



The Science & Art of Happiness:

A Certificate Programme on Positive Psychology &

Evidence-Based Transformative Practice

Co-offered by the Greater Good Science Center, University of California, Berkeley &
Tsz Shan Institute, Tsz Shan Monastery

Supported by Centre of Buddhist Studies Alumni Association

Programme Overview

Have you ever noticed how happiness can feel... conditional?

As if it arrives only after the inbox is cleared, the deadline is met, the relationship is smoother, the next chapter begins.

And yet, even when life looks “fine” on paper, something inside can still feel tight, tired, or quietly restless.

This programme starts from a different premise: happiness isn’t a finish line—it’s a set of skills we can cultivate, supported by science and strengthened through practice.

What *is* happiness? How can we cultivate a deep and lasting sense of well-being? What mental habits foster true happiness, and what practical exercises can help develop

them? How can we better manage stress, build resilience, and nurture authentic, compassionate relationships?

This programme approaches these questions from two complementary perspectives. On one hand, it offers science-based answers from psychology, neuroscience, and transdisciplinary studies of well-being, presenting cutting-edge research and practical tools for everyday life. On the other, it introduces insights from ancient wisdom traditions, not as abstract concepts, but as *living practices* — practices that can be seamlessly woven into every moment of your life.

The programme consists of two courses, '**Scientific Foundations Course**' and '**Practical Intensive Course**'. Both courses teach you scientifically supported techniques for daily practice as well as a series of deep, transformative practices. Together, they cultivate greater awareness of our habitual patterns and transform them into patterns conducive to our well-being, productivity, happiness, kindness, compassion, and quality of life.

In the '**Scientific Foundations Course**', you will explore key discoveries from the transdisciplinary science of happiness to gain basic knowledge about what happiness is, why it matters, and how people can enhance it within themselves and in their communities. Skilled at making science fun and personal, UC Berkeley's instructors will help you discover how cutting-edge research can be applied to your own lives. Experienced in coaching mindfulness and meditation, Tsz Shan Monastery's instructors will offer you direct, step-by-step guidance in one of the core practices of the course — mindfulness and meditation.

In the '**Practical Intensive Course**', you will focus on learning a number of science-based practices and applying them to your everyday life and professional context. These practices are also useful for coaches, counsellors, teachers, healthcare professionals, social workers and team leaders to share with a wide range of people beyond this course. You will also broaden and deepen your mindfulness practice in this course.

Our teaching team is committed to supporting you on your journey of transformation and growth beyond the duration of the course. Dedicated students can deepen their practice through a **Community of Practice** programme after completion of the courses.

Award of Certificate(s):

Upon satisfactory completion of either one of the courses, you will be awarded a Certificate of Completion of that particular course. Once you have been awarded the Certificates of both courses, you will be further awarded an advanced Certificate of Completion of the entire programme.

All Certificates are jointly issued by the Greater Good Science Center, University of California, Berkeley and Tsz Shan Institute, Tsz Shan Monastery.

How to start:

Enrolment is course-based. To start, you apply for the enrolment of either one course when it is offered. Later when the other course is offered, you apply for its enrolment.

If you have not taken the Scientific Foundations Course, You may take the Practical Intensive Course first. The next Scientific Foundations Course will be offered in the first half of 2027. Application to that course will open in early 2027.

Practical Intensive Course

Course Outline

Course Description:

In this course, you will learn the science and practice of enduring happiness and well-being, with an emphasis on the practice side. Through an engaging and interactive format, you will develop skills to increase resilience and well-being in both yourself and others. You will walk away with knowledge and tools to cultivate a more meaningful, joyful, compassionate and connected life for yourself and the people around you.

Complementing the scientific perspective, the course also introduces insights from wisdom traditions and the time-honored transformative practices of mindfulness/meditation, helping you rediscover inner space, clarity, and abundance wherever you are.

Instructors:

Eve Ekman, Ph.D., MSW

Greater Good Science Center, UC Berkeley

Dr Eve Ekman, chief instructor of the course, is known for her leading work in bridging scientific research, emotional skills training, and contemplative wisdom. She is the former Director of Training—and now a Senior Fellow—at UC Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center.

Her work on empathy, burnout, and compassion has appeared in the *Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology* and *Oxford Handbook of Compassion Science*. She co-created the highly-regarded *Atlas of Emotions* and *Cultivating Emotional Balance (CEB)* programme, and helped Apple Inc. develop innovative wellness apps, such as *Fitness+*, *Breathe*, and *Reflect*.

Eve creates dynamic trainings and offers teachings internationally, drawing upon her deep scientific knowledge, direct clinical work, and experiences in a range of institutional

and organizational settings. She worked for years as a social worker in health care, criminal justice, and social welfare systems, which inspired her to earn her master's and Ph.D. at UC Berkeley and complete her postdoctoral training at UCSF Osher Center for Integrative Medicine.

Eve's research has focused on helping professional care providers prevent burnout by giving them easier access to practices of attention, insight, and resilience. Building on her research, she developed trainings to address burnout in national and international organizations and has delivered keynotes and workshops for a wide range of organisations and conferences.

As one of the senior lead teachers of the *Cultivating Emotional Balance (CEB)* programme, Eve taught *CEB* when it was first offered publicly, and since then has been teaching *CEB* and training *CEB* Teachers for 15 years. She's also a contemplative curriculum specialist at UC Berkeley's Center for the Science of Psychedelics, where she designed and led their contemplative science curriculum. In addition to meditation, Eve is also a regular practitioner of yoga and cold-water surfing, and brings her enthusiasm for living a rich emotional life into her teaching.

Walter Ngai, JP

Tsz Shan Institute, Tsz Shan Monastery

Walter Ngai is currently the Secretary General of Tsz Shan Monastery. He also serves as a consultant for the Thomas Jing Centre for Mindfulness Research and Training of the Chinese University of Hong Kong. He used to be a media person. In 2004, he studied for a Master's programme in Buddhism at the University of Hong Kong and started his spiritual exploration. From orphanages in Africa, holy places in India, to monasteries in the Himalayas, he has left his presence. He actively devotes himself to Buddhist spiritual education, strives to bring Buddhism closer to daily life, and strives to enable modern people, especially the younger generation, to follow in the footsteps of enlightened people and live soberly and comfortably in a troubled world.

Luke Shang, M.Phil.

Tsz Shan Institute, Tsz Shan Monastery

Luke Shang serves as a programme consultant for the Tsz Shan Institute and has been a guiding force behind the *Science & Art of Happiness* programme since its inception in 2020, contributing to its vision, design, and pedagogy. Luke's spiritual journey has been marked by a deep openness to multiple wisdom traditions and teachers. He has found profound insight and moments of awakening through diverse sources, with Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh and the Plum Village communities having had the most transformative influence. Over the years, he has led and facilitated mindfulness practices in Hong Kong, mainland China, and Australia, aspiring to help others rediscover their innate freedom, peace, and true love amid the turbulence of modern life. Just as his spiritual path is broad and integrative, so too is his intellectual background. Holding master's degrees in philosophy, social sciences, and health sciences from the University of Chicago, HKU, and the University of Melbourne, Luke speaks the language of the academically inclined, welcoming critical inquiry while illuminating traditional wisdom with analytical clarity — seeking to make these teachings not only accessible but also a wellspring of insight and presence in daily living.

Dates & Time:

Please note that the class dates have been updated on Jan 27. [Here are the updated dates:](#)

Zoom Online Workshops:

March 14; April 4, 18, 25; May 9, 30 (Saturdays) | 10:00am – 12:50pm

* We will be recording the Zoom sessions, allowing you to review afterwards. The recording will remain accessible for a period of 90 days following the class. As our classes are highly interactive, we encourage your active participation in real-time to make the most out of your learning experience.

Experiential Learning Sessions at Tsz Shan Monastery:

Session I: **April 11** (Saturday) | 9 am – 12 pm (English) OR 2 – 5pm (Cantonese)

Session II: **May 16** (Saturday) | 9 am – 12 pm (English) OR 2 – 5pm (Cantonese)

* For the best learning outcome, the class will be split into two groups to attend each in-person Experiential Learning Session. For example, you may choose to attend on either the morning or afternoon of April 11 for the first session. The exact hours of Experiential Learning Sessions are subject to modest adjustment.

* If you are studying from outside Hong Kong as an overseas student, we understand that you won't be able to attend the two in-person Experiential Learning Sessions, during which students deepen mindfulness and meditation practices. We will record these sessions as much as we can and share them with you. If you visit Hong Kong in the future, we welcome you to contact us in advance so that we can see if there are similar Experiential Learning Sessions that we may offer you with our compliments.

Prerequisites:

You do not need prior knowledge from the Scientific Foundations Course to participate in the Practical Intensive Course. However, we recommend you take the Scientific Foundations Course of the programme for a complete learning experience.

* The next Scientific Foundations Course will be offered in the first half of 2027, also on Saturdays 10:00am – 12:30pm via Zoom and supplemented with experiential learning sessions at Tsz Shan Monastery.

Admission priority will be given to applicants who have:

- (a) successfully completed the Scientific Foundations Course, demonstrating the potential and commitment to continue their study;
- (b) been working in teaching, counselling, coaching, healthcare, or other caretaking professions;
- (c) experiences in meditation/mindfulness, or have taken mindfulness or other related courses, e.g., MBSR, MBCT, Mindful Self-Compassion (MSC), Nonviolent Communication (NVC), or Cultivating Emotional Balance (CEB);
- (d) studied psychology, mental health, health sciences or other relevant subjects; and/or
- (e) a strong academic background.

Course Structure:

(Subject to further adjustment)

March 14 Workshop 1. Build Enduring Happiness.

We all want to be happy, but how do we get there? In this workshop, you will explore the science of enduring happiness and what gets in the way. You will leave with a scientific model of lasting well-being and practical exercises to increase it.

April 4 Workshop 2. Boost Positive Emotions.

Why do positive emotions matter for you, your workplace, and community? In this session you will learn the science of positive emotions and practice experiential exercises to increase your positivity and cultivate gratitude.

April 18 Workshop 3. Cultivate Presence.

Do you find it difficult to focus in today's fast-paced, technology-driven times? Research shows a wandering mind is an unhappy mind. In this session you will explore the benefits of being present and how to cultivate increased presence and happiness.

*** April 11 Experiential Learning at Tsz Shan Monastery.**

In the Experiential Learning Sessions at the Tsz Shan Monastery, you will deepen the mindfulness and meditation practices.

April 25 Workshop 4. Nurture Healthy Relationships.

Science shows we are wired to connect. What are the benefits of healthy relationships for you, your workplace and community? In this workshop, you will learn to apply science-backed practices for healthy relationships, including deep listening and empathy.

May 9 Workshop 5. Connect with Compassion.

Despite our best intentions, sometimes relationships are difficult. Why does connecting with compassion matter to you, your workplace, and community? Learn and facilitate the science and practice of compassion for yourself and others around you.

*** May 16 Experiential Learning at Tsz Shan Monastery.****May 30 Workshop 6. Grow Resilience.**

Continuous change and set-backs are an inevitable part of life. In this workshop you will learn the science of resilience and walk away with practical tools to build a growth mindset in the midst of change.

Assessment:

There will be some home practice exercises for you to deepen your learning. A short reflective writing needs to be submitted for you to receive the Certificate of Completion.‡

‡ You may complete the short reflective writing in either English or Chinese.

Community of Practice:

Students can participate in a subsequent Community of Practice. This group will meet periodically on Zoom following the completion of the course. The meetings will refresh the learning and practices, invigorating and supporting you on your journey of growth and transformation. **Dr Eve Ekman** will play a key role in facilitating the meetings, helping the group to go deeper.

The Community will meet on the following Saturdays, from 10:00 to 11:00 am, for a total of eight sessions:

- Jun 20
- Jul 18
- Aug 8
- Sep 5
- Oct 10
- Nov 7
- Nov 21
- Jan 16, 2027

Course Fee:

The course fee for the Practical Intensive Course is HK\$5,000.

* The Community of Practice is an extended part of the course. You may join the Community of Practice after the completion of the course with an administrative fee of HK\$500.

How to Apply:

Apply here: <https://forms.gle/RQNFDsF2MfMjv6hq6>

Application Deadline: Feb 23, 2026

We recommend applying early, as the course may be full before the deadline.

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