

## **A Teacher for sustainable happiness**

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**“Teacher education programs need to produce professionals who not only teach sustainability themes but also can ‘pull together’ the various disciplinary strands that will give their students a holistic understanding of a sustainable future and the role of individuals, communities, and nations in a sustainable world. The development of this cadre of expertise will profoundly affect how rapidly nations will begin the move toward sustainability.”**

**—Rosalyn McKeown, Teaching and Learning for a Sustainable Future**

### **Abstract**

We are living in the era where everyone is concerned about the environment. Now a day’s society is concerned about the changes in the environment like global warming, acid rains, pollution, unseasonal rains, prolonged snowfall, earthquake, flood, drought etc. that are looming largely on the face of earth. To promote sustainable happiness among the society we have to save our natural resources and natural environment. “Promoting Education, Public Awareness and Training,” is one of the fronts with high potential for advancing sustainable development efforts; however, education alone will not move citizens and governments to create a more sustainable future. Many people and organizations must share the responsibility for more sustainable societies through good governance, enlightened policy, civic participation and commitment. Nevertheless, education is essential for moving toward a more sustainable future. We cannot imagine how the people of all nations could move toward a more sustainable world without the contribution of educators from around the globe. Educating for a more sustainable future in its broadest sense includes improving quality basic education, reorienting education to address sustainability, improving public awareness, and providing training to many sectors of society. All these will be possible only if we train our teacher for the sustainable happiness. In this paper we as author of this paper try to focus on the need of sustainable happiness, why we need teacher for sustainable happiness? How can teacher provide sustainable happiness to whole society? , How a teacher can be train for providing sustainable happiness?

## **A Teacher for Sustainable Happiness**

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### **Introduction:**

We are living in the era where everyone is concerned about the environment. Now a day's society is concerned about the changes in the environment like global warming, acid rains, pollution, unseasonal rains, prolonged snowfall, earthquake, flood, drought etc. that are looming largely on the face of earth. Twenty years ago, the Brundtland Commission published its report, *Our Common Future* (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987), which outlined concerns regarding the trajectory of development and the harmful impact of those development patterns for all life on the planet, including life that was yet to be born. It coined the now famous definition of sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (p. 24). By 1992, world leaders gathered in Rio de Janeiro at the Earth Summit, the first United Nations (UN) conference that combined issues of environment and development.

The 40-chapter Earth Summit document that emerged, *Agenda 21*(UN, 1993), presented challenges and plans for action around biodiversity, trade, debt, deforestation, poverty, education, agriculture, desertification, human settlements, consumption, and much more. There was a surge of optimism and activity in the wake of the Earth Summit. The concepts of sustainable development and sustainability became the subject of academic and political discourse, entering the rhetoric and politics of most nations, municipalities, and universities of the North and South. While progress has been made, shifts in policy and practice are far short of the transition.

To promote sustainable happiness among the society we have to save our natural resources and natural environment. "Promoting Education, Public Awareness and Training," is one of the fronts with high potential for advancing sustainable development efforts; however, education alone will not move citizens and governments to create a more sustainable future. Many people and organizations must share the responsibility for more sustainable societies through good governance, enlightened policy, civic participation and commitment. Nevertheless, education is essential for moving toward a more sustainable future. We cannot imagine how the people of all nations could move toward a more sustainable world without the contribution of educators from around the globe. Educating for a more sustainable future in its broadest sense includes improving quality basic education, reorienting education to address sustainability, improving public awareness, and providing

training to many sectors of society. All these will be possible only if we train our teacher for the sustainable happiness. In this paper we are focusing on the need of sustainable happiness, why we need teacher for sustainable happiness? How a teacher can be train for providing sustainable happiness?

### **Why we want sustainable happiness?**

We want sustainable happiness in our life and for the life of the others because at the dawn of a new millennium, the twenty-first century has brought us face to face with the awesome challenge and promise of a new, global age. In healthcare, the economy, the environment, and daily life, we and our fellow citizens the world over are caught in the grips of a crisis of global scale and inexorable scope that seems to threaten not just our dreams but our whole way of life. The problems we face as individuals, societies, and as a planet seem so complex and intertwined that the old adage, “In crisis lies opportunity,” seems hollow to many right now. Is there a thread that ties together the runaway cost of healthcare, the epidemic rise of obesity and school violence, the bursting of the latest financial bubble, and the present dangers of terrorism and global warming? If the challenges before us have no obvious precedent in our lifetimes or those of our forebears, where do we turn to find our way? We all know that when students are happy and engaged they learn well; that stress inhibits learning. We also know that a toxic learning environment is soul crushing for teachers and students. Research on happiness and well-being has been spearheaded by positive psychologists. They are investigating people and institutions that flourish, asking questions such as: What can we learn from happy people? What are the benefits of happiness? Can happiness skills be taught? Further supporting the argument that subjective happiness may be integral to mental and physical health, happy people are more likely to evidence greater self-control and self-regulatory and coping abilities (e.g., Aspinwall, 1998; Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002; Keltner & Bonanno, 1997), a bolstered immune system (e.g., Dillon, Minchoff, & Baker, 1985; Stone et al., 1994), and even to live a longer life (e.g., Danner, Snowdon, & Friesen, 2001; Ostir, Markides, Black & Goodwin, 2000). Also, happy people are not just self-centered or selfish – the literature suggests that happy individuals instead tend to be relatively more cooperative, pro-social, charitable, and other-centered (e.g., Isen, 1970; Kasser & Ryan, 1996; Williams & Shiaw, 1999). In sum, happy individuals appear more likely to be flourishing people, both inwardly and outwardly. Thus, we argue that enhancing peoples’ happiness levels may indeed be a worthy scientific goal, especially after their basic physical and security needs are met. For many effective happiness-enhancing activities, this will not be difficult, as the task will likely be inherently interesting or rewarding, and thus will be “autotelic” in nature (Deci & Ryan, 2000) – that is, self-reinforcing and self-sustaining. This is especially true to the extent that the person continually varies what he does.

## **Concept of sustainable happiness**

The concept of sustainable happiness was developed by O'Brien (2005) in order to draw attention to the consequences, both positive and adverse, of how individuals, communities and nations pursue happiness. In a globalized world, everyone's actions have repercussions on distant lands and people. Some impacts are immediate and short term while some have enduring effects. Thus, further aims of combining the two terms are: to link happiness to sustainability, now and into the future; to emphasize the reality of our mutual interdependence; and to generate discussion regarding the potential for making substantial contributions to sustainability efforts through research from happiness studies.

Sustainable happiness is a concept that can be used by individuals to guide their actions and decisions on a daily basis; at the community level, it reinforces the need to genuinely consider social, environmental and economic indicators of well-being so that community happiness and well-being are sustainable; at the national and international level it highlights the significance of individual and community actions for the well-being of all – now and into the future.

Sustainable happiness reinforces the fact that we are interconnected and interdependent with all life on the planet, even life that is yet to be born. It can also be used to foster sustainable behaviour. Our natural desire for happiness can become the entry point for discovering that our well-being is inextricably linked to the well-being of others and the natural environment.

In short Sustainable happiness is happiness that contributes to individual, community, and/or global well-being and does not exploit other people, the environment or future generations. Sustainable Happiness guides us into opportunities for creating a high quality of life that is both sustainable and doesn't have to cost the earth. Integrating Sustainable Happiness brings inner happiness and well-being to an exciting new level that has us jumping out of bed in the morning, ready to embrace the mystery of the day ahead.

## **Why we need teacher for sustainable happiness?**

Educating students for the values of sustainability is more than acquiring the knowledge related to environment, economy and society. It also addresses the skills, perspectives, and attitudes that motivate people to seek sustainable livelihoods, participate in a democratic society, and live in a sustainable manner. To foster the values of sustainability, pedagogical practices must reflect systems

thinking, inquiry, discovery and active learning in a supportive environment. It is important that students are engaged in decisions about their learning and their school community. And here the role of teacher is most important. It means teacher is the main element which educates the child about sustainable happiness through the curriculum and subject aspect.

### **Role of education in providing sustainable happiness:**

A considerable impediment for sustainability education is to move beyond raising individual awareness and toward fostering sustainable behaviour. This is particularly difficult in industrialized

Countries, where students and educators live in a social and cultural milieu of the consumer society with economic systems that are not sustainable. It is compounded by the fact that many students are spending more hours on the three screens (smartphone, and television) than they are in school (Leatherdale & Ahmed, 2011; Rideout et al., 2010) and media messages are likely to reinforce over consumption. Additionally, the tradition in environmental education has been to focus on “doom and gloom” messages. However, the aim of frightening the public into choosing more environmentally-friendly behaviours has not succeeded in shifting our unsustainable trajectory (Kelsey & O’Brien, 2011).

While the formal education sector has not traditionally taught “happiness” it has gradually started to embrace positive psychology with recommendations for creating “positive schools” (Joint Consortium for School Health, 2008; Morrison & Morrison, 2010) and “positive education” (Seligman, 2011). However, positive psychology and happiness research have not been integrated into public school curricula or teacher training despite the considerable merits of doing so (Conoley & Conoley, 2009; Seligman, 2011). A notable exception is the sustainable happiness course offered to education students at Cape Breton University in Canada (O’Brien, 2010a, 2012). Student teachers explore ways to enhance their own happiness and well-being while investigating how to contribute to the well-being of other people and the natural environment, sustainably. The course leads student teachers through applications of sustainable happiness both personally and professionally. This approach could be extended with graduate programs in education and positive psychology by offering courses or modules on sustainable happiness.

Education for the 21st century can promote positive education and positive schools by applying positive psychology in teacher education and contributing to curricula development. Students and society would benefit from greater attention to student wellness, illness prevention, and happiness skills for enhanced resilience (Seligman, 2011). This would be a progressive step forward

but still grossly insufficient to foster the massive shift in values and behaviour that are required to make a transition towards a more sustainable future—which ultimately impacts everyone’s well-being. Integrating positive psychology with sustainability education would introduce a comprehensive transformation in education, engaging students and teachers in a deep understanding of how to live and work, respecting their own well-being and the well-being of other people, other species, the natural environment, and future generations. It would assist students and educators to recognize that our well-being is interdependent and that our daily activities can contribute to, or detract from well-being. It would also permit students and educators to make informed decisions about policies that impact well-being.

**Teacher education and implication of positive psychology and sustainable happiness:**

An important place to begin is with teacher education. A seminal document on sustainability education, *Guidelines and Recommendations for Reorienting Teacher Education to Address Sustainability* (UNESCO, 2005) provides numerous recommendations that could be reviewed by positive psychologists and educators to consider further opportunities for developing positive education. **Table 1** outlines some possibilities to consider. It pairs recommendations for sustainability education with recommendations for incorporating positive psychology and sustainable happiness into teacher training.

**Table 1. Reorienting teacher education to sustainability, positive psychology, sustainable happiness and well-being.**

<b>Reorienting Teacher Education for Sustainability (UNESCO, 2005)</b>	<b>Positive Education and Sustainable Happiness</b>
Require interdisciplinary coursework on sustainability for student teachers and make materials available for student teachers on local and global sustainability issues.	Introduce student teachers to research in positive psychology and its relevance to their school and community and the subjects they will teach. Encourage systems thinking to integrate sustainability with positive psychology. E.g. how student well-being impacts learning; how individual well-being is interconnected with community well-being and the well-being of the natural environment.

<p>Demonstrate pedagogical techniques that foster higher-order thinking skills, support decision-making, involve participatory learning and stimulate formulation of questions</p>	<p>Critique existing pedagogical techniques to determine how they contribute to or detract from teacher and student well-being. e.g. are we building on student strengths? (Peterson &amp; Seligman, 2003; Seligman, 2011) Discuss teacher well-being, stress prevention and management. Model teaching practices, and assessments that contribute to well-being.</p>
<p>Emphasize to student teachers that citizenry in a sustainable community requires active participation and decision-making into their classroom procedure and curriculum.</p>	<p>Provide opportunities for student teachers to apply positive psychology to classroom management, teaching practice and assessment strategies. e.g. consider how to build on student strengths and reinforce positive behaviour; engage students in their own assessment and learning goals.</p>
<p>Discuss social equity (e.g. gender, racial, ethnic, and generational) with student teachers and identify ways in which the local community exhibits social tolerance, societal intolerance, equity, and discrimination.</p>	<p>Incorporate emerging research on social equity and well-being (e.g., how do we share the earth's resources equitably to enhance well-being?)</p>
<p>Request that student teachers analyse the mandated curriculum they will be teaching to identify topics and themes related to sustainability and those that are linked to local sustainability issues.</p>	<p>Guide student teachers to analyze the mandated curriculum they will be teaching to identify topics and themes related to individual, community and global well-being (review health education in particular). (See the Sustainable happiness and health education teacher's guide, O'Brien, 2010b).</p>
<p>Provide student teachers with opportunities to explore their own values and attitudes towards local sustainability problems and those of the surrounding region.</p>	<p>Provide opportunities for student teachers to apply positive psychology both personally and professionally. (See O'Brien, 2010a, 2012).</p> <p>Assist student teachers to explore their views of happiness and well-being, to develop a "happiness literacy" regarding the factors that influence them and their values about happiness.</p> <p>Encourage a critical analysis of current education practice, including program delivery, how</p>

	schools are built (location, materials, resource use, etc.).
Promote understanding of global sustainability in order to encourage critical thinking and decision-making that influence personal lifestyle and economic choices	Provide opportunities for student teachers to apply sustainable happiness both personally and professionally (synthesizing positive psychology with sustainability). Encourage student teachers to think critically about the role of education for sustainable happiness and well-being.
Develop specialized Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) programs for student teachers (e.g. mini-courses) with certificates of completion, so that student teachers can include them in their resumes for seeking employment. Promote graduates with ESD specializations, who are knowledgeable in ESD and its contribution to society.	Provide teacher education courses and professional development opportunities that apply positive psychology and sustainable happiness to education and educators.

**How a teacher can be trained for providing sustainable happiness?**

**Following is the model that the authors of the paper would like to propose for sustainable happiness.**

**Aspects to be looked into**

What is happiness? How it affects me? How it affects others? How it affects nature? What is true happiness? Does it come by more consumption of goods? Food? Clothes? Gadgets?

If my happiness is troubling others I need to rethink about it. Every unit should have a common element as reduce, reuse and recycle.

**I : need to be sustainably happy**

What makes an individual happy? The aspects related to the locus of control what he she can do comfortably and with little effort or challenge.

- Goal setting exercise vis a vis its impact on nature.



- Time limit to achieve the set goals and its impact on happiness and nature
- For this section one needs to work on the entire profile of the learner one's capacities that is strength and weakness. One also needs to study the type of personality that an individual is and also the kinds of intelligence that a person has. Likes dislikes roles and responsibilities the impact of roles and responsibilities on environment and its degradation. The activities in this segment must match to the needs and requirements of the learners. The activities must match with the different kinds of individuals and their ability to do a certain task at the same time challenging them.

What is the message that I give to myself? Apart from the school, house we must also keep our brain clutter free. We must also know how to deal with our emotions and know how to handle them so that we are more happier. Challenges also have to be within the manageable limits (each individual can set his/her challenge limits).

### **We : need to be sustainably happy**

Friends, colleagues and neighbours have to be collectively happy. Unhappiness can lead to lack of peace of mind, irrational behaviour, aggression and violence. The interaction of ' I ' with people around and group thinking and behaving requires to deal with a lot of social skills. Social skills can be developed in the environment of trust, love, respect and congeniality. Conscious effort needs to be put up in order to develop social skills and a feeling of 'we'. Group Games of various kinds are helpful in development of 'we' feeling. We feeling and other social skills can be developed through team discussions and development of various strategies but the scoring should be such that only those strategies and team win who have taken ample care of environmental issues in order to arrive at solutions. Various games can be organized and discussions on group relevant themes can be taken up. Caring, sharing, tolerance, acceptance of others ideas, waiting for turns, patience, assertion and aggression are developed through such games.

### **All of Us: need to be sustainably happy:**

#### **A state, between states and a nation.**

The happiness index developed by Bhutan has three main indicators 1. experience well being, 2. life expectancy and 3. ecological footprint. India on the happiness index is at 32. We as a team have to be alert and aware of the carbon footprint that we leave behind. This earth that we live in we have not inherited from our forefathers rather we have borrowed from our future. In terms of activities we will have to give the student teachers policies and laws that are there between two states. How is the

waste disposed? What is the impact of the action of one state on the environment on the other state? What is the impact on the other cities around it? What can the people do to work in this area of inter state? Whether it is sharing of electricity, water or any other aspects? How can it be mutually beneficial for both the states and nation as a whole? We all will have to develop a culture of recycle, reuse, reduce.

### **Global Village: entire globe needs to be sustainably happy**

The global issues are between two nations also require attention a sensitivity needs to be developed towards the people the impact of various climatic conditions and the effect of these climatic conditions on other people. How my actions as individual action and my consumption of a particular facility can have long lasting impact on the citizens of other countries. Sensitivity towards the culture of other people their geographical conditions, their lifestyles and the impact of environment on their current lifestyles.

### **Conclusion:**

A lot of awareness and alertness needs to be developed and encouraged in the new student teachers. The student teachers have to be sensitized from the level of I to we so all of us to the global level. Sensitized teachers will be able to produced sensitized citizens thus leading to sustainable happiness for the entire globe. The global issues are on continues rise that need not only our positive awareness but skills and action to deal with these issues. The issues gripping the nation are also varied, but it is well argued and researched that happy people can look outward the people who are not happy are to engrossed with themselves and unhappiness around them. So we need happy people so thrive and strive for sustainable happiness.

Sustainable happiness is a concept that needs to be researched in India in various types of schools so that we can develop teachers for sustainable happiness.

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