, Asia and Latin America
- **15 million educational hours** delivered to children in poverty

# Have you heard of the Starfish Parable?



## My Purpose in Life

To fulfill my Dharma to teach Medicine,  
about Leadership and Happiness.

To do it grounded in humility, and with  
an ardent desire to learn every single day.

To express gratitude to my family,  
friends, colleagues, students and patients  
who inspire me in countless ways.

And in some small measure inspire  
everyone I meet on this amazing life  
journey.





I invite you to reflect on what gives you the greatest **joy** and resonates for you.

Take a few minutes now, or later, and reflect on **Your Purpose** and write it down.

You may wish to share it with your closest family members and your closest friends.

It is my fervent hope that you will find lasting **happiness** and **it will light up every day of your life.**