

From the book *Creating Your Best Life: The Ultimate Life List Guide* by Caroline Adams Miller and Dr. Michael B. Frisch. Sterling.

Happiness House: This is the initial goal-setting exercise of the book, Creating Your Best Life, which describes Best Life Coaching and Counseling™. The “Five Paths to Fulfillment and Happiness” is part of Quality of Life Therapy and Coaching, one of the very few research-supported and comprehensive positive psychology approaches in the world.<sup>1</sup>

After factoring out genetics or the genes we get from our parents, our overall happiness is made up of the areas of life that we care about. The 17 (or 16 if Spiritual Life is seen as part of Goals-and-Values) areas in the game have all been found to be important building blocks of happiness for many, but not all, people around the world, regardless of culture or ethnic grouping.

Instructions for Building your own happiness house:

1. Use a scissors to cut out the 17 area of life squares or potential rooms for your Happiness House.
2. Start to build your Happiness House using the blocks or rooms that you have just cut out. Put the areas of life that are most important to your happiness or quality of life on the first floor or level of your Happiness House. Put areas 2<sup>nd</sup> in importance to your fulfillment on the second floor, put areas 3<sup>rd</sup> in importance to you on the third floor and so on. Your House may not look like a real house and that is ok. There are no right or wrong ways to do this game.
3. Choose only areas that matter to you and are important to your happiness, fulfillment or quality of life. Turn over or discard any areas of life you do not care about.
4. For each area in your house, turn the paper over to its blank side and quickly write in your life goals or the things you would like to accomplish in that area during your lifetime. These should be goals that you feel will make you fulfilled, content, and satisfied with your life.

---

<sup>1</sup> This includes government and grant funded research by the USA National Institute of Health conducted by independent researchers at Beth Israel Hospital and Harvard Medical School, including James R. Rodrigue. This research consists of the most rigorous test of science for effective interventions or treatments, the randomized controlled trial. It is the gold standard for an Evidence Based Intervention or Treatment.

<sup>1</sup> © 2015, Michael B. Frisch, All rights reserved.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Health</b></p> <p>is being physically fit, not sick, and without pain or disability.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Self-Esteem</b></p> <p>means liking and respecting yourself in light of your strengths and weaknesses, successes and failures, and ability to handle problems.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Goals-and-Values (or Philosophy of Life)</b></p> <p>are your beliefs about what matters most in life and how you should live, both now and in the future. This includes your goals in life, what you think is right or wrong, and the purpose or meaning of life as you see it.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Spiritual Life</b></p> <p>refers to spiritual or religious beliefs or practices, that you pursue on your own or as part of a like-minded spiritual community. If important, Spiritual Life becomes an important part of a person's Goals-and-Values.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Money</b> (or Standard of Living)</p> <p>is made up of three things. It is the money you earn, the things you own (like a car or furniture), and believing that you will have the money and things that you need in the future.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Work</b></p> <p>means your career or how you spend most of your time. You may work at a job, at home taking care of your family, or at school as a student. <i>Work</i> includes your duties on the job, the money you earn (if any), and the people you work with.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Play</b> (or <b>Recreation</b>)</p> <p>means what you do in your free time to relax, have fun, or improve yourself. This could include watching movies, visiting friends, or pursuing a hobby like sports or gardening.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Learning</b></p> <p>means gaining new skills or information about things that interest you. <i>Learning</i> can come from reading books or taking classes on subjects like history, car repair, or using a computer.</p>

<p><b>Creativity</b> is using your imagination to come up with new and clever ways to solve everyday problems or to pursue a hobby like painting, photography, or needlework. This can include decorating your home, playing the guitar, or finding a new way to solve a problem at work.</p>	<p><b>Helping</b> means helping others in need or helping to make your community a better place to live. <i>Helping</i> can be done on your own or in a group like a church, a neighborhood association, or a political party. <i>Helping</i> can include doing volunteer work at a school or</p>	<p><b>Love</b> (or Love Relationship) is a very close romantic relationship with another person. <i>Love</i> usually includes sexual feelings and feeling loved, cared for, and understood.</p>	<p><b>Friends</b> (or Friendships) are people (not relatives) you know well and care about who have interests and opinions like yours. <i>Friends</i> have fun together, talk about personal problems, and help each other out.</p>
<p><b>Children</b> means how you get along with your child (or children). Think of how you get along as you care for, visit, or play with your child (or children).</p>	<p><b>Relatives</b> means how you get along with your parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, and in-laws. Think about how you get along when you are doing things together like visiting, talking on the telephone, or helping each other out.</p>	<p><b>Home</b> is where you live. It is your house or apartment and the yard around it. Think about how nice it looks, how big it is, and your rent or house payment.</p>	<p><b>Neighborhood</b> is the area around your home. Think about how nice it looks, the amount of crime in the area, and how well you like the people.</p>

Write your own as needed

<p><b>Community</b></p> <p>is the whole city, town, or rural area where you live (it is not just your neighborhood). <i>Community</i> includes how nice the area looks, the amount of crime, and how well you like the people. It also includes places to go for fun like parks, concerts, sporting events, and restaurants. You may also consider the cost of things you need to buy, the availability of jobs, the government, schools, taxes, and pollution.</p>			

Save your Happiness House by taking a picture of it, writing the floor numbers on each area of life so you can quickly re-build your house, or just glue or paste your House onto a sheet of paper.

In order to be reminded of your priorities and goals every day, you can tape a copy of your Happiness House on your refrigerator or a bulletin board or put your picture of your house in the Start Up folder of your computer. Your priorities and goals can change, so re-do the Happiness House exercise at least once a year.