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Dr. Laurie Santos · *The Happiness Lab*

Spousal Gratitude: Why Marriage Stops Feeling Special

Carousel · Instagram: 34K views, 1.5K interactions



Laurie Santos
@lauriesantosofficial

When we first fall in love and get married, everything about our partner feels exciting. But over time, we adapt and get used to even to the best parts of our relationship.

Psychologists call this **hedonic adaptation**—our mind's tendency to adjust to positive changes until they no longer feel special. Hedonic adaptation is one reason happiness in marriage tends to decline.

But research by Barton and colleagues shows that **spousal gratitude**, or how much we naturally experience gratitude towards our spouse, can help us keep that special feeling for longer.



Laurie Santos
@lauriesantosofficial

Spousal gratitude reduces hedonic adaptation, and it's the most consistent and significant predictor of marriage quality.

Feeling genuinely thankful for our partner helps preserve the happiness in our relationship over time. It can even buffer against issues like poor communication.



Laurie Santos
@lauriesantosofficial

So say thank you to your spouse. And be specific. Let your partner know they're seen. Here's a few examples:

- "Thank you for [something they did today]. I really appreciated it."
- "I noticed how you [insert thoughtful action]—it meant a lot to me."
- "I hope you know how much I value you."

And if you're reading this, I'm grateful that you're taking the time to learn about the science of well-being. Learning how to flourish—especially in our relationships—is hard work, and you're doing it.



Want to learn more about how gratitude makes us happier?

Listen to the episode, "PJ and Alex Love to Gripe" on The Happiness Lab. Available wherever you get your podcasts.

 **Dr. Laurie Santos**

Paper Explainer: The Nun Study

Carousel · Instagram: 10K views, 175 interactions · Part of a "Paper Explainer" series that breaks down key findings from psychology research papers

DANNER ET AL. (2001)

Did you know that being happy may help you live longer?



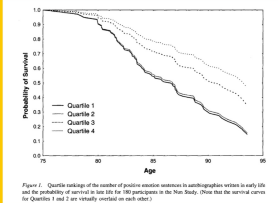
DANNER ET AL. (2001)

One of my favorite studies on this topic is known as "the Nun study."

Researchers studied the autobiographies written by nuns at ages 18–32 and tracked their longevity.

They found that the nuns who expressed more positive emotions in their writing as young adults lived significantly longer.

The top quarter of nuns who experienced the most positive emotions lived up to 6.5 years longer than the bottom quarter of nuns who experienced the least amount of positive emotions!



DANNER ET AL. (2001)

What makes this study so compelling?

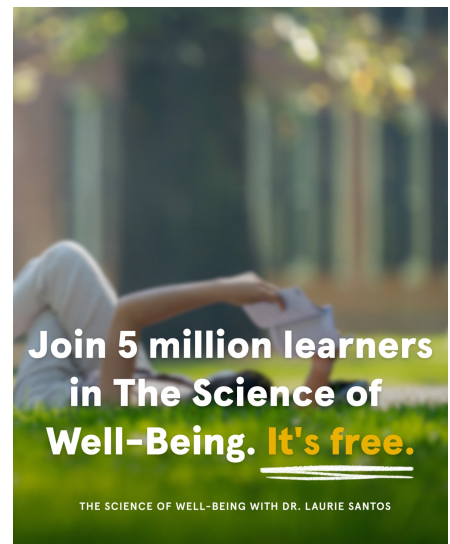
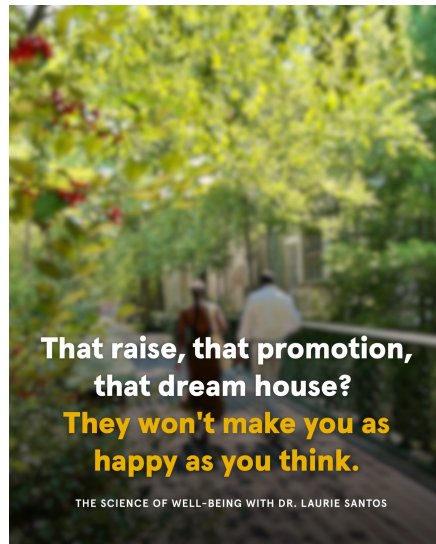
These nuns had remarkably similar lifestyles — they shared the same level of social support, didn't smoke or drink excessively, and had equal access to medical care. This unique level of control allowed researchers to isolate the special relationship between being happier and longevity.

In contrast, all participants in the current study had lived a lifestyle in which such health-risk behaviors were improbable and therefore the physiological impact of a positive emotional style was almost certainly enhanced.



The Science of Well-Being Reaches 5 Million Learners on Coursera

Carousel · Instagram: 11.5K views, 435 interactions



Caption

When I first started teaching Psychology and the Good Life at Yale, I had no idea it would reach so many people. Five million learners have now enrolled in The Science of Well-Being on Coursera. I'm humbled that so many people are able to learn more about what science shows about feeling better.

So what do 5 million people learn in this course? Here are 5 takeaways:

1. The things we chase (money, status, the perfect job, the perfect relationship) often don't deliver the happiness boost we expect. Our predictions about what will make us happy are surprisingly unreliable.
2. Social connection is the strongest predictor of well-being. Even small moments of reaching out matter more than we realize.
3. Gratitude, when practiced consistently can meaningfully shift how we experience our days. Gratitude keeps us from taking the good stuff in life for granted.
4. Our minds adapt to good things faster than we'd like (hedonic adaptation), but strategies like savoring and variety can help us fight back.
5. Knowing the science is the easy part. Putting it into practice takes real effort. That's why the course includes weekly "rewirements" to help you actually build new habits.

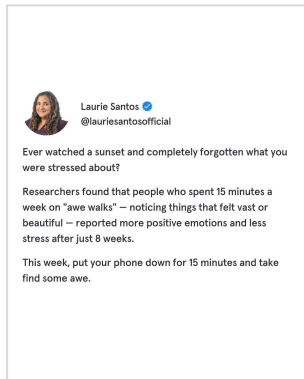
Join 5 million learners in The Science of Well-Being on Coursera. It's free.

Explore the course at the link in bio.

#ScienceOfWellBeing #Happiness #Coursera #Yale

Awe Walks: The 15-Minute Reset

Tweet Post · Instagram: 90K views, 6K interactions



Caption

We keep saving up for the big reset — the long weekend, the trip that's always three months away.

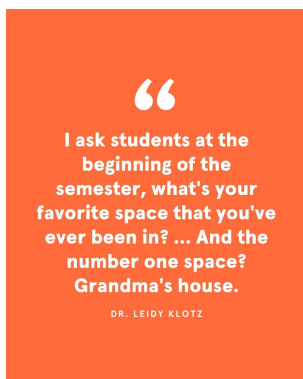
But the science suggests a surprisingly simple emotional reset takes about 15 minutes and costs nothing. The psychologist Dacher Keltner studies what happens when people encounter awe — that feeling when a sunset or a piece of music kind of stops you mid-thought. He found that awe shrinks our sense of self, and when that happens, the worries looping in our heads start to feel smaller too.

A sunset on your block counts just as much as a weekend trip to a national park. And so does a beautiful building you've walked past a hundred times but never really taken the time to look at.

This week, put your phone down for 15 minutes and find some awe.

The Space Where You Feel Most at Home

Quote Post · A top-performing post with 246K views and 16K interactions on Instagram



Caption

Think about the space where you feel most at home.

Leidy Klotz asks his UVA students — kids who've traveled everywhere — to name their favorite space. The answer, over and over: grandma's house. The corner booth at the diner. The kitchen island where they did homework with mom.

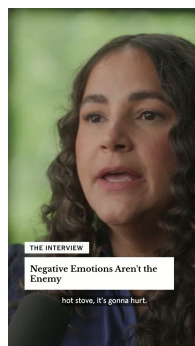
The spaces we love most are ordinary places that are filled with meaning because of the people we shared them with.

What's a totally ordinary space that means everything to you?

Video · To see my video portfolio, please visit my website, christianselden.com.



Happiness Is More Than Positive Emotions



Negative Emotions Aren't the Enemy



The Paradox of Effort



Most-Googled Happiness Questions

Lori Gottlieb

Pain Doesn't Work on a Leaderboard

Tweet Post · Instagram: 1M views, 43K interactions



Lori Gottlieb
@origottlieb_author

"Other people have it worse" has never once made anyone feel better.

It just teaches you to feel guilty for hurting.

Your pain doesn't need to win a contest to be real.

Caption

Here's something I write about in my book, #MaybeYouShouldTalkToSomeone:

Somewhere along the way, a lot of us learned to rank our pain.

There's often someone with a harder story, so who are we to suffer?

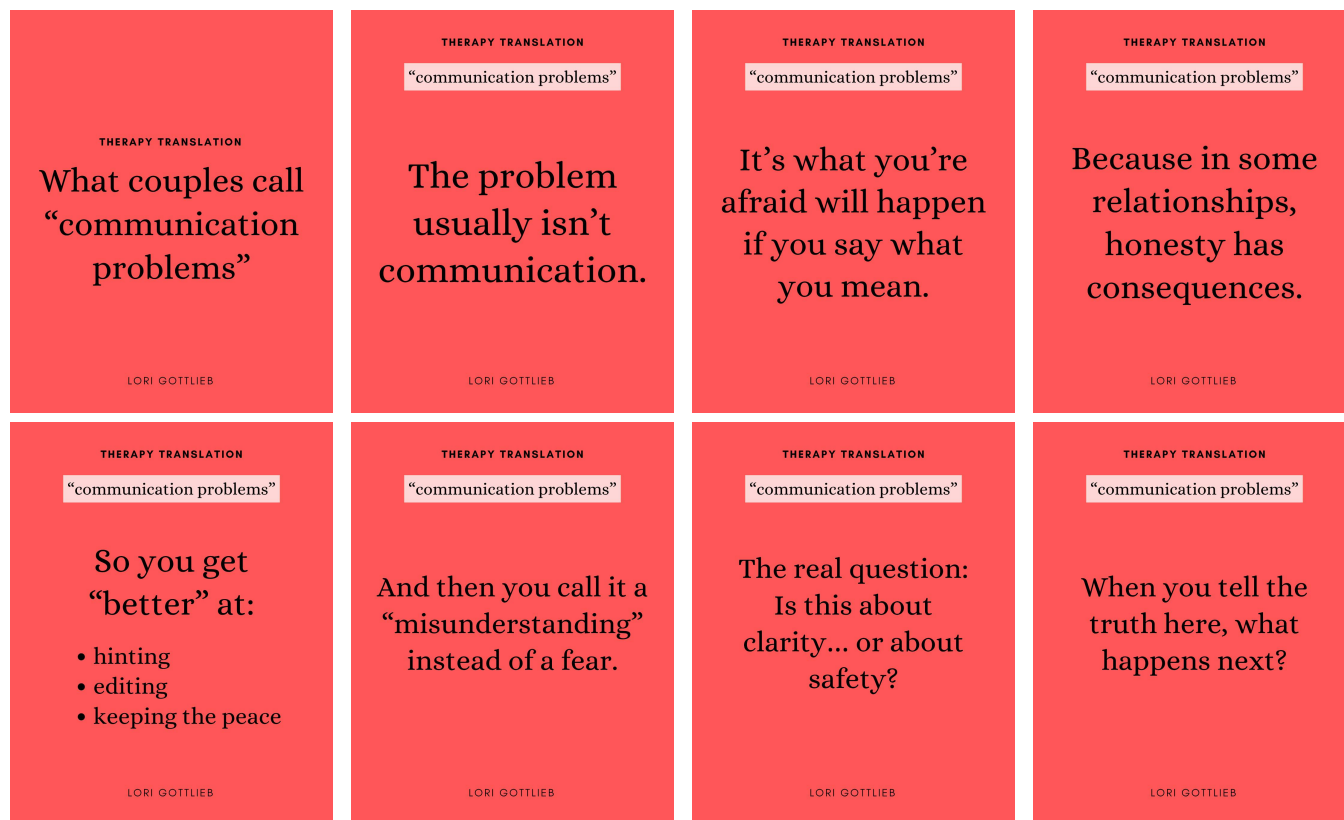
Pain doesn't work on a leaderboard. The fact that someone else is suffering more doesn't lessen what you're carrying. It just adds a layer of guilt on top, so now you're hurting and ashamed of hurting.

Two things can be true. Your problem can be smaller than someone else's and still deserve your attention.

See what happens when you let it just be true.

What Couples Call "Communication Problems"

Carousel · Therapy Translation Series · Instagram: 90K views, 1.2K interactions



Caption

When couples tell me they have "communication issues," it's usually not about vocabulary.

It's about risk.

If you say what you mean, will it turn into a fight? Will you be dismissed? Will it get used against you later? Will you be told you're "too much"? So you do what people do when something doesn't feel safe: you edit. You soften. You hint. You make it sound like it doesn't matter. And then you call the result a "misunderstanding."

Before you work on communication, ask a more useful question:

What are the consequences in this relationship when someone tells the truth?

And if the answer is "punishment," then the problem isn't communication. It's safety.

"Things People Tell Their Therapist"

Carousel · A top-performing series with 80-106K views on Instagram

 Lori Gottlieb @lorigottlieb_author Things People Tell Their Therapist	 Lori Gottlieb @lorigottlieb_author "I just need to be more patient." Translation: I'm waiting for something that may never change.	 Lori Gottlieb @lorigottlieb_author "I probably shouldn't feel this way." Translation: I'm judging my feelings instead of listening to them.
 Lori Gottlieb @lorigottlieb_author "I haven't found a good time to bring it up." Translation: I'm afraid honesty will make people uncomfortable.	 Lori Gottlieb @lorigottlieb_author "It's easier if I just do it myself." Translation: I'm tired of being disappointed.	 Lori Gottlieb @lorigottlieb_author Which sentence have you caught yourself saying?

Caption

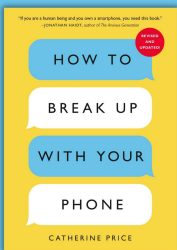
Some "reasons" we give to explain our behavior are just self-protection.

You're trying to avoid rejection, conflict, or the feeling of needing something you might not get.

But really, you're being dishonest with yourself at the cost of the very thing you want: closeness, clarity, or change.

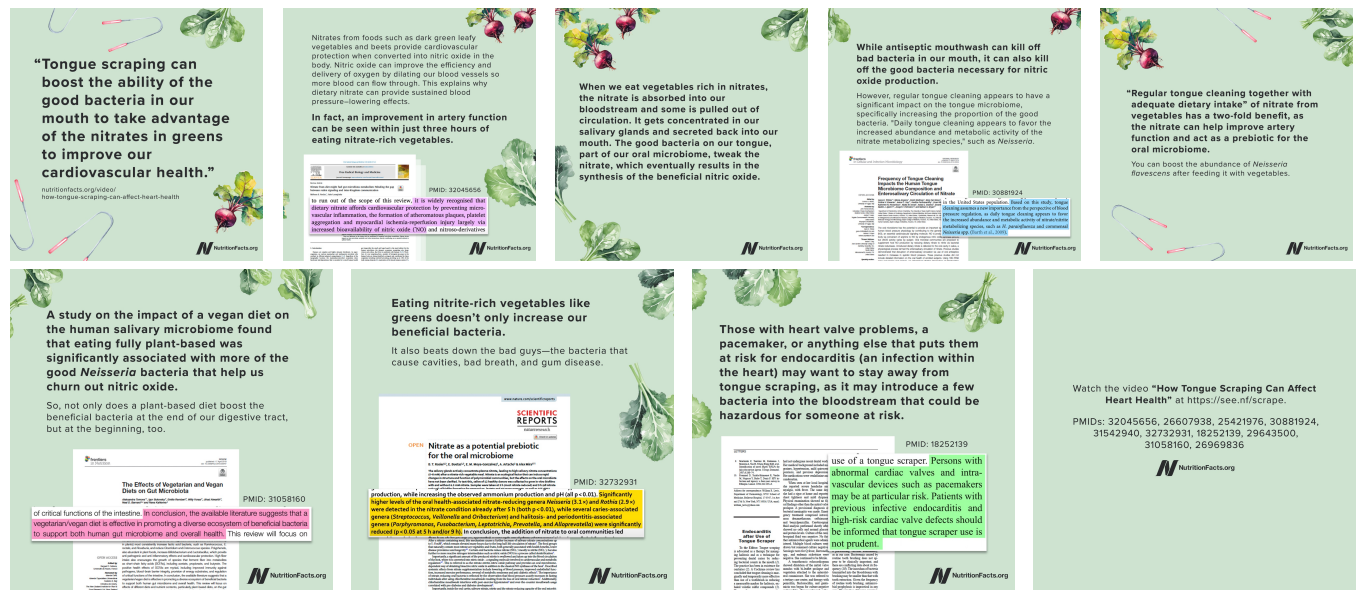
Do you recognize yourself in these?

Catherine Price

 REVISED EDITION HOW TO BREAK UP WITH YOUR PHONE CATHERINE PRICE AVAILABLE 2/4/2025	WANT TO STOP DOOMSCROLLING AND START LIVING? JOIN MY FEBRUARY PHONE BREAKUP CHALLENGE! CATHERINEPRICE.SUBSTACK.COM	Week 1 of the Phone Breakup Challenge Establish a baseline, write your phone a "breakup letter" and practice What For, Why Now, What Else? CATHERINEPRICE.SUBSTACK.COM @catherinepriceofficial	"If you are a human being and you own a smartphone, you need this book." —JONATHAN HAIDT, #1 New York Times bestselling author of The Anxious Generation  @catherinepriceofficial	Welcome to Week 2 of the February Phone Breakup Challenge Let's create some boundaries!  CATHERINEPRICE.SUBSTACK.COM @catherinepriceofficial
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Tongue Scraping & Heart Health

Carousel



The Carrot Campaign

Year-End Fundraiser · Instagram Feed, Story & Banner Formats



Instagram Posts



Instagram Story

Email Banner

The Evidence-Based Eating Guide

Carousel

Why Does Nutrition Matter?

“It turns out a more plant-based diet may help prevent—and, in some cases, even help treat or reverse—our leading causes of death, including high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, and more.”

Michael Greger, M.D.,
FACLM, in the
*Evidence-Based
Eating Guide*
PMID: 30954305



Swipe to learn more about the guide!

Learn How to Dine by Traffic Light

Rather than a black-and-white, all-or-nothing approach to eating more healthfully, follow the traffic light!

Avoid

ultra-processed plant foods
and processed animal foods

Minimize

processed plant foods and
unprocessed animal foods

Maximize

unprocessed plant foods,
nothing added or taken away

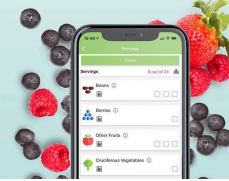
 NutritionFacts.org



Dive Into the Principles of the Daily Dozen

A checklist for including healthy servings of nutrient-dense foods in your meals throughout the day

Try the Free App!



Explore These Sample Menus

Free recipes available at NutritionFacts.org!



Thanks for reviewing my portfolio. To see my video portfolio, please visit my website, www.christianselden.com