



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

Programme Overview

We all want to be happier. But happiness seems elusive. Many of us try to make ourselves happier by chasing ever-higher goals, or holding ourselves to ever-greater standards of perfection, so much so that we have almost completely lost track of how far we have strayed from happiness. What is happiness? How do we attain sustainable happiness? What mental habits are most conducive to happiness and what exercises can help develop these habits? How can we better manage stress and grow resilience? How can we connect with authenticity and compassion, and nurture our relationships? This programme offers a set of science-based answers to such questions, introducing to you cutting-edge findings of multiple disciplines including social, developmental, evolutionary, and positive psychology, alongside neuroscience, economics, and more.

The programme consists of two courses, '**Scientific Foundations Course**' and '**Practical Intensive Course**'. Both courses teach you scientifically supported techniques for daily practice. Such practice is sometimes referred to as transformative practice, or 'deep' practice, meaning that it is an intentional exercise for extended periods of time with the purpose of empowering transformation. It cultivates greater awareness of our habitual patterns and transforms 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 teachers will help you discover how cutting-edge research can be applied to your own lives. Experienced in coaching mindfulness and meditation, Tsz Shan Institute's teachers will offer you direct, step-by-step guidance in the core practice of the course—the mindfulness and meditation exercises.

The '**Practical Intensive Course**', on the other hand, focuses on enhancing your skills to apply the science-based practice to your everyday life and professional work. It also adopts the Train-the-Trainer model to equip teachers, counsellors, healthcare professionals and social workers with knowledge and skills to share such practice with a wide range of people beyond this course. It is our firm belief that teaching someone else is the best way to learn and to deepen the practice on your own path of transformation. In fact, sharing the practice in itself is another practice of generosity and compassion as well as a pursuit of intrinsically meaningful goals, both of which nurture your own happiness. Our teaching team is committed to supporting you on your journey of transformation and growth beyond the duration of the course. Dedicated students will be offered opportunities to engage with the practice through a **Community of Practice** and a **Teaching Assistantship** programme after they have completed the course.

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.

The next Scientific Foundations Course is offered in January – February 2022, and is now accepting applications.

The next Practical Intensive Course will be offered in July – August 2022. Application for the course will be opened in the second quarter of 2022.

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.

Scientific Foundations Course

Course Outline

Course Description:

This course explores the roots of a happy and meaningful life through the scientific lens. It focuses on the key discoveries in the transdisciplinary science of happiness, that is, how scientists characterize and measure various facets of happiness, and what factors and actions they find conducive to happiness. We will try interventions from studies that have been shown to increase happiness - activities, exercises, and practices that people can use in daily life. Specific experiential techniques include increasing self-awareness through reflective and contemplative practices, narrative exercises, inquiry of specific emotions and their role in overall happiness, and adopting a kinder, more generous style of social interaction.

Instructors:

Dr. Emiliana Simon-Thomas

Greater Good Science Center, UC Berkeley

Ven. You Zhe (釋有哲法師)

Tsz Shan Institute, Tsz Shan Monastery

Your main instructor for the course is the Science Director of UC Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center, [Dr. Emiliana Simon-Thomas](#). Emiliana is a leading expert on the neuroscience and psychology of compassion, kindness, gratitude, and other prosocial skills that bolster human happiness. She earned her doctorate in Cognition, Brain and Behavior at UC Berkeley, where her dissertation used behavioral and neuroscience methods to examine how unpleasant emotions influence thinking and decision-making. During her postdoc, Emiliana shifted to studying the origins and effects of prosocial

states such as love of humanity, gratitude, and awe. She then served as the Associate Director/Senior Scientist at the Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education at Stanford, examining how compassion, both innate and learned, benefits health and well-being, and psychosocial functioning. At UC Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center, she co-teaches 'The Science of Happiness' as well as 'The Science of Happiness at Work' Professional Certificate Series. She also runs key research initiatives like [Expanding the Science and Practice of Gratitude](#) and the [Network for Emotional Well-Being](#), and provides an expert scientific voice on the key roles that social connection, support, and belonging play in well-being to audiences worldwide. She regularly lectures on the biological underpinnings of social connection, as well as empirically-supported approaches to improving interpersonal dynamics - like practicing mindfulness, and increasing compassion, gratitude, and generosity. Alongside her academic and popular writing, Emiliana recently co-edited the [Oxford Handbook of Compassion Science](#), a transdisciplinary compendium of articles from world-class researchers.

You will also receive instructions on meditation and mindfulness practices from our much beloved monastic teacher at the Tsz Shan Institute, Ven. You Zhe, as well as our honorary advisor, [Prof. Samuel YS Wong](#).

Date & Time:

Zoom Online Classes:

January ~~22~~, 29; February 12, 19, 26; March 12, 19 (Saturdays) 10:00am – 12:30pm

Experiential Learning at Tsz Shan Monastery:

~~February 12 (Saturday) 9:30am – 12:30pm*~~

~~‡ Optional experiential tour: 12:30pm – 1:30pm~~



Postponed.
We will announce the new date once the
COVID situation in Hong Kong improves.

March 26 (Saturday) 9:30am – 5:30pm*

* TBC: Depending on the pandemic situation, a half or full day session would be offered.

Prerequisites:

There is no prerequisite for the Scientific Foundations Course but you need to be able to follow intensive lectures delivered in academic English.

Priority will be given to applicants who have:

- (a) successfully completed the Practical Intensive Course in 2021;
- (b) been working in teaching, counselling, coaching, healthcare, or other caretaking professions;
- (c) meditation experiences;
- (d) studied psychology, mental health, health sciences or other relevant subjects; and/or
- (e) a strong academic background.

We recommend studying the Scientific Foundations Course before taking the Practical Intensive Course.

* The next Practical Intensive Course will be offered in July – August 2022, also on Saturdays 10:00am – 12:30pm via Zoom and occasionally supplemented with experiential learning sessions at Tsz Shan Monastery.

Languages:

- Dr. Emiliana Simon-Thomas will teach in *English* and Ven. You Zhe in *Cantonese*.
- You are however encouraged to use your preferred language (English, Cantonese, or Mandarin) within your small group exercises.

Course Structure:

(Subject to further adjustment)

January 29: Session 1: The What, Why, and How of Happiness

February 5: BREAK

February 12: Session 2: Built for Connection: Attachment, Empathy, Generosity, and Cooperation

[Postponed. Date to be announced] **Experiential Learning Session 1** at Tsz Shan Monastery

February 19: Session 3: Strong Social Bonds: Gratitude, Compassion, and Reconciliation

February 26: Session 4: The Role of Positive Emotions: Amusement, Awe, and Hope

March 5: BREAK

March 12: Session 5: Mental Habits of Happiness: Mindfulness and Self-Compassion

March 19: Session 6: Global Happiness: Bringing out the Best in Each Other

March 26: Experiential Learning Session 2 at Tsz Shan Monastery

Course Readings:

Session 1 - The What, Why, and How of Happiness

Simon-Thomas, E. (2017) [Three Things I Learned from Teaching Happiness](#), *Greater Good*.

McMahon, D. (2009) [Happiness the Hard Way](#), *Greater Good*.

Session 2 - Built for Connection: Attachment, Empathy, Generosity, and Cooperation

Klein, L. (2013) [Scratch a Happy Adult, Find a Socially Connected Childhood](#), *Greater Good*.

Allen, S. and Suttie, J. (2015) [How Our Brains Make Us Generous](#), *Greater Good*.

Adam-Smith, J. (2009) [Birds Do It, Bats Do It](#), *Greater Good*.

Session 3 - Strong Social Bonds: Gratitude, Compassion, and Reconciliation

Evans, Karin. (2018) [Why Relationships Are the Secret to Healthy Aging](#), *Greater Good*.

Jazairi, H. (2018) [Six Habits of Highly Compassionate People](#), *Greater Good*.

Suttie, J. (2019) [The Ripple Effects of Thank You](#), *Greater Good*.

Session 4 - The Role of Positive Emotions: Amusement, Awe, and Hope

Keltner, D (2016) [Why Do We Feel Awe](#), *Greater Good*.

Suttie, J. (2017) [How Laughter Brings Us Together](#), *Greater Good*.

Simon-Thomas, E. (2020) [What Happy People Think about Luck](#), *Greater Good*.

Session 5 - Mental Habits of Happiness: Mindfulness, Self-Compassion, and Honest optimism

Goleman D. (2014) [Is Attention the Secret to Emotional Intelligence](#), *Greater Good*.

Newman, K. (2016) [Neuroscience Strategies for Resilience](#), *Greater Good*.

Sanderson, Catherine. (2019) [How to Prime Your Mind for Optimism](#), *Greater Good*.

Session 6 - Global Happiness: Bringing out the Best in Each Other

Gregoire, C. (2018) [How Money Changes the Way You Think and Feel](#), *Greater Good*.

Zaki, J. (2019) [In a Divided World We Need to Choose Empathy](#), *Greater Good*.

Allen, S. (2017) [Does Good Government Make People More Generous?](#), *Great Good*.

Assessment:

1. You are required to attend at least 6 out of 8 sessions and at least 1 out of 2 experiential learning sessions; and
2. The instructor may assign some home practice exercises and/or short reflective writings for you. Details to be announced in the class.

Community of Practice:

Students can apply to participate in a subsequent Community of Practice. This group will meet periodically following the completion of the course, enabling participants to learn from one another and get support while applying the course content to various aspects of their lives and work.

Further Opportunity to Engage with the Practice:

Students who have completed both the Scientific Foundations and the Practical Intensive courses will also be eligible to serve as teaching assistants for these courses in the future, helping the instructor teach the course and offering support to the new learners in the course. Ideally, these teaching assistants are from the Community of Practice. Being a teaching assistant help a former student keep remembering, engaging with, and deepening their practice.

Course Fee:

The course fee for the Scientific Foundations Course is HK\$5,000.

How to Apply:

Apply here: <https://forms.gle/SKwHn2hh2tyjQ4yo6>

Enquiries: tsi@tszshan.org