

# Free happiness

 By [Erik Du Plessis](#), issued by [Kantar](#)

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Did you know that the United Nations declared 20 March as International Happiness Day? Are you doing something special? Is your company doing something special?

It has been shown that neither wealth, nor health nor relationships cause happiness. In fact, happiness causes good health, wealth and good relationships. For companies, it is also true that happy staff are productive staff.

Pursuing happiness is a fundamental human goal.

*In psychology, happiness is a mental or emotional state of well-being which can be defined by, among others, positive or pleasant emotions ranging from contentment to intense joy. Happy mental states reflect judgements by a person about their overall well-being.*

**From a marketing perspective:** all successful brands are positioned as creating happiness, and actually delivering on that promise. When a consumer buys a brand, the consumer is actually buying future happiness.

**From a neuroscience perspective:** in all our observations (e.g. sight), the process of interpretation starts in the hind brain and proceeds to the frontal lobes. As it passes through the mid-brain the brain knows what the developing perception is, based on memories, and here the memory of how one feels about it (emotion) is added. When it reaches the frontal lobes one knows what it is and also how one feels about it (or, more importantly, how it is likely to make one feel).

**From a neuro-chemical perspective:** Happiness is a mood, or rather a state of mind. Your mood is largely set by the chemical state of your brain (mainly by the neurotransmitters: dopamine and serotine). People influence the chemical state of their brain by smoking, consuming caffeine or alcohol, listening to music, exercise, etc. One's thoughts are actually the main influencer of the chemical state of your brain.

**From a consumer behaviour perspective:** When a consumer sees a brand on the shelf the process of interpreting what one sees starts in the hind-brain. As the process passes through the mid-brain the memory of past emotional experiences (or advertising promises) is added to the interpretation. When this reaches the frontal lobes the consumer not only knows what the brand is, but also how it is likely to make him feel when he consumes it – will it make me happy?

**From a market research perspective:** It is important to measure how people believe they will feel when they consume the brand. In other words: what is the happiness potential of the brand.

**From a neuromarketing research perspective:** the mid-brain reaction happens pre-consciousness and becomes an important part of the decision-making process. This can be measured and should be measured. It is important to note that once the perception reaches the frontal lobe the consumer might change what he thinks about the brand (by some logical process) and then it becomes difficult for him to report on what the initial emotional response by the mid-brain was.

**From a human resources perspective:** The main objective of the HR department is to create a happy atmosphere for companies.

**From a personal perspective:** Happiness is a choice. You can choose to be happy or not. You influence the state of your mind (mood) by what you do, and especially what you think. I was going to include a quote, but the web is full of quotes: go to [https://www.google.com/search?q=happiness+is+a+choice+quotes&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwitidC-7NnZAhXIJsAKHThtDCEQ\\_AUICigB&biw=1536&bih=686](https://www.google.com/search?q=happiness+is+a+choice+quotes&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwitidC-7NnZAhXIJsAKHThtDCEQ_AUICigB&biw=1536&bih=686)

# Mi Happi Wall

All over the world organisations celebrate Happiness Day, mostly by the staff posting little notes on a happiness wall. These are notes about what makes them happy or what they do to make others happy. It is a simple exercise, but a powerful reminder.

The problem is that these events happen once a year and then are forgotten.

I wrote an app titled Mi Happi Wall which allows you, and your friends, to post events that make you happy every day. Just the process of thinking about what made you happy releases dopamine and affects your mood positively. It runs on your cell phone.

The app is free and self-explanatory: <http://happywall.azurewebsites.net/>

For pictures of happiness walls:

[https://www.google.com/search?biw=1536&bih=686&tbm=isch&sa=1&ei=\\_6afWpSIIYSbgAahqb-QDA&q=happiness+wall+&oq=happiness+wall+&gs\\_l=psy-ab.3..0l3j0i10k1l7.5730.8029.0.8751.15.10.0.0.0.0.332.1518.2-2j3.5.0....0...1c.1.64.psy-ab..12.1.317....0.3RZ3xEzsHDI#imgsrc=aRKe2LHhOqI9gM:](https://www.google.com/search?biw=1536&bih=686&tbm=isch&sa=1&ei=_6afWpSIIYSbgAahqb-QDA&q=happiness+wall+&oq=happiness+wall+&gs_l=psy-ab.3..0l3j0i10k1l7.5730.8029.0.8751.15.10.0.0.0.0.332.1518.2-2j3.5.0....0...1c.1.64.psy-ab..12.1.317....0.3RZ3xEzsHDI#imgsrc=aRKe2LHhOqI9gM:)

Video about happiness:

## ABOUT ERIK DU PLESSIS

Erik is the Chairman of Millward Brown (SA), Visiting Professor at the Copenhagen Business Schools unit of Neuro-Decisionmaking, Conference Speaker on matters of the brain, emotions, advertising and brand strategy, i.e. neuro-marketing...

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