

## PERSON-ACTIVITY FIT DIAGNOSTIC

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### A. OVERVIEW by [Ed Batista](#), Executive Coach & Instructor, Stanford GSB

Dr. Sonja Lyubomirsky, a professor of psychology at UC Riverside, is the author of [The How of Happiness](#) (2008) and [The Myths of Happiness](#) (2014), among other works. Lyubomirsky's research suggests that we have the greatest ability to influence our level of happiness by engaging consistently in a set of small-scale, regular activities on a weekly or even daily basis. She has identified 12 such activities, shown below, ranging from "Counting your blessings" to "Taking care of your body."

However, note that no single activity is helpful for everyone, and it's important to engage in those activities that are best-suited to us as individuals. Lyubomirsky has devised this *Person-Activity Fit Diagnostic* to help choose the activities that are most likely to have a positive impact on our happiness, which depends on our personal assessment of the factors listed below.

Once you've determined the happiness activities that are likely to be the best fit for you, choose 2 or 3 to experiment with for a period of at least several weeks. For detailed guidance, see the books cited above, [my discussion of Lyubomirsky's first book](#) and [Lyubomirsky's site](#).

*Many thanks to Dr. Lyubomirsky for her permission to reproduce this instrument.*

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### B. INSTRUCTIONS

Please consider each of the following 12 happiness activities. Reflect on what it would be like to do it every week for an extended period of time. Then rate each activity by writing the appropriate number (1 to 7) next to the terms NATURAL, ENJOY, VALUE, GUILTY, and SITUATION.

People do things for many different reasons. Please rate why you might keep doing this activity, in terms of each of the following reasons. Use this scale:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Not at all</i>		<i>Somewhat</i>			<i>Very much</i>	

NATURAL: Because doing this activity will feel "natural" to me and I'll be able to stick with it.

ENJOY: Because I will enjoy doing it; I'll find it to be interesting and challenging.

VALUE: Because I value and identify with doing it; I'll do it freely even when it's not enjoyable.

GUILTY: Because I would feel ashamed, guilty, or anxious if I don't do it; I'll force myself.

SITUATION: Because somebody else wants me to, or because my situation will force me to.

### 1. Counting your blessings

Expressing gratitude for what you have (either privately – through contemplation or journaling – or to a close other) or conveying your appreciation to one or more individuals whom you’ve never properly thanked.

\_\_\_ NATURAL \_\_\_ ENJOY \_\_\_ VALUE \_\_\_ GUILTY \_\_\_ SITUATION

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### 2. Cultivating optimism

Keeping a journal in which you imagine and write about the best possible future for yourself, or practicing to look at the bright side of every situation.

\_\_\_ NATURAL \_\_\_ ENJOY \_\_\_ VALUE \_\_\_ GUILTY \_\_\_ SITUATION

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### 3. Avoiding overthinking and social comparison

Using strategies (such as distraction) to cut down on how often you dwell on your problems and compare yourself to others.

\_\_\_ NATURAL \_\_\_ ENJOY \_\_\_ VALUE \_\_\_ GUILTY \_\_\_ SITUATION

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### 4. Practicing acts of kindness

Doing good things for others, whether friends or strangers, either directly or anonymously, either spontaneously or planned.

\_\_\_ NATURAL \_\_\_ ENJOY \_\_\_ VALUE \_\_\_ GUILTY \_\_\_ SITUATION

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### 5. Nurturing relationships

Picking a relationship in need of strengthening, and investing time and energy in healing, cultivating, affirming, and enjoying it.

\_\_\_ NATURAL \_\_\_ ENJOY \_\_\_ VALUE \_\_\_ GUILTY \_\_\_ SITUATION

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### 6. Doing more activities that truly engage you

Increasing the number of experiences at home and work in which you “lose” yourself, which are challenging and absorbing.

\_\_\_ NATURAL \_\_\_ ENJOY \_\_\_ VALUE \_\_\_ GUILTY \_\_\_ SITUATION

## 7. Replaying and savoring life's joys

Paying close attention, taking delight, and going over life's momentary pleasures and wonders – through thinking, writing, drawing, or sharing with another.

\_\_\_ NATURAL \_\_\_ ENJOY \_\_\_ VALUE \_\_\_ GUILTY \_\_\_ SITUATION

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## 8. Committing to your goals

Picking one, two, or three significant goals that are meaningful to you and devoting time and effort to pursuing them.

\_\_\_ NATURAL \_\_\_ ENJOY \_\_\_ VALUE \_\_\_ GUILTY \_\_\_ SITUATION

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## 9. Developing strategies for coping

Practicing ways to endure or surmount a recent stress, hardship, or trauma.

\_\_\_ NATURAL \_\_\_ ENJOY \_\_\_ VALUE \_\_\_ GUILTY \_\_\_ SITUATION

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## 10. Learning to forgive

Keeping a journal or writing a letter in which you work on letting go of anger and resentment towards one or more individuals who have hurt or wronged you.

\_\_\_ NATURAL \_\_\_ ENJOY \_\_\_ VALUE \_\_\_ GUILTY \_\_\_ SITUATION

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## 11. Practicing religion and spirituality

Becoming more involved in your church, temple, or mosque, or reading and pondering spiritually-themed books.

\_\_\_ NATURAL \_\_\_ ENJOY \_\_\_ VALUE \_\_\_ GUILTY \_\_\_ SITUATION

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## 12. Taking care of your body

Exercising, meditating, smiling and laughing, and getting plenty of rest.

\_\_\_ NATURAL \_\_\_ ENJOY \_\_\_ VALUE \_\_\_ GUILTY \_\_\_ SITUATION

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### C. SCORING

For each of the 12 activities subtract the average of the NATURAL, GUILTY and SITUATION ratings from the average of the ENJOY and VALUE ratings.

That is, FIT SCORE = (NATURAL + ENJOY + VALUE)/3 – (GUILTY + SITUATION)/2

#### 1. Counting your blessings

$$(\text{___ NATURAL} + \text{___ ENJOY} + \text{___ VALUE}) / 3 = A \text{ ___}$$

$$(\text{___ GUILTY} + \text{___ SITUATION}) / 2 = B \text{ ___}$$

$$\text{FIT SCORE} = A - B = \text{___}$$

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#### 2. Cultivating optimism

$$(\text{___ NATURAL} + \text{___ ENJOY} + \text{___ VALUE}) / 3 = A \text{ ___}$$

$$(\text{___ GUILTY} + \text{___ SITUATION}) / 2 = B \text{ ___}$$

$$\text{FIT SCORE} = A - B = \text{___}$$

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#### 3. Avoiding overthinking and social comparison

$$(\text{___ NATURAL} + \text{___ ENJOY} + \text{___ VALUE}) / 3 = A \text{ ___}$$

$$(\text{___ GUILTY} + \text{___ SITUATION}) / 2 = B \text{ ___}$$

$$\text{FIT SCORE} = A - B = \text{___}$$

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#### 4. Practicing acts of kindness

$$(\text{___ NATURAL} + \text{___ ENJOY} + \text{___ VALUE}) / 3 = A \text{ ___}$$

$$(\text{___ GUILTY} + \text{___ SITUATION}) / 2 = B \text{ ___}$$

$$\text{FIT SCORE} = A - B = \text{___}$$

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#### 5. Nurturing relationships

$$(\text{___ NATURAL} + \text{___ ENJOY} + \text{___ VALUE}) / 3 = A \text{ ___}$$

$$(\text{___ GUILTY} + \text{___ SITUATION}) / 2 = B \text{ ___}$$

$$\text{FIT SCORE} = A - B = \text{___}$$

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#### 6. Doing more activities that truly engage you

$$(\text{___ NATURAL} + \text{___ ENJOY} + \text{___ VALUE}) / 3 = A \text{ ___}$$

$$(\text{___ GUILTY} + \text{___ SITUATION}) / 2 = B \text{ ___}$$

$$\text{FIT SCORE} = A - B = \text{___}$$

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### 7. Replaying and savoring life's joys

$$(\text{___ NATURAL} + \text{___ ENJOY} + \text{___ VALUE}) / 3 = A \text{ ___}$$

$$(\text{___ GUILTY} + \text{___ SITUATION}) / 2 = B \text{ ___}$$

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### 8. Committing to your goals

$$(\text{___ NATURAL} + \text{___ ENJOY} + \text{___ VALUE}) / 3 = A \text{ ___}$$

$$(\text{___ GUILTY} + \text{___ SITUATION}) / 2 = B \text{ ___}$$

$$\text{FIT SCORE} = A - B = \text{___}$$

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### 9. Developing strategies for coping

$$(\text{___ NATURAL} + \text{___ ENJOY} + \text{___ VALUE}) / 3 = A \text{ ___}$$

$$(\text{___ GUILTY} + \text{___ SITUATION}) / 2 = B \text{ ___}$$

$$\text{FIT SCORE} = A - B = \text{___}$$

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### 10. Learning to forgive

$$(\text{___ NATURAL} + \text{___ ENJOY} + \text{___ VALUE}) / 3 = A \text{ ___}$$

$$(\text{___ GUILTY} + \text{___ SITUATION}) / 2 = B \text{ ___}$$

$$\text{FIT SCORE} = A - B = \text{___}$$

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### 11. Practicing religion and spirituality

$$(\text{___ NATURAL} + \text{___ ENJOY} + \text{___ VALUE}) / 3 = A \text{ ___}$$

$$(\text{___ GUILTY} + \text{___ SITUATION}) / 2 = B \text{ ___}$$

$$\text{FIT SCORE} = A - B = \text{___}$$

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### 12. Taking care of your body

$$(\text{___ NATURAL} + \text{___ ENJOY} + \text{___ VALUE}) / 3 = A \text{ ___}$$

$$(\text{___ GUILTY} + \text{___ SITUATION}) / 2 = B \text{ ___}$$

$$\text{FIT SCORE} = A - B = \text{___}$$

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*Note: The scoring above uses the method described by Dr. Lyubomirsky in The How of Happiness, but an alternative method is to omit the NATURAL ratings from the calculation, adjust the averaging accordingly (divide by 2 rather than 3 to obtain value A) and treat them as a separate category of fit score.*