

The Myths of Happiness: What Should Make You Happy, but Doesn't, What Shouldn't Make You Happy, but Does

by Sonja Lyubomirsky

Audio (MP3) version: https://books.kim/mp3/book/www.books.kim_1130_summary-The_Myths_of_Happine.mp3

Summary:

The Myths of Happiness: What Should Make You Happy, But Doesn't, What Shouldn't Make You Happy, But Does by Sonja Lyubomirsky is a book that explores the myths and misconceptions about what makes us happy. The author examines the research on happiness and provides practical advice for how to become happier. She argues that many of our beliefs about what will make us happy are wrong and can actually lead to unhappiness.

Lyubomirsky begins by discussing the idea of "the hedonic treadmill" – the notion that no matter how much money or success we achieve, it won't bring lasting happiness because we quickly adapt to new levels of comfort. She then looks at some common myths about happiness such as "money buys happiness" or "having children will make you happier" and explains why these are not necessarily true.

The author also discusses strategies for increasing one's level of well-being such as cultivating gratitude, savoring life's joys, practicing acts of kindness, nurturing relationships with others, developing optimism and resilience in difficult times. In addition she talks about how important it is to set realistic goals in order to be successful in achieving them.

Finally Lyubomirsky offers advice on how to maintain your newfound sense of contentment over time including setting aside time each day for reflection; engaging in activities that bring pleasure; taking care of yourself physically; being mindful; learning from mistakes; finding meaning through work or service; connecting with nature; expressing emotions honestly and openly; having faith/spirituality if desired; seeking out supportive relationships with family members or friends who understand you best.

Overall this book provides an insightful look into what really makes us happy versus what we think should make us happy but doesn't. It offers practical tips on how to increase our overall wellbeing while debunking popular myths along the way.

Main ideas:

#1. *Happiness is not a fixed trait; it is something that can be cultivated and improved. Idea Summary: The Myths of Happiness argues that happiness is not a fixed trait, but something that can be cultivated and improved through intentional effort.*

The Myths of Happiness argues that happiness is not a fixed trait, but something that can be cultivated and improved through intentional effort. According to the book, people often mistakenly believe that certain external factors such as wealth or success will bring them lasting happiness. However, research has shown that these things do not necessarily lead to long-term satisfaction. Instead, true contentment comes from within and must be actively pursued in order for it to be achieved.

The book outlines several strategies for cultivating greater levels of happiness including gratitude exercises, savoring positive experiences, expressing kindness towards others and engaging in meaningful activities. It also emphasizes the importance of self-care practices such as getting enough sleep and exercise as well as taking time out for relaxation.

Ultimately, The Myths of Happiness encourages readers to take an active role in their own emotional wellbeing by recognizing what truly makes them happy and then making conscious efforts to cultivate those feelings on a daily basis.

#2. *Happiness is not determined by external factors such as wealth, success, or beauty. Idea Summary: The Myths of Happiness argues that external factors such as wealth, success, or beauty do not determine one's level of happiness, and that true happiness comes from within.*

The Myths of Happiness argues that external factors such as wealth, success, or beauty do not determine one's level of happiness. Instead, true happiness comes from within and is determined by our own thoughts and attitudes. According to the book, it is possible to be happy even if we don't have a lot of money or material possessions. It suggests that people can find joy in simple things like spending time with family and friends, engaging in meaningful activities, having a sense of purpose in life, and cultivating positive emotions.

The book also explains how certain behaviors can lead to greater levels of satisfaction. For example, it encourages readers to practice gratitude by taking time each day to appreciate what they have rather than focusing on what they lack. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of self-care through exercise and healthy eating habits as well as getting enough sleep.

Ultimately The Myths of Happiness provides an alternative perspective on achieving lasting contentment without relying solely on external sources for validation or fulfillment.

#3. *Happiness is not a destination; it is a journey. Idea Summary: The Myths of Happiness argues that happiness is not a destination, but rather a journey that requires effort and dedication to maintain.*

The Myths of Happiness argues that happiness is not a destination, but rather a journey. According to the book, true and lasting happiness requires effort and dedication. It suggests that people should focus on cultivating positive emotions such as gratitude, optimism, and joy in order to achieve long-term satisfaction with life. The book also emphasizes the importance of engaging in meaningful activities like volunteering or spending time with family and friends.

In addition, it encourages readers to practice self-care by taking care of their physical health through exercise and healthy eating habits. Furthermore, it advises individuals to be mindful of their thoughts and feelings so they can recognize when negative thinking patterns are present. Finally, it stresses the need for balance between work/school commitments and leisure activities.

#4. *Happiness is not a result of luck or chance. Idea Summary: The Myths of Happiness argues that happiness is not a result of luck or chance, but rather something that can be cultivated through intentional effort.*

The Myths of Happiness argues that happiness is not a result of luck or chance, but rather something that can be cultivated through intentional effort. According to the book, true and lasting happiness comes from within and requires us to take responsibility for our own emotional well-being. The author suggests that we should focus on cultivating positive emotions such as gratitude, optimism, joy, and contentment in order to achieve greater levels of satisfaction with life.

The book also emphasizes the importance of developing meaningful relationships with others as an essential part of achieving happiness. It encourages readers to invest time in building strong connections with family members and friends by engaging in activities together or simply spending quality time talking about shared interests. Additionally, it recommends taking steps towards self-improvement such as setting goals for personal growth or learning new skills.

Ultimately, The Myths of Happiness provides readers with practical advice on how they can create their own path towards a more fulfilling life. By recognizing that happiness is not dependent on luck or chance but instead something we have control over ourselves, we are empowered to make conscious decisions about what will bring us joy.

#5. *Happiness is not a result of having more; it is a result of appreciating what one already has. Idea Summary: The Myths of Happiness argues that true happiness is not a result of having more, but rather a result of appreciating what one already has.*

The Myths of Happiness argues that true happiness is not a result of having more, but rather a result of appreciating what one already has. This idea challenges the notion that material possessions and wealth are necessary for achieving contentment. Instead, it suggests that individuals should focus on cultivating gratitude and appreciation for the things they have in their lives. By doing so, they can find joy in even the simplest moments and experiences.

This concept also encourages people to recognize how much they have to be thankful for instead of focusing on what they lack or don't have. It emphasizes the importance of savoring life's small pleasures such as spending time with family or friends, taking walks outdoors, listening to music, reading books etc., which can bring about feelings of joy and satisfaction without needing anything else.

In addition to this idea being beneficial from an emotional standpoint, research has shown that those who practice gratitude tend to experience better physical health outcomes than those who do not. Therefore by recognizing all we have been blessed with and expressing our thanks accordingly we can lead healthier lives both mentally and physically.

#6. *Happiness is not a result of material possessions. Idea Summary: The Myths of Happiness argues that material possessions do not bring true happiness, and that true happiness comes from within.*

The Myths of Happiness argues that material possessions do not bring true happiness, and that true happiness comes from within. The book explains that although people may feel a temporary sense of joy when they acquire something new, this feeling is fleeting and does not lead to lasting contentment. Instead, the author suggests focusing on activities such as spending time with loved ones or engaging in meaningful work which can provide more long-term satisfaction. Additionally, the book emphasizes the importance of cultivating positive emotions such as gratitude and optimism in order to achieve greater levels of well-being.

The Myths of Happiness also discusses how external factors like money or status can be detrimental to one's mental health if they become too important. It warns against placing too much emphasis on these things because it can lead to feelings of envy or dissatisfaction when comparing oneself to others who have more than them. Ultimately, the book encourages readers to focus on internal sources of fulfillment rather than relying solely on external rewards for their happiness.

#7. *Happiness is not a result of comparison to others. Idea Summary: The Myths of Happiness argues that true happiness is not a result of comparing oneself to others, but rather a result of appreciating one's own unique qualities.*

The Myths of Happiness argues that true happiness is not a result of comparing oneself to others, but rather a result of appreciating one's own unique qualities. According to the book, comparison can lead to feelings of envy and resentment which can be detrimental to one's overall wellbeing. Instead, it suggests focusing on developing self-acceptance and gratitude for what we have in life. It also encourages us to focus on our strengths and talents instead of dwelling on our weaknesses or shortcomings.

The book further explains that when we compare ourselves with others, it often leads us down an unproductive path where we become overly focused on material possessions or external accomplishments as sources of happiness. This type of thinking can cause us to overlook the importance of cultivating meaningful relationships with family and friends, engaging in activities that bring joy into our lives, and taking time out for self-care.

Ultimately, The Myths Of Happiness emphasizes the importance of finding contentment within ourselves by recognizing our individual worthiness without relying on comparisons with other people. By doing so, we are able to create more fulfilling lives filled with genuine happiness.

#8. *Happiness is not a result of perfectionism. Idea Summary: The Myths of Happiness argues that true happiness is not a result of striving for perfection, but rather a result of accepting oneself and one's*

imperfections.

The Myths of Happiness argues that true happiness is not a result of striving for perfection, but rather a result of accepting oneself and one's imperfections. The book suggests that the pursuit of perfection can actually be detrimental to one's overall well-being. It explains how people often become overwhelmed by their own expectations and end up feeling inadequate or disappointed when they don't reach their goals. Furthermore, it states that this type of thinking can lead to feelings of depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem.

The book also discusses how focusing on our flaws instead of our strengths can prevent us from achieving true happiness. It encourages readers to focus on what makes them unique and special instead of trying to fit into an idealized version of themselves. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of being kinder to ourselves in order to foster greater self-acceptance and contentment.

Ultimately, The Myths Of Happiness provides an insightful look at why perfectionism does not lead to lasting happiness. Instead, it encourages readers to embrace their imperfections as part of who they are in order to find joy in life.

#9. Happiness is not a result of avoiding negative emotions. Idea Summary: The Myths of Happiness argues that true happiness is not a result of avoiding negative emotions, but rather a result of accepting and embracing them.

The Myths of Happiness argues that true happiness is not a result of avoiding negative emotions, but rather a result of accepting and embracing them. According to the book, when we try to avoid or suppress our negative feelings, it can actually lead to more unhappiness in the long run. Instead, by acknowledging and understanding our emotions—both positive and negative—we can learn how to better cope with difficult situations and ultimately become happier.

The book also suggests that instead of trying to escape from our problems or ignore them altogether, we should focus on finding solutions for them. This means taking an active role in addressing issues such as stress or anxiety head-on instead of simply trying to push them away. Additionally, Lyubomirsky encourages readers to practice self-compassion by being kinder towards themselves during times of difficulty.

Ultimately, The Myths of Happiness emphasizes that true happiness comes from learning how to accept both positive and negative emotions without judgment. By doing so, we can gain insight into ourselves while developing healthier coping mechanisms for dealing with life's challenges.

#10. Happiness is not a result of avoiding difficult tasks. Idea Summary: The Myths of Happiness argues that true happiness is not a result of avoiding difficult tasks, but rather a result of facing them head-on and learning from them.

The Myths of Happiness argues that true happiness is not a result of avoiding difficult tasks, but rather a result of facing them head-on and learning from them. According to the book, when we take on challenges and work hard to overcome them, it can lead to greater satisfaction in life. This is because tackling difficult tasks gives us a sense of accomplishment and pride in our own abilities. Additionally, by taking on these challenges we are able to learn more about ourselves and grow as individuals.

Furthermore, the book suggests that if we avoid challenging tasks or situations out of fear or anxiety then this can actually have an adverse effect on our overall wellbeing. By avoiding difficulty we may miss out on opportunities for growth and development which could ultimately lead to unhappiness down the line. Therefore it is important for us to be brave enough to face our fears so that we can reap the rewards associated with overcoming obstacles.

In conclusion, The Myths of Happiness makes a compelling argument that true happiness does not come from avoiding difficult tasks but instead comes from embracing them. Taking risks and pushing ourselves outside our comfort zone allows us to gain valuable insight into who we are as people while also providing us with feelings of accomplishment.

#11. *Happiness is not a result of having a perfect life. Idea Summary: The Myths of Happiness argues that true happiness is not a result of having a perfect life, but rather a result of making the most of the life one has.*

The Myths of Happiness argues that true happiness is not a result of having a perfect life, but rather a result of making the most of the life one has. According to Lyubomirsky, many people mistakenly believe that if they have enough money, success, or possessions then they will be happy. However, she states that these things do not guarantee lasting happiness and can even lead to feelings of emptiness and dissatisfaction. Instead, Lyubomirsky suggests focusing on cultivating positive emotions such as gratitude and joy in order to achieve true contentment.

Lyubomirsky also explains how external factors such as luck or circumstance can play an important role in our overall level of satisfaction with life. She notes that while some people may experience more good fortune than others due to their circumstances or environment, this does not necessarily mean they are happier than those who have less luck. Rather it is up to each individual person to make the best out of whatever situation they find themselves in.

Finally, Lyubomirsky emphasizes the importance of self-acceptance when striving for happiness. She encourages readers to recognize their own strengths and weaknesses without judgement so that they can focus on what truly matters: living a meaningful life filled with purposeful activities and relationships.

#12. *Happiness is not a result of having a perfect relationship. Idea Summary: The Myths of Happiness argues that true happiness is not a result of having a perfect relationship, but rather a result of making the most of the relationships one has.*

The Myths of Happiness argues that true happiness is not a result of having a perfect relationship, but rather a result of making the most of the relationships one has. According to Lyubomirsky, "Happiness does not come from finding an ideal partner or achieving some kind of romantic perfection; it comes from taking advantage of what we have and striving for something better." She goes on to explain that while it may be tempting to think that having a perfect relationship will bring us lasting joy, this is simply not the case. Instead, she suggests focusing on cultivating meaningful connections with those around us and learning how to appreciate them in all their imperfections.

Lyubomirsky also emphasizes the importance of self-reflection when it comes to our relationships. She explains that by understanding ourselves better—our strengths and weaknesses—we can learn how best to interact with others in order to create more fulfilling relationships. Additionally, she encourages readers to take responsibility for their own happiness instead of relying solely on another person for fulfillment.

Ultimately, The Myths Of Happiness challenges traditional notions about what should make us happy and offers insight into how we can cultivate genuine contentment within our lives through meaningful connections with others.

#13. *Happiness is not a result of having a perfect job. Idea Summary: The Myths of Happiness argues that true happiness is not a result of having a perfect job, but rather a result of making the most of the job one has.*

The Myths of Happiness argues that true happiness is not a result of having a perfect job, but rather a result of making the most of the job one has. According to Sonja Lyubomirsky, author of *The Myths of Happiness: What Should Make You Happy, but Doesn't, What Shouldn't Make You Happy, but Does*, "Happiness does not come from having an ideal career or achieving success in any particular area; it comes from finding satisfaction and meaning in whatever you do."

Lyubomirsky suggests that instead of striving for perfection at work or elsewhere in life, people should focus on cultivating positive emotions such as gratitude and contentment. She also encourages individuals to find ways to make their current jobs more meaningful by setting goals and taking steps towards them. Additionally, she recommends engaging with colleagues and forming relationships with coworkers.

Ultimately, Lyubomirsky believes that true happiness is found within oneself rather than through external sources like material possessions or professional accomplishments. By recognizing this fact and actively working towards creating a

fulfilling life experience regardless of one's job situation can lead to greater levels of overall satisfaction.

#14. *Happiness is not a result of having a perfect body. Idea Summary: The Myths of Happiness argues that true happiness is not a result of having a perfect body, but rather a result of accepting and embracing one's body as it is.*

The Myths of Happiness argues that true happiness is not a result of having a perfect body, but rather a result of accepting and embracing one's body as it is. The book explains that the pursuit of physical perfection can be an endless cycle with no real end in sight. It also points out that even if one were to achieve their ideal physique, they would still have to maintain it through constant effort and vigilance. This means that any sense of satisfaction or joy from achieving this goal would be fleeting at best.

The book further suggests that instead of focusing on physical appearance, people should focus on cultivating self-love and acceptance for who they are right now. This includes learning to appreciate all aspects of oneself - both the good and bad - without judgement or comparison to others. By doing so, individuals can learn how to accept themselves fully which will lead them towards greater contentment and peace.

Ultimately, The Myths of Happiness emphasizes the importance of understanding what truly makes us happy in life: our relationships with ourselves and others; meaningful work; engaging hobbies; spiritual practices; etc., rather than relying solely on external factors such as physical appearance.

#15. *Happiness is not a result of having a perfect home. Idea Summary: The Myths of Happiness argues that true happiness is not a result of having a perfect home, but rather a result of making the most of the home one has.*

The Myths of Happiness argues that true happiness is not a result of having a perfect home, but rather a result of making the most of the home one has. The book explains that although it may seem like having an ideal living space would bring joy and contentment, this is often not the case. Instead, Lyubomirsky suggests that people should focus on creating meaningful experiences within their homes in order to find true happiness.

Lyubomirsky encourages readers to think about how they can make their current living situation more enjoyable and fulfilling. She emphasizes the importance of taking time for self-care activities such as reading or listening to music in order to relax and recharge. Additionally, she recommends engaging in activities with family members or friends at home so as to create lasting memories together.

Ultimately, Lyubomirsky believes that by focusing on what we have instead of what we don't have when it comes to our homes, we can achieve greater levels of satisfaction and contentment. By recognizing our own strengths and abilities while also appreciating those around us who help make our lives better each day, we can learn how to be truly happy regardless of where we live.

#16. *Happiness is not a result of having a perfect family. Idea Summary: The Myths of Happiness argues that true happiness is not a result of having a perfect family, but rather a result of making the most of the family one has.*

The Myths of Happiness argues that true happiness is not a result of having a perfect family, but rather a result of making the most of the family one has. The book explains that while it may seem like having an ideal family would bring about contentment and joy, this is often not the case. Instead, it suggests that individuals should focus on cultivating positive relationships with their families and learning to appreciate them for who they are. It also encourages people to recognize their own strengths and weaknesses in order to better understand how they can contribute positively to their families.

The book further emphasizes that although there may be difficult times within any given family dynamic, these moments

can actually provide opportunities for growth and connection if approached with patience and understanding. Additionally, it highlights the importance of self-care when dealing with familial issues as well as recognizing when outside help might be necessary in order to ensure everyone's wellbeing.

Ultimately, *The Myths of Happiness* provides readers with valuable insight into how they can create meaningful connections within their families despite any imperfections or challenges they may face along the way. By focusing on building strong relationships through communication and compassion instead of striving for perfectionism, individuals will find themselves much more fulfilled than if they had simply sought out an idealized version of what a "perfect" family should look like.

#17. *Happiness is not a result of having a perfect social life. Idea Summary: The Myths of Happiness argues that true happiness is not a result of having a perfect social life, but rather a result of making the most of the social life one has.*

The Myths of Happiness argues that true happiness is not a result of having a perfect social life, but rather a result of making the most of the social life one has. The book explains that while it may seem like having an ideal social life would lead to greater levels of happiness, this is often not the case. Instead, it suggests that people should focus on cultivating meaningful relationships with those around them and engaging in activities they enjoy with their friends and family.

The book also emphasizes the importance of self-care when it comes to achieving lasting happiness. It encourages readers to take time for themselves by engaging in activities such as meditation or journaling which can help reduce stress and increase feelings of contentment. Additionally, Lyubomirsky recommends setting realistic goals for oneself so as to avoid disappointment or frustration.

Ultimately, *The Myths Of Happiness* provides readers with valuable insight into how they can achieve true happiness without relying solely on external factors such as having a perfect social life. By focusing on cultivating meaningful relationships and taking care of oneself mentally and physically, individuals can find joy even if their lives are far from perfect.

#18. *Happiness is not a result of having a perfect career. Idea Summary: The Myths of Happiness argues that true happiness is not a result of having a perfect career, but rather a result of making the most of the career one has.*

The Myths of Happiness argues that true happiness is not a result of having a perfect career, but rather a result of making the most of the career one has. The book explains that many people believe that if they have an ideal job or make more money, then they will be happy. However, this is not necessarily true. Instead, it is important to focus on what you can do with your current situation and how you can use it to create meaning in your life.

The book also discusses how our expectations for success often lead us astray when it comes to finding happiness. We may think that achieving certain goals or reaching certain milestones will bring us joy and satisfaction, but this isn't always the case. It's important to recognize that even if we don't reach our desired level of success in our careers, we can still find fulfillment by focusing on other aspects such as relationships and hobbies.

Finally, *The Myths of Happiness* emphasizes the importance of gratitude and appreciation for what we already have in order to achieve lasting happiness. By recognizing all the good things in our lives—even those related to work—we are able to cultivate contentment regardless of whether or not we have achieved perfection in our careers.

#19. *Happiness is not a result of having a perfect lifestyle. Idea Summary: The Myths of Happiness argues that true happiness is not a result of having a perfect lifestyle, but rather a result of making the most of the lifestyle one has.*

The Myths of Happiness argues that true happiness is not a result of having a perfect lifestyle, but rather a result of

making the most of the lifestyle one has. According to Lyubomirsky, many people mistakenly believe that if they could just have more money, better relationships, or an ideal job then they would be happy. However, research shows that these external factors do not necessarily lead to lasting happiness and satisfaction with life.

Lyubomirsky suggests instead focusing on internal sources such as cultivating gratitude and savoring positive experiences. She also recommends engaging in activities like volunteering or helping others which can bring joy and meaning into our lives. Additionally, she encourages us to practice self-compassion by being kinder to ourselves when we make mistakes or fail at something.

Ultimately, Lyubomirsky emphasizes that it is possible for anyone to find contentment regardless of their circumstances by actively working towards creating meaningful connections with others and finding purpose in life through meaningful activities.

#20. *Happiness is not a result of having a perfect life plan. Idea Summary: The Myths of Happiness argues that true happiness is not a result of having a perfect life plan, but rather a result of making the most of the life one has and embracing the unexpected.*

The Myths of Happiness argues that true happiness is not a result of having a perfect life plan, but rather a result of making the most of the life one has and embracing the unexpected. According to Sonja Lyubomirsky, author of *The Myths of Happiness: What Should Make You Happy, but Doesn't, What Shouldn't Make You Happy, but Does*, many people mistakenly believe that if they can just figure out what their ideal life should look like and then work hard to make it happen, they will be happy. However this is not necessarily true.

Lyubomirsky explains that while having goals and striving for them can bring satisfaction in itself as well as provide direction in life; it does not guarantee lasting happiness. She states that "happiness comes from within" and suggests instead focusing on cultivating positive emotions such as gratitude or joy through activities like journaling or meditation. Additionally she encourages individuals to embrace uncertainty by learning how to accept change with grace.

Ultimately Lyubomirsky believes that real happiness comes from living an authentic life full of meaningful experiences rather than trying to achieve some predetermined idea about what success looks like. By understanding this concept we can learn how to better appreciate our lives even when things don't go according to plan.