

## *The Four Levels of Happiness™*

*“The human heart desires joy. We all desire joy, every family, every people aspires to happiness.”*



*“Christianity spreads through the joy of disciples who know that they are loved and saved.”*

**A**ristotle – *Happiness is the meaning and purpose of life, the whole aim and end of human existence.*

**A**ugustine – *We all want to live happily; in the whole human race there is no one who does not assent to this proposition, even before it is fully articulated.*

**A**quinas – *Man cannot live without joy.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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### What is Happiness?

- An ancient and modern theme
- Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics
- Our Catholic tradition-the gold standard
- Aquinas' happiness inquiry
- Four levels in a nutshell
- All levels are good; healthy and unhealthy sides; one will be dominant and eventually translate into one's life purpose

### JUST FOR FUN

- A. Make a list of at least 10 things that make you happy.  
(Anything counts – from chocolate to meditation)

- |    |     |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 6.  |
| 2. | 7.  |
| 3. | 8.  |
| 4. | 9.  |
| 5. | 10. |

- B. Is happiness more: (circle one, even if it's only a 51% to 49% edge)

- |                               |    |                     |
|-------------------------------|----|---------------------|
| A Feeling                     | OR | A Choice            |
| Our Basic, Overarching Desire | OR | One of Many Desires |

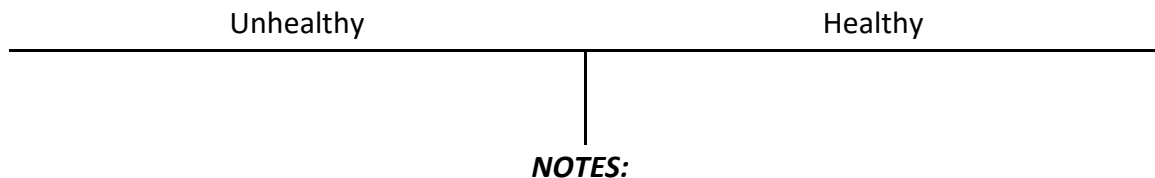
## Happiness Level One – *I lunge toward the bowl of the lingvine*

3

*The beautiful form of material things attracts our eyes, so we are drawn to gold, silver and the like. We are powerfully influenced by the feel of things agreeable to the touch; and each of our other senses finds some quality that appeals to it individually in the variety of material objects.*

Mystery Philosopher

**Goal:** Pleasure  
**Means:** The physical senses  
**Breadth:** Self  
**Duration:** Immediate



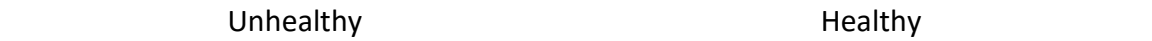
- *Go, eat your bread with enjoyment, and drink your wine with a merry heart; for God has already approved what you do.* Ecclesiastes 9:7
  - *So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all for the glory of God.* 1 Corinthians 10:31
  - *Be content with little or much.* Sirach 29:23
  - *The human person cannot do without the material goods that correspond to his primary needs and constitute the basic conditions for his existence.* Pius XII
  - *Happiness does not consist in bodily good as its object; but bodily good can add a certain charm and perfection to Happiness.* St. Thomas Aquinas
  - *When a man arrives at the point of perfection in bodily pleasures, he wearies of them, and sometimes desires another kind.* St. Thomas Aquinas
  - *Any one that chooses to look back on his past excesses, will perceive that pleasures had a sad ending.* Boethius as quoted by St. Thomas Aquinas
  - *The vehemence of desire for sensible delight arises from the fact that operations of the senses, through being the principles of our knowledge, are more perceptible. And so it is that sensible pleasures are desired by the majority.* St. Thomas Aquinas
  - *All material things obey money, so far as the multitude of fools is concerned, who know no other than material goods, which can be obtained for money. But we should take our estimation of human goods not from the foolish but from the wise.* St. Thomas Aquinas
  - *Because of this bodily dimension, however, following the wound of sin, man experiences the rebellion of his body and the perverse inclinations of his heart; he must always keep careful watch over these lest he become enslaved to them and become a victim of a purely earthly vision of life.* Compendium of Catholic Social Doctrine of the Church, 128
- TEMPERANCE
- *The end and rule of temperance itself is happiness.* St. Thomas Aquinas
  - *Temperance more than any other virtue lays claim to a certain comeliness, and the vices of intemperance excel others in disgrace.* St. Thomas Aquinas
  - *What we observe and seek most in temperance is the safeguarding of what is honorable, and the regard for what is beautiful.* St. Ambrose

## Happiness Level Two – *Ego in the center*

*There is appeal in worldly rank, and the possibility it offers of commanding and dominating other people; this too holds its attraction, and often provides an opportunity for settling old scores.*

Mystery Philosopher

**Goal:** Ego Fulfillment  
**Means:** Personal achievement  
**Breadth:** Self  
**Duration:** Short-term



**NOTES:**

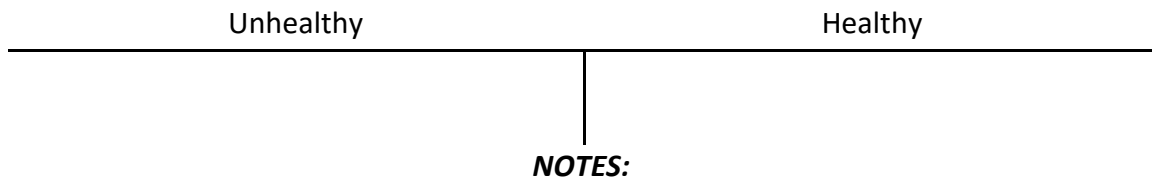
- *Man exists as a unique and unrepeatable being, he exists as an “I” capable of self-understanding, self-possession and self-determination.* Compendium of Catholic Social Doctrine of the Church, 131
- *Excel in all that you do.* Sirach 33:22
- *There is something great which man possesses through the gift of God.* St. Thomas Aquinas
- *Magnanimity and humility are not contrary to one another.* St. Thomas Aquinas
- *Do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves.* Philippians 2:3
- *My son, glorify yourself with humility, and ascribe to yourself honor according to your worth.* Sirach 10:28
- *When pride comes, then comes disgrace; but with the humble is wisdom.* Proverbs 11:2
- *Happiness is the perfect good. But power is most imperfect. For as Boethius says (De Consol. iii), “the power of man cannot relieve the gnawings of care, nor can it avoid the thorny path of anxiety”.* St. Thomas Aquinas
- *That man desires honor above all else, arises from his natural desire for happiness.* St. Thomas Aquinas
- *Fame has no stability; in fact, it is easily ruined by false report. And if sometimes it endures, this is by accident. But happiness endures of itself, and forever.* St. Thomas Aquinas

*Again, the friendship which draws human beings together in a tender bond is sweet to us because out of many minds it forges a unity.* Mystery Philosopher

**Goal:** Good beyond self  
**Means:** Contribution  
**Breadth:** Others  
**Duration:** Long-term

### Happiness Level Three Sources

1. Being With – connecting with others
2. Doing For - giving to others



- *Man comes out of himself from the self-centered preservation of his own life, to enter into a relationship and dialogue and communion with others.* Compendium of Catholic Social Doctrine of the Church, 130
- *So whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them. For this is the Law and the Prophets.* Matthew 7:12
- *It is better to give than to receive.* Acts 20:35
- *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.* Mt. 5:6
- *Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep.* Romans 12:15
- *Above all, let your love for one another be constant, for love covers a multitude of sins.* 1 Peter 3:8
- *A pleasant voice multiplies friends and softens enemies, and a gracious tongue multiplies courtesies.* Sirach 6:5
- *Friendship is the source of the greatest pleasures, and without friends even the most agreeable pursuits become tedious.* St. Thomas Aquinas
- *A faithful friend is a sturdy shelter; he that has found one has found a treasure.* Sirach 6:14

## Happiness Level Four – *My mother was right*

*These lowest goods hold delights for us indeed, but no such delights as does my God, who made all things; for in him the just man finds delight, and for upright souls he himself is joy.*

Mystery Philosopher

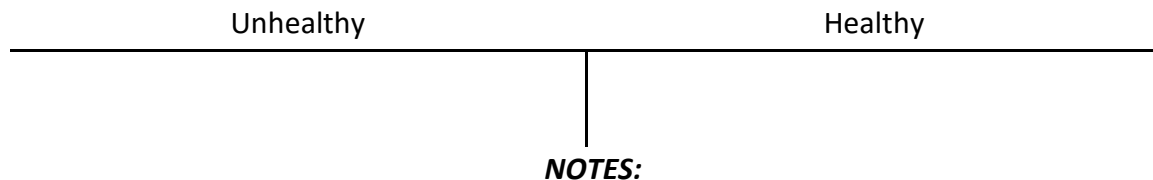
**Goal:** Ultimate Happiness  
**Means:** Contemplation of truth; spirituality  
**Breadth:** Unlimited  
**Duration:** Eternal

Plato's Transcendentals:

Truth, Justice, Love, Beauty, Home

Psychology: Transcendence – Strengths that forge connection to the larger universe and provide meaning

1. Appreciation of beauty and excellence (awe, wonder, elevation)
2. Gratitude
3. Hope (optimism, future-mindedness, future orientation)
4. Humor (playfulness)
5. Spirituality (religiousness, faith, purpose)

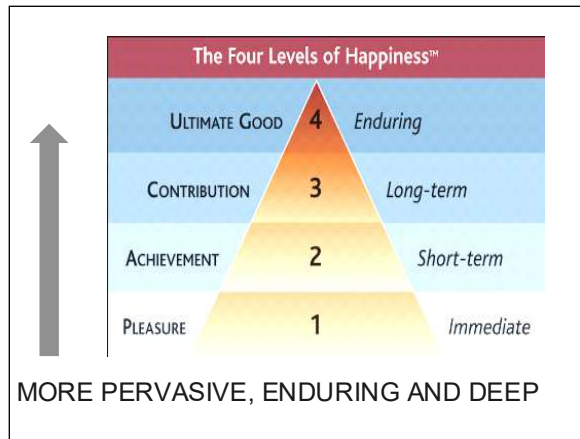
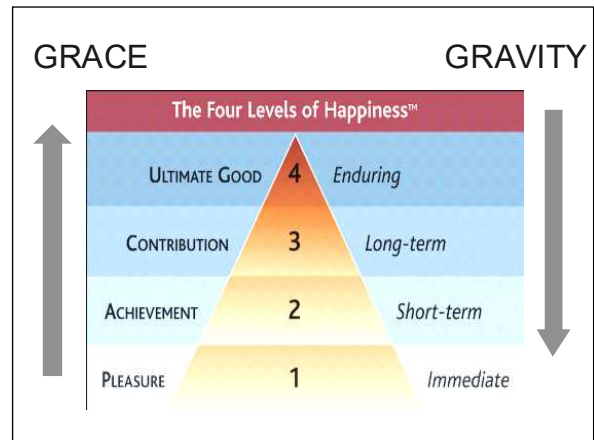
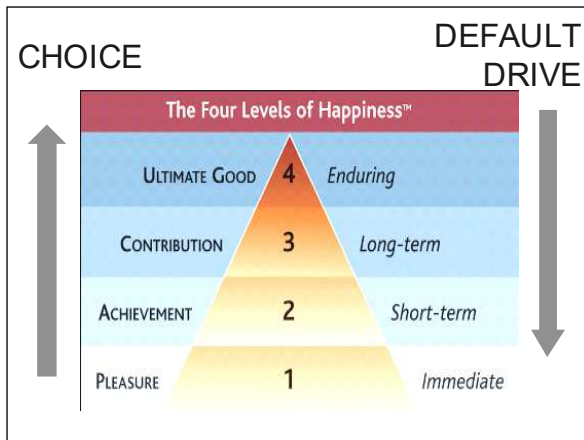


- *God is happiness by His Essence.* St. Thomas Aquinas
- *For where your treasure is there will be your heart also.* Matthew 6:21
- *Openness to transcendence belongs to the human person: man is open to the infinite and to all created beings.* Compendium of Catholic Social Doctrine of the Church, 130
- *Let joy in the Lord win and go on winning.* St. Augustine
- *It is characteristic of God and His Angels, when they act upon the soul, to give true happiness and spiritual joy, and to banish all the sadness and disturbances which are caused by the enemy.* St. Ignatius
- *As the soul is the life of the body, so God is man's life of happiness.* St. Augustine
- *The greatest of all pleasures consists in the contemplation of truth.* St. Thomas Aquinas
- *Happiness is twofold; the one is imperfect and is had in this life; the other is perfect, consisting in the vision of God.* St. Thomas Aquinas
- *Happiness is the attainment of the Perfect Good. Whoever, therefore, is capable of the Perfect Good can attain Happiness.* St. Thomas Aquinas
- *For the more perfectly the sovereign good is possessed, the more it is loved, and other things despised, because the more we possess it, the more we know it.* St. Thomas Aquinas

# The PED Formula

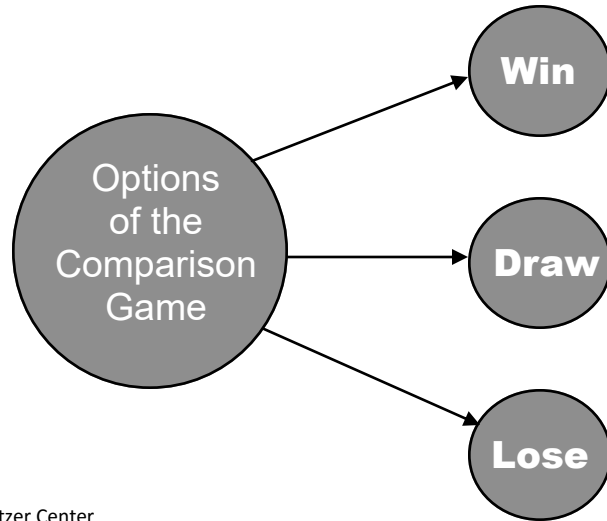
Guess which three simple criteria or factors Plato used to determine the quality of happiness. Circle the three that you think reveal the Four Levels of Happiness.

- a. How much money it costs
- b. How long it lasts
- c. If my mother forbids it
- d. Whether or not it makes me feel good
- e. How well it engages my higher powers
- f. If my mother recommends it
- g. How intensely I feel it
- h. How many people it effects
- i. If it makes me popular
- j. If it gets me all excited



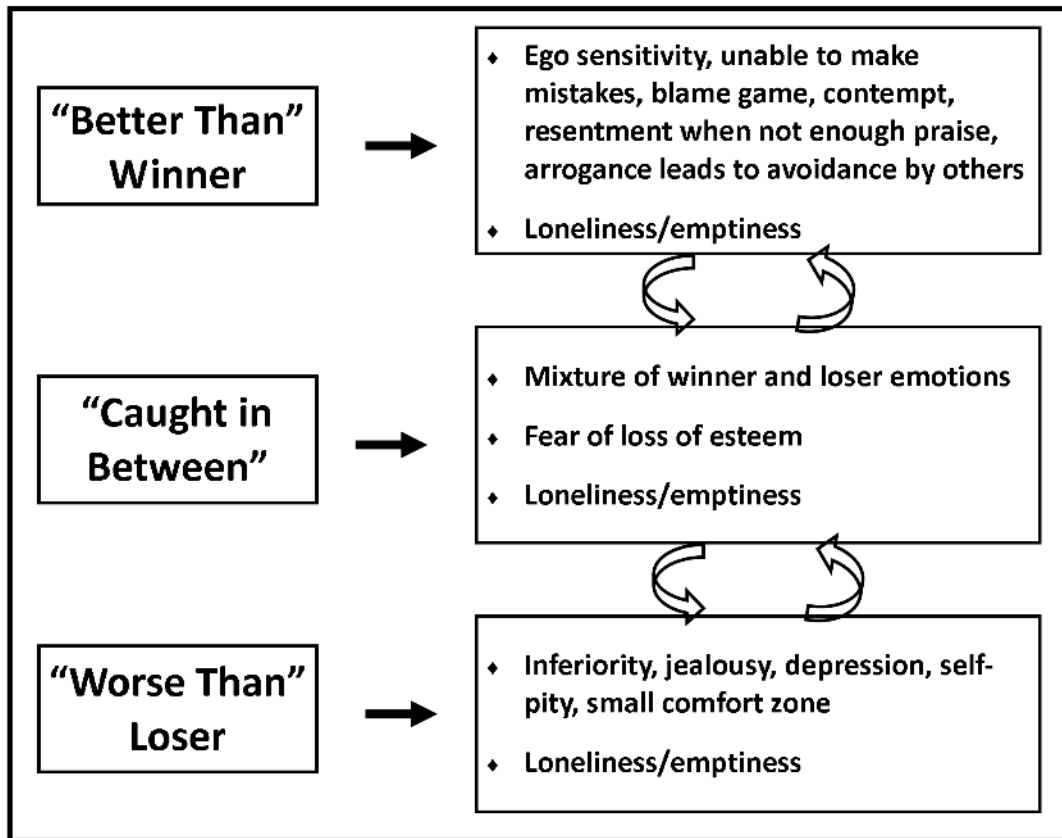
P \_ \_ V \_ \_ \_ \_ E  
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 D \_ \_ P

# The Comparison Game



- **Ego sensitivity**
- **Emptiness**
- **Contempt**
- ↳ **Isolation**
- ↳ **Resentment**
  
- **Fear of losing**
- **Suspicion of others**
  
- **Depression**
- **Jealousy**
- **Anger**
- **Inferiority**

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*By the envy of the devil, death entered the world, and they who belong to his company experience it.*  
Wisdom 2:24

1. He was deeply envious of his brother's offering of sacrifice.
  - a. Esau
  - b. Job
  - c. Cain
  - d. Lot
2. His father loved and openly preferred him; his brothers hated and tried to kill him.
  - a. David
  - b. Elijah
  - c. Reuben
  - d. Joseph
3. The Comparison Game is healthy in two circumstances:
  - a. If recognized
  - b. If it makes me feel better about myself
  - c. If it's pointing toward contribution
  - d. If I don't lie, cheat or steal
4. This leader was paranoid that his talented and popular subordinate was plotting to take his job.
  - a. Saul
  - b. Hezekiah
  - c. Samuel
  - d. Moses
5. Tormented by a rival because she was infertile, she finally conceived a child and composed a famous prayer of thanksgiving.
  - a. Ruth
  - b. Hannah
  - c. Rachel
  - d. Jezebel
6. In his passion to locate someone he felt threatened by, he sought the counsel of sages.
  - a. Ezra
  - b. Herod
  - c. Ananias
  - d. Simon the magician
7. Jesus condemned them for seeking the praise of men rather than the favor of God.
  - a. John the Baptist's disciples
  - b. The Pharisees
  - c. The Gentiles
  - d. The tax collectors
8. The mother of these sons requested that they sit at the right hand of their leader.
  - a. James and John
  - b. Peter and Andrew
  - c. Timothy and Titus
  - d. Tom and Jerry

## FOUR FUNDAMENTAL ATTITUDES

ATTITUDE	DOMINANT LEVEL ONE-TWO ("DEFAULT DRIVE")	DOMINANT LEVEL THREE-FOUR
PURPOSE IN LIFE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Pleasure</li> <li>◆ Material Accumulation</li> <li>◆ Ego-Comparative Advantage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Optimal contribution to family, organization, community, Church, culture, society, and Kingdom of God</li> </ul>
VIEW OF OTHERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The Bad News in Others</li> <li>◆ The Other is "Over-against" Me</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Others' cultural institutions and church institutions have value and should be promoted if deemed good</li> </ul>
VIEW OF SELF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The Estimable Self</li> <li>◆ The "Thingafied" Self</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The Loving Self</li> <li>◆ The Lovable Self</li> <li>◆ The Transcendent Self</li> </ul>
VIEW OF FREEDOM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Freedom From</li> <li>◆ Getting what I want now</li> <li>◆ Avoid Constraint By and Responsibility to Others</li> <li>◆ Commitment is Negative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Freedom For</li> <li>◆ Desire to get to the most pervasive, enduring, and deep meaning</li> <li>◆ Self-Sacrifice is Acceptable</li> <li>◆ Commitment is Positive</li> </ul>

### WHAT AM I LOOKING FOR? - PURPOSE IN LIFE

How can I make a positive difference in the short term, and in the long term?	
Category 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To my family?</li> <li>• To my friends and colleagues?</li> </ul>
Category 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To my organization?                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ To my organization's stakeholders (employees, management, customers, vendors, etc)?</li> <li>◆ To the general welfare of the organization?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Category 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To my community?                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ To charitable and educational institutions within the community?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• To the culture?</li> <li>• To the society?</li> </ul>
Category 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To my church?</li> <li>• To the Kingdom of God</li> </ul>
<b>FOR THIS I CAME</b>	

## MAKING LEVEL THREE A HABIT

### It takes discipline

Because Level 2 is both our default drive and reinforced by the culture, it takes discipline to make Level 3 habitual. We need to write things down and look at them every day.

### What is a habit?

Habit is not just oft repeated, but is an integration of the conscious choice with the subconscious mind. A good habit is what we call a virtue.

The challenge of forming Level 3 habits

- The subconscious mind lags behind the conscious mind in the choosing process at least 6 months to a year.
- Subconscious likes the old self, old habits.
- When we try to change, we meet frustration. This is normal, as the conscious mind requires more psychic energy.
- When we are weary or tired we naturally return to Level 2 habits.

### Three stages to build a habit

#### 1. *Tension*

In this stage you are intentionally choosing a Level 3 habit (looking for goods news, contribution and freedom for). Expect frequent failure, frequent reversion, particularly when tired. Why? Because the intentional choice is being directly opposed by the subconscious and the conscious intention requires more psychic energy than the efficient subconscious.

#### 2. *Proclivity*

Here the new choice is getting more integrated with the subconscious. There will be some gestalt, some confusion, and when tired, reversions to Level 2. But making progress.

#### 3. *Habit*

Finally where the dominant Level 3 view becomes habitual. Be careful however. In danger or with exhaustion or near-depression, the lower self-conscious can return with a vengeance.

### Four essential techniques

#### 1. *Daily remembrance*

Contemplation. Don't force Level 3 onto yourself. The subconscious will push back and not allow. Rather, take time for contemplation. Admire the beauty of Level 3. Look at the Level 3 lists you wrote. Take five to ten minutes a day. It will also add to your efficiency. The practical will never be undermined by the contemplative.

#### 2. *Watch your self-talk*

Lou Tice describes how your subconscious talks to you. Write down a series of affirmations into your life. Write down what you really want and who you really are. Requires exercise and discipline. "I'm the kind of person who..."

#### 3. *Manage your failures*

Reject the myth of Sisyphus who could never make progress because the rock fell back upon him as he climbed the hill. Perfect description of hell. The myth is not true. With every effort our subconscious is getting patterned through contemplation, self-talk affirmations. It's actually getting etched. The rock rolls back a few feet even though we fall to the bottom. Get up, dust off and go back to the rock. You're not starting over again. It will roll down again but it gets higher as long as you contemplate and affirm. With the right notion of failure don't talk yourself out of the transition you desire.

#### 4. *Leverage your successes*

Leverage past changes for good outcomes. See what's working and when you make progress take a minute and positively reinforce with feelings.

### Litany of Humility

O Jesus! meek and humble of heart,

**Hear me.**

From the desire of being esteemed,

**Deliver me, Jesus.**

From the desire of being loved...

From the desire of being extolled ...

From the desire of being honored ...

From the desire of being praised ...

From the desire of being preferred to others...

From the desire of being consulted ...

From the desire of being approved ...

From the fear of being humiliated ...

From the fear of being despised...

From the fear of suffering rebukes ...

From the fear of being calumniated ...

From the fear of being forgotten ...

From the fear of being ridiculed ...

From the fear of being wronged ...

From the fear of being suspected ...

That others may be loved more than I,

**Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.**

That others may be esteemed more than I ...

That, in the opinion of the world,  
others may increase and I may decrease ...

That others may be chosen and I set aside ...

That others may be praised and I unnoticed ...

That others may be preferred to me in  
everything...

That others may become holier than I, provided  
that I may become as holy as I should.

### Action Steps Checklist

#### BE QUICK TO:

- ✓ Ask God
- ✓ Apologize
- ✓ Compliment
- ✓ Give thanks
- ✓ Do a lowly task
- ✓ Associate with common folk
- ✓ Admit a mistake
- ✓ Laugh at yourself
- ✓ Defer in matters of preference
- ✓ Ask for advice
- ✓ Bite your tongue
- ✓ Accept criticism
- ✓ Give credit to others

#### EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE:

- ✓ Reflect on how much you don't know
- ✓ Examine your conscience
- ✓ Confess your failings
- ✓ Identify your predominant fault
- ✓ Then pursue the opposite virtue
- ✓ Skip a meal or two
- ✓ Remember your appointment with death

#### AVOID:

- ✓ Nagging
- ✓ Meddling
- ✓ Bragging
- ✓ Criticizing
- ✓ Fretting

#### IN GENERAL:

- ✓ Give more than you take
- ✓ Pray for others
- ✓ Take the first step to resolve a conflict
- ✓ Be at peace with your shortcomings

## The Four Levels of Happiness – Personal Application

- Page 11 - Personal Inventory (balanced portfolio)
- Daily reflection Card
- The habit of gratitude (Examen prayer)
  1. *Become aware of God's presence.*
  2. *Review the day with gratitude.*
  3. *Pay attention to your emotions.*
  4. *Choose one feature of the day and pray from it.*
  5. *Look toward tomorrow.*
- Four obstacles in ministers
- Tracking symptoms back to the Levels
- Sense of humor/Do your \_\_\_\_\_ best

Your Insights: Personal Application from the pastors

- The power of a common language
- The universal appeal of happiness in pre-evangelization and evangelization
- Countering the cultural propaganda –  
Unmasking the seduction and false promises of Levels One and Two;  
Promoting the truth and beauty of Levels Three and Four
- Connecting the dots with Level Four-  
Conversion, gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit, virtues, Beatitudes
- Preaching and teaching–  
The Four Levels in Scripture, prayers, lives of the Saints, liturgical seasons
- Counseling -  
The Four Levels as a simple tool for self knowledge
- Hitting on all four cylinders

Your Insights: Pastoral Application from the pastors

# Four Levels of Happiness Personal Inventory

<p>Good habits or practices which enhance my relationship with God:</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Ways I'd like to grow in my relationship with God:</p> <p>4</p>
<p>Ways I've made an optimal positive difference for others in the past:</p> <p>3</p>	<p>Ways I can make an optimal positive difference for others in the future:</p> <p>3</p>
<p>Some personal achievements I'm proud of are:</p> <p>2</p>	<p>Some things I'd like to accomplish in the future:</p> <p>2</p>
<p>Some material things or physical activities I enjoy are:</p> <p>1</p>	<p>Some material things or physical activities/pleasures I would like <b>more</b> of in my life are:</p> <p>Some material things or physical activities/pleasures I would like <b>less</b> in my life are:</p> <p>1</p>

# Four Levels of Happiness™

4

## Transcendent

- Source: Transcendental awareness of and desire for the sacred, and spiritual as well as perfect and unconditional truth, love, justice-goodness, beauty, & being-home.
- Satisfaction: Openness to a transcendental power who is perfect and unconditional truth, love, justice-goodness, beauty, & being-home.
- Problem: Not maintain life of prayer and moral-spiritual connection.

3

## Contributive-Empathetic

- Source: Self-consciousness, as well as empathy, and conscience creating a desire to make an optimal positive difference to the world beyond myself.
- Satisfaction: Contributing through actions and empathy to family, friends, organization, stake holders of organization, community, church, kingdom of God, culture, and society.
- Problem: Does not deal with the five transcendental desires and the yearning for the sacred.

2

## Ego-Comparative

- Source: Self-consciousness - trying to bring the outer-world under the influence or dominion of the inner world (ego world).
- Satisfaction: Comparative advantage in achievement, status, popularity, intelligence, perceived intelligence, power, control, and winning.
- Problem: Does not address the contributive; a profound emptiness, and negative emotions of the comparison game.

1

## External-Pleasure-Material

- Source: Brain and sensory faculties.
- Satisfaction: Food, drink, shelter, affection, procreation, and material satisfaction - clothes, house, car, jewelry, and other material goods.
- Problem: Superficial, profound emptiness, reduces self to the merely material.

