

A four-sided view of teen happiness.

What are some of the factors that can lead a teenager to be upbeat, assured and positive? Philip Jenkinson investigates four sides of the story.

Having a sister leads to greater encouragement.

A recent University of Ulster (UK) research study found that having a sister is one of the keys to happiness, after finding that young people who grew up with a sister or two were significantly more likely to be happy.

The university surveyed 571 young adults aged 17 to 25 in detail about their family life, and found a significant positive influence when a boy or a girl had a sister, with one of the biggest reported "benefit years" being when respondents were aged 13.

The professor in charge of the study suggested that sisters "appear to encourage more open communication and cohesion in families" while brothers tend to be divisive and seemed to have the reverse effect.

Focussing outwards, not inwards, makes teens feel more positive.

There is growing evidence indicating that living externally focused lives actually increases our happiness, and the big winners tend to be adolescents. A study published in 'The Science of Altruism and Health' followed 1,000 teenagers, tracking their attitudes and behaviours, over five years ending mid 2008.

Those who spent the most time in various community service efforts were least likely to be involved in violence, suffer drug or alcohol addiction, or get pregnant. They were also less likely to express negative feelings or describe themselves as feeling stressed.

The investigators also found that charity and faith tended to interact for extra benefit. Religious, 'giving' teens

had higher self-esteem, confidence, and optimism than nonreligious, 'giving' teens. So it seems the notion of "I get much more out of it than I give" is not just feel-good, but real, and supported by the research.

Expressing gratitude enhances well-being.

When you next get something, let yourself be grateful, as it's the best way to achieve happiness, according to new studies conducted by Professor Todd Kashdan of George Mason University in Virginia, USA.

"Gratitude, the emotion of thankfulness and joy in response to receiving a gift, is one of the essential ingredients for living a good life," Professor Kashdan says. But wake up boys! Girls reported feeling less burden and obligation and greater levels of gratitude when presented with gifts than guys.

Kashdan says if he had to name three elements essential for creating happiness and meaning in life, they would be meaningful relationships, gratitude, and living in the present moment with an attitude of openness and curiosity.

Make fame and money a little less important.

'The Future of Happiness' study by Social Technologies found that despite rumours to the contrary, youth will continue to depend on parents as a vital source of security and happiness with almost 50% naming at least one of their parents as a hero.

Youth are still seeking happiness through spirituality and faith too. Popular responses in this regard included "I'm not religious as such, but having a spiritual life is important," and "there needs to be a purpose for life. If I

didn't have it, I don't know where I'd be."

Money has devalued as a priority just a little, and is becoming seen by youth as a means, rather than an end in itself. 73% said the kind of stuff they have makes them happy, 69% said they want to be rich, but 51% said it 'is not at all likely' or 'not too likely' that they will ever be rich. Only 12% are actually banking on getting famous so that they can be happy. The study concluded that today's youth define happiness very differently than previous generations did.

The current French President, Nicolas Sarkozy, says we should all be happy. Then again, he's powerful, loaded, and married to an ex supermodel (Carla Bruni). He believes happiness is the true measure of wealth and in September 2009 he proposed that his country's economic progress should be measured in "happiness" rather than the standard GDP method.

But the last word on happiness goes to Glyn Henman, CEO of youth mentoring charity Young Life Australia. "Yes, we probably should have a happiness measure or two. But just having them won't make everyone happy. It's how teens can bypass all the dangers of society, or get help recovering from them, that influences whether or not they can then go on to lead happy and productive lives."

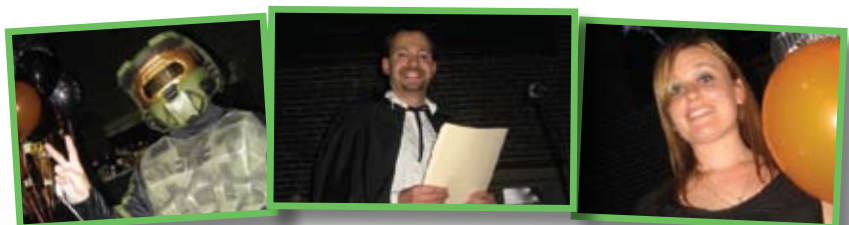
Yes, that's true. Still, all four sides of the happiness conundrum indicate that positivity encourages more positivity. And positive people are generally happier people.

Sources: The Age 27/9/09, University of Ulster (UK) study 2008; Assoc Prof T Kashdan, George Mason University study, 'Curious?' T Kashdan, Harper Collins 4/2009; 'The Science of Altruism and Health' report; Social Technologies 'Youth Happiness' study 7/07; Glyn Henman, 2/11/09. Author: Philip Jenkinson.

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Trivia night a monster hit!



Tony Montgomery suited up. The maestro, Daniel Changer. Erica Grunberg with prize balloons.

On Saturday the 31st of October (Halloween) Young Life Ryde staged a fantastic Trivia night with a dress up theme. The BYO food and drink night didn't cost much to set up, with all prizes vouchers and hampers donated, and West Ryde Anglican Church generously donated the Hall booking fee.

Our talented Quizmaster for the evening, Daniel Changer impressed everyone, as did Committee member Tony Montgomery's epic Doom warrior outfit, and Committee Chair Michelle Loxton's extra long nose. Philip Jenkinson was the MC for the evening, Brooke Filipovski gave an area update and 85 people came along. Around \$1,800 was raised for Ryde on the night.

Keeping the faith.

Message from the CEO, Glyn Henman.

This edition I want to focus our attention on two things. One is our upcoming Summer camp... the other helps ensure our sustainability moving forward.

This year we are running our annual extreme Summer camp in two locations... Coonawarra Resort in Gippsland for Victoria and Canberra based Young Life communities from January 11-15... and the other venue is Copeton Waters, at Copeton Dam in northern NSW for Young Lifers in that state and Queensland on from January 17-22 2010.

The switch to regional locations has been economically necessary to try and cut costs, and I would like to thank

all of the people who have already given to the Summer Camp appeal mailed out earlier this month.

Your support means that we can help ease the expense for some of our volunteers who will be working there, and bring along some teenagers who would otherwise be financially unable to come. If you haven't already contributed but are intending to, please help out, so that we can bring more young people to camp.

Now on to my second priority. Monthly direct-debit giving from our donors not only allows us to prepare, assemble and run activities, it provides a level of certainty that we as a charity need, to keep going.



As we rely almost solely on the generous support of individuals, being able to budget in advance allows us to interact more effectively in the communities in which we operate, and makes forward planning possible.

One-off giving really helps too, but I ask you to consider backing our charity in an on-going way, so that we can continue to make a difference. Every little bit helps.

Armidale @ Work.

The big news of recent times is that Area Manager Brendan Hatt married Mel Doe at Armidale Cathedral on October 31, and a number of recently trained volunteers helped out with Club while Brendan and Mel were on their honeymoon.

In early November, the Armidale team kicked off regular Tuesday morning pancake breakfasts at Armidale High School, to an enthusiastic reaction, and Tim and Lisa are continuing their important chaplaincy work at the school.

The Mums and Bubs program is continuing, helping out a small group, Young Life Club continues to attract a good number of local teens who are responding well to the talks and enjoying the fun activities too. And the October school holidays Study Camp at Lennox Head was also really amazing this year.

Armidale's annual Thanksgiving dinner event is on Nov 26th, and the Area is also putting on a mega Young Life Garage Sale on Saturday November 28th with plenty of fantastic stuff, so get ready to grab a bargain! For more information email: brendan@younglife.org.au

The Ryde Report.

Brooke Filipovski Ryde and Northern Sydney Area Manager



The work in Ryde continues strong as we begin Term 4. Three of our Junior leaders - Martin Lee, Scott Singh and Tim Morris have just finished HSC exams at Marsden High School, and along with Brendan Morris, they are keen to now complete Work Crew training and serve for the first time this summer behind the scenes at Copeton Dam.

Club has been fun so far this term and new students continue to come. Many events help fill this short term with excitement, including: a very successful Trivia Night fundraiser, a Bunnings BBQ fundraiser, a parade float and booth during the local Granny Smith Festival, and coming up our first ever Barefoot Bowls event on the 20th of November that will bring together club kids, their parents and our donors and friends.

In Northern Sydney, Chatswood High has been progressing well with Brooke even invited to teach two Spanish classes recently. More rapport between students and leaders is developing and leader Shannon Armstrong has begun volunteering at Willoughby Girls High School. Our volunteer team continues to develop and grow strong under Stephanie Heyward-Brown's leadership and partnership with Northside Community Church and we have been grateful for parents, like Patricia Chan who recently hosted a Back-to-School BBQ at Balls Head. One unique event this team is taking kids to soon is a taping of the popular TV show: Australia's Favourite Home Videos.

A fond farewell to Brett.

Brett Kirkwood is leaving Young Life after nine years of service.



It is with sadness that we advise Brett Kirkwood is standing down as Area Manager for Maroondah and as Young Life's Southern Regional Director from the end of the year. However, Brett will also be helping run the Gippsland Summer Camp being staged from the 11th to the 15th of January 2010.

Brett's stellar contribution to the mission in Melbourne is something that all in Young Life respect and his enthusiasm and drive will be sorely missed by the organisation. After Brett leaves, interim Area Manager duties for Maroondah will be taken over initially by Nathan Crouch, who is the part time Field Staff person at Maroondah Secondary College. All at Young Life wish Brett, Kath and son James Michael Kirkwood the very best in the future and hope that at some juncture Brett will rejoin the mission in some capacity.

"While he may be resigning from the staff, Brett and Kath have a deep desire to remain involved in many other ways," says Glyn Henman, CEO of Young Life. "They are still committed to the mission and will look to engage afresh in a voluntary capacity once life has settled in the new year."

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All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

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What's hapnin' in the Switch.

Michael Anderson, Ipswich Area Manager

The Hub is now up and running with an office, leaders meeting lounge, club hall and shed and Young Life youth have put in huge amounts of their own time to get the place clean and looking great (some of the dudes even mow our lawn even if they don't at home) and this has really boosted our community credibility and presence.

Our local council has been incredibly supportive in many ways which gives us great hope for the future and Club has been going really well with a renewed focus on relationships.

The talks at the end are so powerful that we are seeing some very strange teenage behaviour as a result - prolonged silence, reflection and stillness afterwards. In late October we ran an awesome Mega Club which helped all day at school and then turned into a massive 5-hour club with heaps of wild games and cool hang time.

The Ipswich leadership team, committee and work crew are amazing and so hard working, and their commitment to helping others and sharing their faith is really inspiring and humbling. I am looking forward to teaching the current team how to train others, and Ruth and Adam have shown incredible growth in the past few months which has recharged the team for some great positive outcomes. Hannah and James also announced their engagement, which is very exciting news.

We have recruited three new leaders - Josh, Todd and Spud - who have begun to find their niches and style and are great assets to 'the Switch team'. The committee and I are in the midst of praying and planning for which school to go into next. It's a big step and I will be speaking to other Area Managers to use their hard earned ideas and experience to ensure smooth progress. There are also some more church partnerships in the pipeline. I'll keep you posted. - M.A.

Maroondah and Braybrook.



Maroondah continues to rock! A recent Club night at the end of October with a theme of "The racers" was a blast, and the Area's Hat making competition was also a whole lot of fun.

Over the past two months, Nathan C and Dave have been doing their weekly work at Maroondah SC and Brett and Viv have been positively interacting with the students at Croydon SC. A new student teacher Laura, is helping out for the rest of the year, and a youth work student from Glen Waverley, Damien, has been learning how we do things at schools, Club and our procedures.

Interest has been good for the upcoming Summer camp trip to Gippsland and there are another three Club nights before the end of year themed around beach games and swimming pools, along with the message of how Jesus is the true reason for the Christmas season and all that means to us.

Nathan Velja, the Melbourne Western Suburbs Co-ordinator, has been working hard for over two years and in the past few months the rewards have flowed. A church partnership and another partnership with a Christian youth organisation has begun, and together we have got into a local High School, Braybrook College, and started working with the students there. Nathan asks that you pray for more consistent donations and more volunteers, to keep the momentum going.

End of Year financials reveal increasing need.

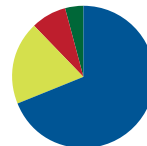
From June 2008 to June 2009 Young Life Australia experienced a difficult financial year. While the charity was able to increase overall income by 10% (an incredible result given the circumstances) this was not enough to cover the increased costs of conducting new activities around the country, and subsidising many existing programs.

The end result for the year was an operating deficit of \$37,669 including depreciation. This deficit followed four years of surpluses, so fortunately there are enough short-term reserves built up to carry Young Life through the downturn.

The organisation has been blessed to see quite a few new financial supporters coming on board. However, a greater number of donors who were adversely affected by the economic downturn, had to withdraw or reduce their level of financial support. Young Life asks regular donors and appeal supporters to keep supporting the charity at this time of increased need.

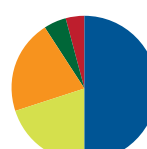
Where our money comes from:

Donations & Grants	69%
Camping & Activities	19%
Fundraising	8%
Miscellaneous	4%



Where we spend our money:

Employment & Training	50%
Camping & Activities	20%
Fundraising	4%
Asset Expenses	5%
Administration	21%



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We'd like to hear your views on a number of key issues relating to teens and Young Life Australia. It takes just 5 minutes.

Go to www.younglife.org.au then 'Click here to take survey'.

Our vision...

- ★ **18 Schools in every state and territory**
- ★ **80 Clubs operating around the nation**
- ★ **1 Camp property operated by Young Life**



Join us on the adventure!

“Mando” on a mission...



Michael Anderson commenced with Young Life in August 2009 as Area Manager, in what is his first ministry staff role. So what motivated his move to teenage outreach and what makes him tick? Philip Jenkinson investigates the man they call “Mando”.

Michael has been in Ipswich for many years. His upbringing was a little out of the ordinary in that he grew up having a dad who was a Minister, preaching at a number of churches over the years until he started his own in Ipswich – Westside Christian Church – in 1995 and John Anderson served there until his passing in 2005.

PJ: So ‘Mando’, what was it like growing up as a pastor’s son?

MA: As Pastor’s kid there is a level of behavioural expectation, of which I really enjoyed pushing the boundaries. Ultimately I became a Christian because of my parents, so I was taught how to pray, read the word and love God in the home which has had a massive influence on my life. It isn’t easy being the child of any person who is in ministry or serves others, but it does give you a good appreciation of what loving people actually looks like. My Dad once asked me if I would ever follow him into ministry, I laughed and said “there is absolutely no way I would put up with all those people and their problems 24/7, for pretty much no money!” I’m so glad I ended up being wrong.

PJ: Young Life was your first official ministry role. How did you get hooked into it?

MA: I went into Bremer as a volunteer Chaplain and kept bumping into Pete Wiedemann. He and I got on really quickly and had very similar ideas. We worked together on a large outreach event in the city and developed a friendship which I am very thankful for, because he then asked me to come along to Young Life Club. I also invited my wife and we both saw the fruit of the ministry and recognised the heart of God in all the leaders and the vision for Ipswich. I had never before seen a ministry that was so true to the way I see ministry, so I just had to join the team.

PJ: What else do you do in the rest of your working week?

MA: I flip burgers for a little joint called Hungry Jack’s. ‘HJ’s Goodna’ is where I work as the Restaurant Manager. I love the work because it is people based and it’s a good company to have a career in. I have been there for nearly ten years fighting the war on hunger. Motivating teenagers to work is not easy but it’s very fulfilling and it has been great training for what I now do with Young Life.

PJ: What do you reckon are the four key ingredients that make up a good leader for teens?

MA: Relationship with Jesus. Prayer for everything, all the time. Being active where the youth are. And having the courage to do whatever God asks you to do to show His love to those you are reaching out to.

PJ: How do you see your role as Area Manager?

MA: Well, it’s not just contact work with teenagers – which by the way I find incredibly fulfilling and amazing – but community contact too, along with providing pastoral care and support for our team of volunteer leaders. I can help the teenagers of the area so much more by positively representing the organisation of Young Life. Man, I can change a school. It’s an incredible opportunity that is a real humbling experience for me.

PJ: You’ve been married for seven years to Tess. How did you two meet?

MA: Well we actually met on a holiday program for primary school kids that we were both helpers at, back in the mid 90’s. We were really young like 12 and 13 but we became friends straight away. It is totally awesome to fall in love with and marry your best friend, and then to be in ministry with them, and we have a lot of fun together. After seven years I am still madly in love with Tess and she is still my best friend.

PJ: Where do you see yourself and Young Life Ipswich in five years time?

MA: I really want to see more clubs in our city. Ipswich is rapidly expanding, we have a good local government and there are great local churches, so we have a real ability to see the youth positively changed in our city. I see myself and everyone involved in Young Life Ipswich being blown away by how good God is.

Source: Michael Anderson of YL Ipswich 5/11/2009.
Author: Philip Jenkinson.

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