

# THE PURSUIT OF *Happiness*

*Anyone can  
adopt one of  
several happiness  
approaches from  
across the world*

**BINDU GOPAL RAO**



**F E E L - G O O D M O V I E S**

- It's a Wonderful Life (1946)
- Limelight (1952)
- Le Bonheur (1965)
- The Sound of Music (1965)
- Local Hero (1983)
- Sister Act (1992)
- Forrest Gump (1994)
- Shall We Dance? (1996)
- Good Will Hunting (1997)
- After Life (1998)
- Billy Elliot (2000)
- Amélie (2001)
- Love Actually (2003)
- Happy Feet (2006)
- Little Miss Sunshine (2006)
- Happy-Go-Lucky (2008)
- Eat, Pray, Love (2010)
- Inside Out (2015)
- Lovers Rock (2020)

**T**here is no path to happiness; happiness is the path ~ Buddha  
 Post the pandemic this is a lesson that many people swear by: Happiness probably is more important now than ever before. And if you are wondering how to be happy, we share some tested methodologies from across the world. So, don't worry, be happy.

**GOA'S SUSEGAD**

Susegad, which comes from the Portuguese word 'sossegado' that means quiet, is something you will see all over Goa. If you are in a marketplace in the afternoon, almost all the stores will be closed because Goans do not compromise on their afternoon siesta. This is the crux of susegad, keeping Goans in perennial contentment. However, it is not just about siesta; for Goans, it is all about taking life slowly, whether it is spending a Sunday with family, playing card games, or even enjoying a leisurely meal. Make no mistake, it is not about being lazy, but being able to enjoy the moment.

**DANISH HYGGE**

In recent times, hygge (pronounced hoo-gah) has become a commonplace aspect in home decor, as it roughly means coziness, but it is much more than that. The Danes routinely feature as the happiest people in the world, and hygge is all about having a warm atmosphere and enjoying the good things in life. If you have lit candles and enjoyed its soft glow, read a book indoors, enjoy a hot cup of coffee on a rainy day, spent time with a loved one watching a movie, spent leisurely time around with friends and family, those are all examples of hygge.

**JAPANESE IKIGAI**

Ikigai is all about happiness in living. Ikigai is the age-old Japanese ideology associated with the long life expectancy of the Japanese. It comes from "iki," meaning life, and "gai," meaning value or worth. Basically, it is what makes you get up every morning and keeps you going. Ikigai comes four forms: what you love, what you are good at, what the world needs, and what you can be paid for. For instance, people can find their ikigai in work. Doing what makes you feel happy, celebrating elders, being motivated, and finding ways to keep your brain alert are all ways of practicing ikigai.

**WABI SABI**

Another Japanese aesthetic concept, wabi sabi, says there is beauty in all objects, whether they are simple or imperfect. Wabi is about finding beauty in humble simplicity; sabi is how things manifest beautifully with time. The concept calls for being connected to nature and being true to ourselves. It is also philosophical in that it says that nothing is perfect, and that beauty exists in things that are impermanent, incomplete, and imperfect. Simple things, like learning to accept situations (losing your job), striving for excellence over perfection, finding beauty in broken things (a broken teapot, scars), slowing down, feeling alive and being



**BOOKS TO BE  
HAPPY**

- The Art of Happiness – the Dalai Lama and Howard C. Cutler
- Authentic Happiness – Martin Seligman
- Stumbling on Happiness – Daniel Gilbert
- The Happiness Trap: Stop Struggling, Start Living – Russ Harris
- The Happiness Advantage – Shawn Achor
- Happiness Is an Inside Job: Practicing for a Joyful Life – Sylvia Boorstein
- The Happiness Project – Gretchen Rubin
- The Happiness Hypothesis – Jonathan Haidt
- The Happiness Equation – Neil Pasricha
- Happiness by Design: Finding Pleasure and Purpose in Everyday Life – Paul Dolan
- The Happiness Factor: How to Be Happy No Matter What! – Kirk Wilkinson
- The How of Happiness – Sonja Lyubomirsky
- Happiness Beyond Thought: A Practical Guide to Awakening – Gary Weber
- Happiness: Lessons from a New Science – Richard Layard and Baron Layard



content with what you have are ways to practice wabi sabi.

**SWEDISH LAGOM**

Lagom means not too much, not too little, just the right amount. It is about leading life with awareness, moderation, and sustainability. You can practice the concept by doing the morgondopp, or morning dip – in a lake, river, or sea. If you don't have access to these, a cool morning shower could energize you. Take a trek alone, be amidst nature by yourself, reduce your wardrobe to a set of versatile garments, take a break, and practice random acts of kindness and learn to listen.

**DANISH LYKKE**

Lykke (pronounced loo-ka), is built on principles like togetherness, money, health, trust, freedom, and kindness. Make sure you make lonely people feel wanted, or share a meal with someone who lives alone and see the difference it makes. Focus on experiences when you travel. Check if you are mentally happy and not just physically fit. Freedom to work from anywhere and having the ability to slot some me time on weekdays are a great way to practice lykke.

**KOREAN NUNCHI**

A traditional concept, nunchi is the art of understanding what people are thinking and feeling – all about being sensitive to other people. Nunchi involves things such as noticing who is speaking, who is listening, who interrupts, who apologizes, and being attentive to how people in a group are behaving. Nunchi particularly helps introvert to battle social anxiety. Rooted in relationship-building and collective harmony, the mindful practice of nunchi will make you and others around you comfortable.

**ASIAN ZEN**

Zen is believed to have origins in Mahayana Buddhism in China, and spread to Vietnam, Korea and even Japan. Zen means a state of calm attentiveness, where intuition and not conscious effort guides your actions. It is a way to embrace nondiscriminatory wisdom and develop a sense of equality of all things in life. Practicing Zen involves adjusting the body (proper posture), mind (disengaging from outside noise), breathing (mindful inhalation and exhalation). It is about letting go and being exhilarated in the freedom of having no baggage.