

*The Art and Science
of Getting Happier*



BUILD

the

LIFE

You

WANT

**STUDENT READING
GUIDE**



What others are saying

”

“What a great read! There are so many actionable ideas that you can put into your life immediately and see life improvement.”

— *Greg L.*

“Happiness is a serious subject that deserves more research and helpful ‘how to, practical guides’ like this one.”

— *Antonia B.*

“We should all read this book once a year to stay connected with what really matters in life. Absolutely loved it!!”

— *Monica D.*

“Whether you are just starting out on a journey to find more happiness or need a refresher, this book is for you. It offers practical tips and insights based on scientific research.”

— *Lynn L.*

Contents



A Note from a Recent College Graduate

3

Before You Read

5

Questions to Consider

7

Show Off Your Happy

9

Notes

10



A Note from a Recent College Graduate

Dear Reader,

Not long ago, I was in the same position that you are in now. After the excitement and anticipation of starting college had worn off, and my parents had driven away (my mom crying and waving through the back windshield), I closed the door of my dorm room, and for the first time, I felt completely alone. It's not what I had pictured when I thought about my first week in college. I was in an unfamiliar city with strangers, in a place that was now referred to as my "new home," but it didn't feel that way. To make matters worse, everyone around me was buzzing with excitement and settling into their new lives.

Throughout college, my emotions waxed and waned with new challenges each year. While it looked like everyone around me was effortlessly conquering college life, I found myself struggling to keep up. It wasn't like I was failing out of school or didn't have any friends, but I felt disconnected and uncertain about my values and priorities. It was like I was drifting toward graduation without a clear sense of who I was or what I wanted.

Looking back, I realize that many of my peers felt the same way, and after reading this book, I see that it could have been very different for me if I had the right tools and guidance. *Build the Life You Want* showed me how to take control of my life and make the necessary changes. College is often viewed as a stepping stone to the future: work hard, build knowledge, and figure out what you want to do. We think that we will be happy once we graduate and land that dream job, so we accept our current state of unhappiness and overlook the opportunity for personal growth. It doesn't have to be that way. These years could be perfect for what Arthur Brooks calls "me-search," or research about yourself.



So read this book and discover your personality profile in Chapter 1—how strongly you feel emotions (I am a Mad Scientist!). From there you'll learn about metacognition and how to manage your emotions. You will be reminded how to put less importance on yourself and focus more on the world around you, something we often forget. While reading, think about what is important in your life and how that may affect your happiness. With the big changes you are currently going through, it is easy for your priorities to shift. This book helps you to realign what is important to you and to prioritize those values.

Take advantage of the environment that college has to offer, where you can try new things, meet new people, and grow in your understanding of yourself. Good luck on your journey and I hope that this book will help you with your own “me-search.”

Happy reading!

Olivia

Olivia L, University of Arizona, Class of 2021



Before You Read

In a sea of self-help books promising to unlock the secret to happiness, it's easy to roll your eyes at a book called *Build the Life You Want: The Art and Science of Getting Happier*. You might think, "How is this book going to be any different than the last?"

What makes *Build the Life You Want* truly different (and so powerfully effective) is that it moves beyond self-help by providing science-backed tools and practices that help you better understand yourself and your emotions, and adjust your attention to the areas that matter most for your happiness.

But reading this book alone won't instantly make you happier. You have to work at it, like exercise. It's not as if one jog around the block will prepare you to run a marathon. You need to practice, to run every day, and to create an action plan. The journey to becoming happier also requires a plan and this book will help you create just that.



Here are some tips on how to approach this book:

1. **Begin with an open mind.** You are the only person who can decide you want to improve your well-being, so only you can make the changes needed to do that.
2. **Embrace the discomfort that comes up.** It's tempting to cling to our familiar routines for comfort and security, but real personal growth happens when you step out of your comfort zone.
3. **Engage actively with the material:** do the activities, discuss the questions that arise and talk about the topics with your family and friends.
4. **Be receptive to being met where you are right now.** Use what you learn as a guide, and know that it doesn't ALL need to work for you today or immediately.

As you begin to read, remember that true happiness is not a destination but a journey. As Oprah says, the goal is “happierness.” Just as physical fitness requires consistent effort, so too does cultivating more happiness. So lace up your mental sneakers, take those first steps “off the couch,” and trust in your ability to build the life YOU want.



Questions to Consider

As you read *Build the Life You Want*, take a moment to reflect on the following questions. They serve as a loose roadmap for your journey toward “happierness,” guiding you through the themes and ideas within the book. These questions are intended to ignite your curiosity, spark anticipation, and help you make a deeper connection with the text. They are also great conversation starters for getting to know your fellow students better and deepening your relationship with friends and family.



- What does happiness look like to you?
- Can you think of a time in your life when you weren't able to manage your feelings and reactions? Recall the event. What was the outcome of this?
- What do you think would change in your life if you were able to manage your emotions more effectively?
- What are some things you are grateful for right now and how do you express the gratitude that you feel? How do the people around you react to your gratitude?
- How do you let others' emotions influence your own? Is there something you can do differently?
- We often check in on friends and family when they don't seem like themselves. Do you ever check in on yourself like this? How might neglecting your own well-being stop you from helping others to be happier?
- If you paid more attention to the people and world around you, what do you think you would learn about yourself?
- The book describes the four most important pillars of your life —family, friendship, work (school), and faith (spirituality/life philosophy.) Which is the most important to you, and why? Are your four pillars balanced? Why do you think each one is important to your happiness?

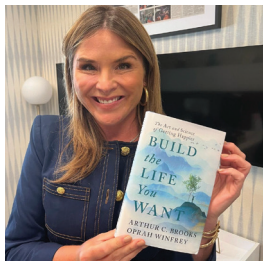
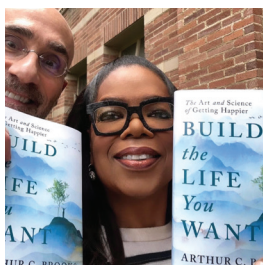
For more resources, please visit www.arthurbrooks.com.



Show Off Your Happy

Share your happy moments with us. Post your photos on social media and don't forget to use the hashtag below.

#buildthelifyouwant





“Oprah and I have written this book to unlock for you the amazing secrets to emotional self-management. This isn’t based on some ancient, esoteric, mystical formula. Rather, it comes from the most cutting edge neuroscience and social science, conducted at the greatest universities in the world, related in terms non-scientists can understand and put into use.”

— Arthur C. Brooks

“I see myself in so much of this book. My hope is that you will see yourself, too. Not just the person you’ve been, but the truly happier person you can become. As I follow the principles that Arthur presents, I am becoming happier. I’m actually having fun, too—a word that previously didn’t exist in my vocabulary. And what I know for sure is that happiness multiplies when we share it. May this book serve as a reminder to embrace and share yours.”

— Oprah Winfrey

