

Resilience Boosters Starting with ABC

by Tania Sommerz

March 20,2020



THE SCIENCE OF HAPPINESS

The Science of happiness refers to a new field of social Science called Positive Psychology. This field operates from the premise that we have to acknowledge both the light and the dark sides of life¹. This means that a happy life also has painful moments that allow us to learn and live a growing experience. So if we try to define Happiness we will say that is the experience of the wholebeing. During difficult times like the ones we are living now, it is even more relevant to learn about the science of happiness. It helps to build resilience at a psychological, emotional and physical level.

I would like to share my notes from a webinar I took with Tal Ben-Shahar² called Resilience Boosters

- Starting with ABC:

- 1) A - Affect : emotions, feelings, heart
- 2) B- Behavior : actions, doing, body
- 3) C-Cognition: thoughts, reasoning, mind

Affect

1. ***Give yourself permission to be human*** is the foundation to a happy life. Allow all the emotions to flow. When you reject painful emotions , they will intensify. The more you think I can't be sad the more sad you will feel. It's better if we allow our emotions to flow in and let them out. All emotions go through the same pipeline, so if the pipeline is blocked with negative emotions we will not allow the positive ones to come up. So just let them flow!

What kind of techniques can we use to give ourselves permission to be human?

- Talk about your emotions - with friends, with a therapist, with someone you trust
- Write about your emotions. The important thing here is to express your feelings. You can start journaling for 5 - 15 minutes daily to let the painful emotions out.
- Cry, there's no need to hold it.

If we want to fulfill our potential to happiness we need to give permission to be unhappy.



-
2. **Express Gratitude.** There is research that validates that people who are grateful are happier, more generous, physically healthier, they are stronger psychologically and have a stronger immune system. Some ideas of how you can start with this practice:
- On a daily basis, try to find something to be grateful for. Even in the worse times we can be grateful, even if there are small things like a smile.
 - Share gratitude with others so you can see beyond your current situation.
 - Write a gratitude journal every day when you wake up or before sleeping write 3 things why you are grateful for.. Believe me it changes your perspective of the day and boosts your energy levels. If we are experiencing painful emotions we narrow our view, if we are grateful we expand this view.
 - Take time to appreciate people around you, but also those who are doing great things for us at this moment: doctors, nurses, supermarket employees, bus drivers, etc.



Behaviour

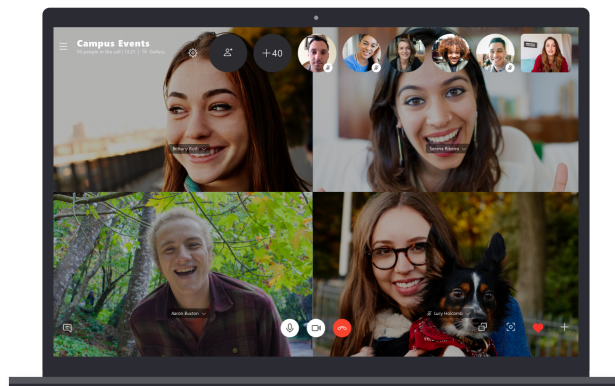
1. **Exercise regularly.** In stressful moments is when we should exercise the most. We have to be grateful we can keep doing it at home thanks to the thousands of options we have on the internet or social media. There is research that has validated that exercise is as effective as the psychiatric medication in dealing with depression, anxiety and stress as we produce dopamine and endorphins that help us with our emotional levels.

Not exercising is like taking a depressant (the opposite of anti-depressant!!! so please do not stop exercising there are plenty of options online!)



2. **Invest in relationships.** Based on research, the number one predictor of happiness is to spend time with people we care about and they care about us. Again, take advantage of technology and meet with family and friends online, have a daily ritual to engage with people you care about. Maybe you have not been in touch with friends in a long time, well, now you have plenty of time to catch up!

“Friendship doubles joy and cuts griefs in half” - Francis Bacon



Cognition

1. ***Distract yourself*** We are bombarded by bad news, currently our mind thinks that everything is terrible and given the mind-body connection affects everything. Nothing is really good or bad, but thinking makes it so. Make a daily ritual and try to disconnect for a set of time from the news and from all those whatsapp groups that are full of overwhelming news.

Here are few options of what you can do to help disconnect from those bad news:

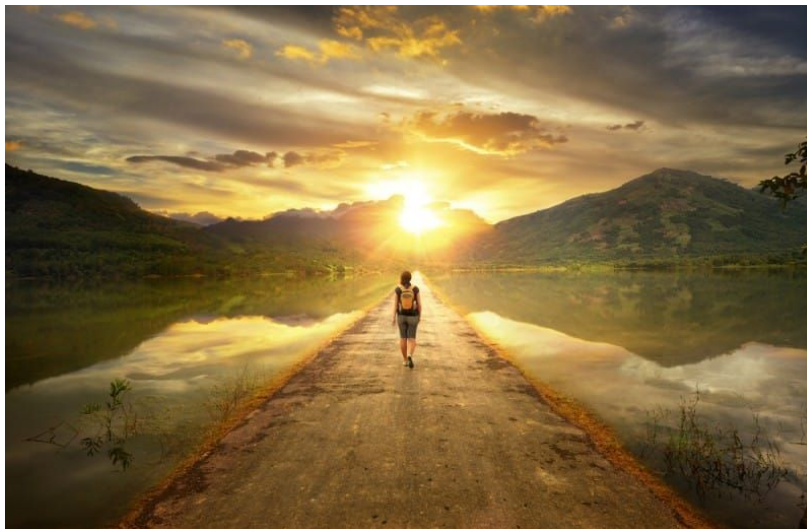
- Listen to music (the one you really like!)
- Meditation
- Read a poem
- Watch a funny TV Show
- Find healthy distractions
- Online learning is one of the best distractors and helps to increase wellness.
- Engage on single-tasking activities

Getting distracted helps to get a more realistic picture as media is magnifying glass of a piece of reality.



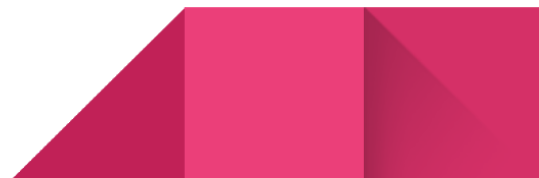
2. **Find benefits** Ask yourself what is in my world where I can benefit from this situation?

For example, I appreciate health, nature, a hug, more than I did before. Things not necessary happen for the best, but you can choose to make the best of things that happen. I truly believe this is a great opportunity to rethink the way we live, to start all those projects that were put on hold because of lack of time, to be grateful for everything we have. This is one of the best opportunities to grow as a person so make the best out of it. For that, you will need to spend time with yourself and go deep into your emotions and thoughts.



If we put in place these 6 tips, we are helping ourselves to be happier, stronger psychologically and physically and we will be, building resilience for this unique moment that we are living. And remember, cultivating happiness is not something you do only once in a while is about a consistent practice, especially during painful moments.

I hope you find this helpful and I wish you HAPPY INTERNATIONAL DAY OF HAPPINESS!



1 [What is the science of happiness?](#)

2 [Tal Ben-Shahar](#) - these are notes taken from Tal's webinar Resilience Booster Starting with ABC on March 20th 2020