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.*

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:

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<th>1</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>Very much</td>
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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

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

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

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

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

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

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

9. Developing strategies for coping

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

_____NATURAL   _____ENJOY   _____VALUE   _____GUILTY   _____SITUATION

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

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

12. Taking care of your body

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

_____NATURAL   _____ENJOY   _____VALUE   _____GUILTY   _____SITUATION
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

(____NATURAL + ____ENJOY + ____VALUE) / 3 = A ____

( ____GUILTY + _____SITUATION) / 2 = B ____

FIT SCORE = A – B = ____

2. Cultivating optimism

(____NATURAL + ____ENJOY + ____VALUE) / 3 = A ____

( ____GUILTY + _____SITUATION) / 2 = B ____

FIT SCORE = A – B = ____

3. Avoiding overthinking and social comparison

(____NATURAL + ____ENJOY + ____VALUE) / 3 = A ____

( ____GUILTY + _____SITUATION) / 2 = B ____

FIT SCORE = A – B = ____

4. Practicing acts of kindness

(____NATURAL + ____ENJOY + ____VALUE) / 3 = A ____

( ____GUILTY + _____SITUATION) / 2 = B ____

FIT SCORE = A – B = ____

5. Nurturing relationships

(____NATURAL + ____ENJOY + ____VALUE) / 3 = A ____

( ____GUILTY + _____SITUATION) / 2 = B ____

FIT SCORE = A – B = ____

6. Doing more activities that truly engage you

(____NATURAL + ____ENJOY + ____VALUE) / 3 = A ____

( ____GUILTY + _____SITUATION) / 2 = B ____

FIT SCORE = A – B = ____
7. Replaying and savoring life’s joys

\[(\text{NATURAL} + \text{ENJOY} + \text{VALUE}) / 3 = A\]
\[(\text{GUILTY} + \text{SITUATION}) / 2 = B\]  FIT SCORE = A – B = ____

8. Committing to your goals

\[(\text{NATURAL} + \text{ENJOY} + \text{VALUE}) / 3 = A\]
\[(\text{GUILTY} + \text{SITUATION}) / 2 = B\]  FIT SCORE = A – B = ____

9. Developing strategies for coping

\[(\text{NATURAL} + \text{ENJOY} + \text{VALUE}) / 3 = A\]
\[(\text{GUILTY} + \text{SITUATION}) / 2 = B\]  FIT SCORE = A – B = ____

10. Learning to forgive

\[(\text{NATURAL} + \text{ENJOY} + \text{VALUE}) / 3 = A\]
\[(\text{GUILTY} + \text{SITUATION}) / 2 = B\]  FIT SCORE = A – B = ____

11. Practicing religion and spirituality

\[(\text{NATURAL} + \text{ENJOY} + \text{VALUE}) / 3 = A\]
\[(\text{GUILTY} + \text{SITUATION}) / 2 = B\]  FIT SCORE = A – B = ____

12. Taking care of your body

\[(\text{NATURAL} + \text{ENJOY} + \text{VALUE}) / 3 = A\]
\[(\text{GUILTY} + \text{SITUATION}) / 2 = B\]  FIT SCORE = A – B = ____

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.