ABSTRACT

Our brain processes significantly better when we are happy. This leads to more intelligence, creativity, our energy level rises and we become more successful. Many people think we have to be successful to be happy. But it is the other way around. We have to be happy to be successful.

How can we become happy? The brain acts as a lens that shapes our individual reality. By changing the lens to focus on positivity it gets rewired for a positive mindset. People become happier and therefore more successful.

This creates a great opportunity for interaction design. We get in contact with so many interactive devices every day. From turning off the alarm clock to making coffee, taking a shower, driving a car, using mobile phones, computers and so on. These interactions can put us in a positive or negative mood. By creating a positive user experience the mind can be changed to focus on patterns of positivity.

How can we create a positive user experience? By looking at the two books *The Happiness Advantage* by Shawn Achor and *The Art of Happiness* by the Dalai Lama and Howard C. Cutler I found out what their methods are to think positive. *The Happiness Advantage* takes a more business approach to the subject and *the Art of Happiness* represents a Buddhism point of view. I compared the two books looking for commonalities and differences. Then I used these findings to create new methods and an evaluation system for interactive products regarding happiness. The methods can be used as a guideline to implement certain qualities into interactive products regarding happiness. The evaluation system can be used to evaluate these qualities in existing products.

The evaluation system still needs to be worked out. It was not possible to make it perfect in such a short time. That's why I will use and test it in my practical project to develop it further on. I will try to implement the qualities of my findings and evaluate my practical project at the end using the system.

Keywords: happiness, interaction design, user experience, the happiness advantage, shawn achor, the art of happiness, buddhism

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INTRODUCTION

«Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success. If you love what you are doing, you will be successful.»

Albert Schweitzer

Many people think they have to be successful to be happy. They set goals in their life and think when they reach them they will be happy. But as soon as they reach the goal, there will be another one and another one and so on. Success becomes a moving target and people will never be happy.



Schwartz, Barry (2005): The Paradox of Choice, TED Talk video, TED Conferences

That's why we have to reverse the formula. Our brain processes significantly better when we are happy. This leads to more intelligence, creativity, the energy level rises and we become more successful. It is an advantage to be happy. Psychologist Shawn Achor calls it "The Happiness Advantage".

But how can we become happy? Our brain acts as a lens through which we perceive the world. This lens shapes our individual reality. By changing the lens to focus on positivity the brain gets rewired for a positive mindset. People become happier and therefore more successful.

The idea of training our mind to be happy is not a new one. It became more accepted in the western world since positive psychology came up in the late 90s around Martin Seligman but it was already part of Buddhism thoughts a long time ago. The Dalai Lama describes the mind in the book *The Art of Happiness* as the main factor to be happy.

This creates a great opportunity for interaction design. We get in contact with so many interactive devices every day. From turning off the alarm clock to making coffee, taking a shower, driving a car, using mobile phones, computers and so on. These interactions can put us in a positive or negative mood. For example a ticket machine at the train station. People are often in a hurry when buying tickets. If the interface is complicated and confusing people get more stressed out maybe even before they are using the machine. But if it is easy to use and the user feels comfortable he or she can think more clearly, focusing on the task itself and get the ticket faster. The fact that the world is getting more and more digitalized makes it even more important to create good interfaces and help people to keep a positive mindset.

This is part of my responsibility as an interaction designer. But how can I implement or evaluate the qualities of interactive products to help people to keep a positive mindset when using such products? It requires a tool or design method to measure these qualities. And that's what I would like to work out in this written assignment. I would like to learn from the methods used in the two books the Happiness Advantage and the Art of Happiness and use the knowledge to create a design method for evaluating interactive products.

How can I use methods from *the Happiness Advantage* and *the Art of Happiness* to create a new design method for evaluating interactive products regarding happiness?

I can use this evaluation system for the practical part of my bachelor project and in my future work as an interaction designer. In my practical project I will try to implement the findings of this written assignment how to add certain qualities to interactive products regarding happiness and evaluate it afterwards using the system I created.

METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FRAME

By making a comparative analysis between the two books *The Happiness Advantage* by Shawn Achor and *The Art of Happiness* by the Dalai Lama and Howard C. Cutler I get two different views on the same subject. *The Happiness Advantage* is more business oriented and *the Art of Happiness* explains the topic from a Buddhism point of view. By finding out their commonalities and differences I won't just focus and believe in one source but remain critical regards both of them. Further more it gives me a more open-minded view on the subject of long-term happiness and will help me map the summarized findings to interaction design. I will use these methods to create an evaluation system for interactive products. By defining questions for all the methods I will be able to rate products in the different aspects of *the Happiness Advantage* and *the Art of Happiness*.

I will use and try out the system in my practical project. In the concept phase I can think about what kind of interactions I could use regarding the qualities of the evaluation system. In the design phase I can implement them and when finishing the project I will make an evaluation of my own project using the system. This allows me to reflect on my written assignment with practical experience.

EMPIRICAL STUDIES / CASES

THE 7 PRINCIPLES OF THE HAPPINESS ADVANTAGE COMPARED TO THE ART OF HAPPINESS AND INTERACTION DESIGN

There are seven main principles explained in *the Happiness Advantage* how to train the mind to become happy. I will use these seven principles as a main structure to begin with the comparative analysis. This will allow me to categorize and structure the content and findings into different parts. The seven principles are the following:

1. THE HAPPINESS ADVANTAGE	Our brain performs better when we are happy. Our intelligence, creativity and energy level rises.
2. THE FULCRUM AND THE LEVER	Our brain is able to change. If we adjust our mindset to a more positive one we will be more fulfilled.
3. THE TETRIS EFFECT	We see what our brain is trained for. Retrain it to spot patterns of positivity.
4. FALLING UP	See crisis or failure as an opportunity for growth.
5. THE ZORRO CIRCLE	Concentrate on small manageable goals to feel in control.
6. THE 20 SECOND RULE	Decrease the required activation energy for goals or tasks to make them happen.
7. SOCIAL INVESTMENT	We need social relationships to drive. We bounce back from setbacks faster, accomplish more and feel a greater sense of purpose.

I made a summary for all the principles and split them into a theoretical and practical part. The theoretical part contains the main ideas or methods of the principle. The practical part gives advises how to implement the method in our daily life. Then I could use this grid to fill in related content of *the Art of Happiness* and my conclusions regarding interaction design. The following table shows the structure of this first comparison.

PRINCIPLE	THE HAPPINESS ADVANTAGE	THE ART OF HAPPINESS	INTERACTION DESIGN
THEORETICAL			
PRACTICAL			

In the practical cell of interaction design I wrote down concrete ideas how to implement the methods in a practical work. It was a tool of ideation and I could always come back to these ideas for my practical project but I didn't use them further on in my written assignment. This mapping was about six pages so I had narrow it down to the key findings.

KFY FINDINGS

The title in the first column is the name of the principle of *the Happiness Advantage* defined by Shawn Achor. In the second column I made a summary of the principle. Then I filled in related content of *the Art of Happiness* in the third column. In the last column there are my key findings how to use the methods of *the Happiness Advantage* and *the Art of Happiness* in interaction design.

	1	ı	1
PRINCIPLE	THE HAPPINESS ADVANTAGE	THE ART OF HAPPINESS	INTERACTION DESIGN
1. THE HAPPINESS ADVANTAGE	 We perform better when we are happy Happiness is the center and success orbits around it Success is a moving target Happiness is relative to the person who experiences it 	 Everybody wants to be happy There are different factors that lead to happiness but the mind is the most important one We continuously want more than we have Through training we can change 	 Give the user a good experience to make him happy and therefore more productive Show the user that he is improving and that he is part of the success Make the user feel attached to the artifact not in a physical but in an emotional way
2. THE FULCRUM AND THE LEVER	 Our brain can just process a limited amount of experiences at the same time We have to use these resources for positive impressions We can't change the reality but how we process it 	 Everybody has the ability to be happy A calm mind is the basic need for happiness The mind is able to change 	 Through interaction design we can change how we perceive the world Give the user not too many information at the same time Focus on positive information Neutral interface for a calm mind
3. THE TETRIS EFFECT	 Cognitive after image: We see what our brain is programmed for Unintentional blindness: The brain as a human spam filter 	 If you continuously remind yourself of a problem it becomes part of you Reduce negative thoughts and emotions and replace them with positive ones 	 Connect different parts of a process using the same patterns (cognitive after image) Use existing patterns / metaphors
4. FALLING UP	 Crisis can be catalysts for creativity From failure to be stronger Problems are temporary There is always a way upwards, the only task is to find it 	 Compassion and suffering are closely linked Confront suffering and don't ignore it Give suffering a meaning You are not alone suffering 	 Make a clear and understandable interface Show people where they are in the process Make people learn from failures and not being afraid of using the device again Provide a community where people can share their problems

5. THE ZORRO CIRCLE

- It's more important how much control we think we have than how much control we actually do have
- Circle of control: Concentrate on small manageable goals
- Jerk vs. thinker: Emotions vs. thinking
- Emotional hijacking: The jerk takes over
- Look at a problem from a greater distance then it appears smaller
- Angriness is not genetic and not automatically activated
- Anger and hatred are the biggest obstacles to become happy - They eliminate the ability to judge between right and wrong
- Divide a process in small steps
- Give the user a feeling of control
- Provide a way where the user can get rid of the jerk

6. THE 20 SECOND RULE

- Humans are biologically prone to habits
- Will power does not work for a long time
- We automatically follow the path of least resistance
- Active leisure enhances concentration, motivation and our sense of enjoyment but it needs a certain activation energy
- A disciplined mind leads to happiness
- You need to develop a strong willingness to do the change
- Develop a sense of urgency to strengthen your will
- Keep the activation energy as low as possible
- Use existing habits / metaphors
- Encapsulate different tasks from each other

7. SOCIAL INVESTMENT

- The more social connections we have the happier, more productive, engaged and energetic we are
- It protects us from stress and we can focus on our qualities
- The happier you are the happier the others are the happier you are
- Our education should focus on the importance of wholesome engagement
- To see the positive in others
 make you feel connected
- We depend on others
- Share data with others
- Connect employees / team
- Make the user feel connected

KEY FINDINGS AND QUESTIONS TO EVALUATE INTERACTIVE PRODUCTS

The key findings in interaction design from the comparative analysis above can be seen as quality attributes of interactive products regarding happiness. In order to evaluate products each of the principle needs to be rated in a way. Therefore I formulated questions, which can be used to rate the product in a scale from one to ten. I setup an online survey with all the questions and asked friends to evaluate one of their favorite iPhone apps. The main purpose was to get a feedback for the questions if they were understandable or not. And of course I could use the data to compare the different apps in their qualities. I asked them to choose their favorite app and not a specific one because the better they knew it the better they could answer the questions. It requires a bigger effort to work oneself into a new app. So I tried to keep the activation energy low to get more answers. I reformulated the key findings and questions regarding the feedback for a better understanding and defined a more interaction design related title for each principle to point out what the principle is about.

PRINCIPLE	KEY FINDINGS	QUESTIONS
8. THE HAPPINESS ADVANTAGE PERFORM BETTER	 Make the user satisfied and not to want more Show the development of the user Create an emotional connection to the user Make it attractive to use every day Customization 	 Does the product make you happy when using it? Does it leave you without any further desires? Can you see how you develop yourself as a user? Do you have an emotional connection to it? Is it attractive to use every day? Is it customizable for your needs?
9. THE FULCRUM AND THE LEVER ADJUST THE MINDSET	 Focus on positive information Create a neutral interface for a calm mind 	 Does the product show more positive than negative information? Is the design of the interface neutral? Do you feel calm when using the product?
10. THE TETRIS EFFECT USAGE OF PATTERNS	 Connect different parts by using similar patterns Use metaphors to simplify processes Highlight important information clearly 	 Are there similar patterns in different parts of the interface structure? Are there any metaphors? Do you always notice the important information?
11. FALLING UP LEARN FROM FAILURE	 Make a clear and understandable interface Show people where they are in the process Provide help features The user should learn from failure and not being afraid of using the device again 	 Is the interface intuitive? Do you see where you are in the process? Are there any help features? If there is an error or something went wrong can you learn from it?
12. THE ZORRO CIRCLE FEEL IN CONTROL	 Make small steps in a process, don't show too much information Give the user a feeling of control Give the user a feedback of his actions 	 Do you have a great overview of what is going on? Is the amount of information shown at the same time appropriate? Do you feel in control when using the product? Do you get a good feedback of your actions?
13. THE 20 SECOND RULE FAST ACCESS	 Make the product fast and easy accessible Keep distraction away 	 Is the product fast and easy accessible? Can you focus on your main task without being distracted?
14. SOCIAL INVESTMENT FEEL CONNECTED	 Share data with others Connect users Let the user feel connected 	 Is it possible to share data with others? Are there any connections to other users? Do you feel connected to other people when using the product?

EVALUATION SYSTEM

To create and test the evaluation system I used the answers I got from the online survey. I created an excel sheet where I could fill in the ratings for all the questions and then got calculated and visualized what the average per principle and the overall average was.

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	ī	1	1	2
	4	6	7	7
	3	5	3	5
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	8	10	3	4
	7	10	7	2
	8	10	1	2
	8	9		8
	5	8	7	6
7	1	1	1	1











I chose three apps and made the questionnaire myself to compare my outcome to the users'. This allowed me to see if there was a common trend in rating a product or if the evaluation was completely subjective.

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ANALYSIS / DISCUSSION

THE HAPPINESS ADVANTAGE

The Happiness Advantage shows a very business oriented, western point of view to become happy. Most of the examples are related to business people who are stuck at work or companies that are not doing fine. Then Shawn Achor uses his techniques of the Happiness Advantage to explain how to solve the problem. He has a lot of experiences as a consultant for companies during crisis to help restart forward progress. He points out very well how the techniques work in practice what is important for the western readers to see themselves in the same situation and relate advises directly to their life. But it might be too focused on the business outcome. The overall goal is often to become more successful by being a happier person instead of just being happy and not thinking about the business outcome. That's not a bad thing because the book's main target group are business people but one could consider that not everything is about being successful.

It was helpful for me that Shawn Achor mentions a lot of references to positive psychology, neuroscience and researches made in these fields. Therefore I could see that the methods are scientifically proven. I can use that as an interaction designer to explain and legitimate the qualities of the Happiness Advantage in interactive products. In relation to interaction design it was also helpful that the book is very practice oriented. That made it easier to relate his methods to the interaction design key findings and my practical project.

THE ART OF HAPPINESS

The Art of Happiness is a collaboration between psychiatrist Howard C. Cutler and the Dalai Lama. Howard C. Cutler basically poses questions to the Dalai Lama and interprets the answers. The questions are about both – Buddhism and western topics like marriage, meditation or self-hatred but the overall topic is always happiness. It is interesting when the Dalai Lama talks about a western topic that is not part of his culture. Then he analyzes the situation from his own point of view with his lifetime experience and Buddhism knowledge. These findings allow the reader to see certain circumstances from another point of view.

For me personally and as an interaction designer it is very important to see the world from different angles. It allows me to reflect on it differently and gives me a greater understanding of the situation. And because different cultures have different ways of thinking they can carry solutions we didn't think about. Like when the Dalai Lama speaks about self-hatred when he never experienced or heard of the concept before. The fact that self-hatred doesn't exist in Buddhism reminds us that it is not part of our fundamental nature. And this leads to the awareness that everybody should be able to overcome self-hatring thoughts by believing in oneself and focus on the positive aspects of life.

THE TWO BOOKS COMPARED TO EACH OTHER

As already mentioned both books deal with the subject of long-term happiness. *The Happiness Advantage* takes a more business and western approach and *the Art of Happiness* a more spiritual and eastern approach to it. The main philosophy of both books is the same: to change people's mind to become happy. In almost every point they have similar opinions. The reason for that is probably because Shawn Achor earned a Masters from Harvard Divinity School in Christian and Buddhist ethics.

I could only see one conflict in the thoughts about will power. Shawn Achor writes that will power is not enough to change the mind because we always follow the path of least resistance. Will power gets worn out after a while and we fall back to old habits. We should reduce the required activation energy for a certain task and transform it to the path of least resistance instead.

The Dalai Lama's thoughts about will power are the opposite. He sais that we have to develop a strong willingness to do the change and that we have to develop a sense of urgency to strengthen our will. For example we should think about our life as non-permanent to develop urgency for enjoying every single moment in our life.

In my opinion it is true that will power alone is not enough. There is always a chance of falling back because will power is not a constant fortitude. There is also an obvious difference in the importance of spirituality between the two books. Spirituality is a fundamental part of Buddhism. The Dalai Lama speaks about that it doesn't matter which religion you believe in but everybody should find a spiritual part that bests suits his or her disposition. Besides meditation spirituality is not part of *the Happiness Advantage*. I also didn't include it into my work because I think it could defer people from using an interactive device.

Finally I could use more methods from the Happiness Advantage then from the Art of Happiness for my key findings in interaction design. Probably because it was more practice and western oriented what matches better with interaction design. But both books strengthen each other by having similar thoughts on the subject.

KEY FINDINGS IN INTERACTION DESIGN

The key findings in interaction design are basically not new inventions I made but more existing methods of interaction design related to the conclusion of the Happiness Advantage and the Art of Happiness. I could refer the methods to the background knowledge of the two books und therefore make them reasonable. By categorizing them into the seven principles I was able to see qualities in interactive products in different aspects. Some of the findings are more related to the summary of the principle then the principle itself. For example the principle Falling Up is about seeing failure as an opportunity to improve oneself. To achieve that people should focus on the path upwards and not circling around a problem. This led me to the finding to show people where they are in a process and not let them circling around.

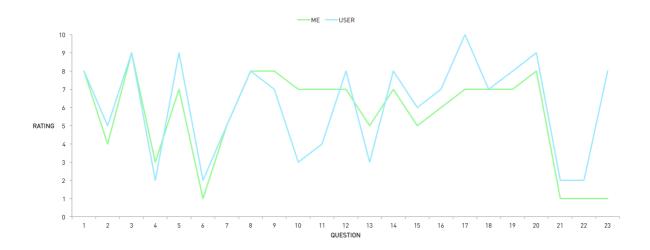
I can use the key findings in the concept or design phase by making decisions regarding them. Another way could be in the ideation phase to brainstorm around the principles or key findings. They should not be taken as the only guideline to design a product but they can be used for inspiration or advises as any other design method.

In this written assignment the key findings have also been a step in the process towards the evaluation system.

EVALUATION SYSTEM

The questionnaire was a result of a long process. The questions made sense to me because I've seen every single question growing from the very beginning until the end. But I had to find out if they also made sense for somebody else without the whole background. That's why I made the online survey and asked people to have a look at them and give me a feedback. As I expected some of the questions didn't make sense to them. With help of the feedback I could rephrase them for a better understanding. I also redefined some of the key findings when there was confusion about a certain point. The questions still need to be worked out. The survey was just a very brief first feedback I got. It should be tested with many people evaluating one specific product to be able to compare the answers and see if there is a common trend. For this reason I chose three of the apps and did the questionnaire myself. Even if the result is quantitatively not representative it shows that there is a common trend and similar patterns in the diagrams between my and the user's result.

The following diagram shows my rating compared to the user's rating of the app Danske Mobilbank. It shows clearly that there are similarities in the rating. On the other hand there is a big difference at question eleven and twelve. To develop the system further on these differences needed to be reduced to a minimum to make it as objective as possible.



To make the evaluation system more precise it would require long-term user studies at this point. There is not enough time to do that in this theoretical part of the bachelor project but it is a good base to work on in the future. As I know exactly what all the questions mean I definitely can use the system for my practical project.

CONCLUSION AND PERSPECTIVES

I learned a lot from this written assignment. I tried out some of the methods of *the Happiness Advantage* and *the Art of Happiness* during the project to think positive or when I was struggling with the project and that was really helpful. It was also nice to see that I unintentionally already practiced some of the methods before.

Regarding interaction design I've seen how important it is to create a good user experience. Not just to make the usage of the device as easy as possible but also to help people to keep or get a positive mindset. We are busy enough so we should not struggle around with devices that actually should help us to make life easier. It reminds me of the Dalai Lama's thought about religion:

«Religion should be a remedy to help reduce the conflict and suffering in the world, not another source of conflict.»

The Dalai Lama

I created a new design method to evaluate interactive products regarding the user's happiness. Implementing these qualities into an interactive product can create a positive user experience and therefore helps the user to stay positive what makes him or her more productive and successful.

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For more web-based references please visit www.happy-bachelor.com/category/research

APPENDIX

EVALUATION IN DETAIL

This is an example of an evaluation I did for the app "Convertbot". First of all a very short introduction to the application:



Convertbot is an application for the iPhone that allows converting from one unit to another in different kind of categories.

STARTSCREEN



This is the start screen of the application. It starts up with the conversion that has been used the last time. In the upper part of the screen is which units will be converted (from Fahrenheit to Celsius).

ENTER VALUES



By tapping on the values of the units a numeric keypad pops in and the values can be changed. There is a button to invert the units in the lower visible in which category the center of the screen. By user is (Temperature) and tapping again on the values of the units the user gets back to the home screen.

CHOOSE CATEGORY



The user also has the possibility to invert the units by clicking on the blue button in the center of the big wheel. Turning the big wheel to the next icon will change the category. The units can be changed by tapping on one of the units in the bottom of the he wants to use. wheel

SETTINGS



By tapping on the small information icon in the lower right corner of the home screen the settings appear. There are a view settings, a support page with the FAQs, a demo video and the user can define which units she or

Below there is the questionnaire with my answers and the rating I did.

PERFORM BETTER		7
Does the product make you happy when using it?	Yes it does make me happy because I get the information I am looking for and I like to interact and play around with the app.	10
Does it leave you without any further desires?	I am totally happy with it and I don't need anything else (for converting units).	10
Can you see how you develop yourself as a user?	No there is no history of what I have done or what I could have learned.	1
Do you have an emotional connection to it?	Not really but I remember some situations when it was really helpful.	4
Is it attractive to use every day?	Yes it is. As long as you need to convert something of course.	10
Is it customizable for your needs?	You can activate and deactivate the units you would like to use. That's the most important part for me. You can't make any changes in the interface.	8

ADJUST THE MINDSET		7
Does the product show more positive than negative information?	It is just data. So it is neutral.	5
Is the design of the interface neutral?	Yes it is. The wheel to change the categories is a bit unconventional but very intuitive.	8
Do you feel calm when using the product?	Yes I do. I can focus on the task I have to do.	9
USAGE OF PATTERNS		8
Are there similar patterns in different parts of the interface structure?	It's always the same. It doesn't matter which units you're converting.	10
Are there any metaphors?	The wheel to choose the category is a metaphor of a physical wheel and reminds of a dial of an old phone. When typing in the values the interface is a metaphor of a calculator.	7
Do you always notice the important information?	There is no special information but I know that the information is displayed in the top part of the interface. So I don't miss it.	8
LEARNING FROM FAILURE		8
Is the interface intuitive?	Yes it is intuitive. Even if the wheel might be unconventional.	8
Do you see where you are in the process?	You can see where you are looking at the shown interface elements. In the settings there is navigation header.	7
Are there any help features?	There are a view FAQ's, Email support and a very helpful demo video that shows directly in the app how it works.	10
If there is an error or something went wrong can you learn from it?	I can always learn from failure but there are no special tools to learn from errors. I've never had an error so far.	5
FEEL IN CONTROL		10
Do you have a great overview of what is going on?	Yes I always have the overview of what's going on. But you can't see all the units at the same time.	9
Is the amount of information shown at the same time appropriate?	Yes it is never too much.	10
Do you feel in control when using the product?	The mechanical look of the interface, the animated transitions between the different parts and the interface sounds let me feel in control.	10
Do you get a good feedback of your actions?	You can immediately see what you are changing and it has nice sounds as a feedback.	10
FAST ACCESS		10
Is the product fast and easy accessible?	Just start the app and it is ready!	10
Can you focus on your main task without being	Yes, there are no commercials and no dispensable functions.	10
distracted?	,	

FEEL CONNECTED		1
Is it possible to share data with others?	No there isn't.	1
Are there any connections to other users?	No there isn't.	1
Do you feel connected to other people when using the product?	No I just use it for myself.	1

The following diagram shows the average per principle.

