



# DESIGNING LIFE 6: HOW TO DESIGN YOUR FUTURE?

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# OPENING QUESTION

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**WHAT DO YOU WANT YOUR OBITUARY TO SAY ABOUT YOU?**

# TOOLS FOR DESIGNING YOUR LIFE

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## TOOLS FOR DESIGNING YOUR LIFE

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# GENERATE GOOD GOALS

- Autonomously motivating: Meaningful: & focusing on the positive
- Clear: When, what, how, where
- Written: Privately or publicly
- Process-oriented: Step-wise and iterative
- Revisable: Don't get stuck in the wrong goal

TOOLS FOR DESIGNING YOUR LIFE

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**CREATE REGULAR HABITS**

TOOLS FOR DESIGNING YOUR LIFE

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**FIND A SUPPORT GROUP**

# TOOLS FOR DESIGNING YOUR LIFE

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- 1. BELIEVING GAME**
- 2. DOUBTING GAME**

**LIFE DESIGN IS NOT HOUSE  
BUILDING.**

**IT IS IMPROVISATIONAL DANCING**



“Do you want to know who you are? Don’t ask.  
Act! Action will delineate and define you.”  
– Witold Gombrowicz

# FINAL ESSAY

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The final essay has three parts:

- 1) Deep dive in one theory or idea within the course
- 2) Your future life – reflection
- 3) Personal learning points

The deadline for returning the final essay is Friday 1<sup>st</sup> of March.

# FINAL ESSAY PART I: DEEP DIVE INTO TOPIC

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- 1) Choose the topic
  - a. Think back on the topics, theories, themes, and ideas of the course and choose a topic that is especially interesting and/or relevant to you.
- 2) Identify two articles on the topic written by researchers of the topic
  - a. When you have decided your topic, your task is to identify two articles related to it
    - b. Google scholar ([scholar.google.com](https://scholar.google.com))
    - c. People working in the university libraries
    - d. Find interesting articles through newspaper articles on the topic that reference some scientific work.
    - e. Many of the course readings also include references.  
Harvard Business Review authors are typically experts on the topic they write about.  
Tip: If you find it hard to identify relevant literature on your chosen topic, then it might be easiest to choose a topic for which it is easy to find relevant readings.
    - f. You can also contact Frank ([frank.martela@aalto.fi](mailto:frank.martela@aalto.fi)) and he can help you find some articles on it.
- 3) Read the two articles and reflect on the topic
- 4) Write a reflection that is at least 1 page long on the topic, where you answer the following questions
  - a. What was your chosen topic?
  - b. Why did you choose this particular topic? What interested you in this topic?
  - c. What were the key claims the articles made about the topic? Provide a brief summary about what the articles said about the topic
  - d. What new things did you learn about the topic from the articles?
  - e. Etc



# FINAL ESSAY PART II: YOUR FUTURE LIFE

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- 1) What would be your dream life 10 years from now?
- 2) Looking at your dream life, contemplate on what would be needed to make that into reality
- 3) Two alternative dream lives
- 4) Your key goals for the year 2019
- 5) How do you keep your goals, values and commitments up to date
- 6). What kind of monthly or weekly routines, habits or rituals could help you stay aware of what is truly important to you?

# FINAL ESSAY PART III: PERSONAL LEARNING POINTS

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Think about the course as a wholeness. All the lectures, readings, discussions, and other parts of the course. Reflect on what you have personally learned through this process.

- 1) What new things did you learn about motivation, happiness, meaning, our current era, other topics, and human nature in general?
- 2) What new things did you learn that are especially relevant for your own life?
- 3) Of the six lectures, which lecture was the most interesting from your point of view? Why?
- 4) Critique: What claims of the lecturer or theories presented were the least convincing from your point of view? What were the things where you had a different opinion as compared to what was presented in the course?
- 5) How will you personally be a different person in the future because of this course?

# FINAL ESSAY PART III: TECHNICAL INSTRUCTIONS

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Language: You can write your essay in English, Finnish or Swedish, according to your preferences.

Please return the final essay through MyCourses as one document latest Friday 1<sup>st</sup> of March.

- Return preferably in pdf-format
- Use a basic font, font size 12, and line spacing of 1.5.
- Name the file: SURNAME\_FINAL ESSAY.pdf

## Grading criteria

- The student demonstrates that she/he can apply the key theories and concepts of the course to the reflections about her/his own life
- The student demonstrates his/her ability to think critically, reflectively, and independently. The student's observations and remarks are insightful, justified, and to the point.
- The student is able to come up with one's own thoughts and points of views on the topic. And to provide reasons and justifications for these points of views.
- The student demonstrates his/her capability to understand "the big picture" and limit the analysis to the most essential points.
- The answers are well-written: The structure is consistent and compact. The writing is fluent and readable.

Grading will be based on sections I & III. Section II is for your personal benefit.



# WRITING ABOUT VALUES

# WRITING ABOUT VALUES EXERCISE

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From the list below, circle the value that is most important to you.

Then for 15 minutes, until you are told that time is done, write about why this value is important to you. Include personal experiences demonstrating its significance.

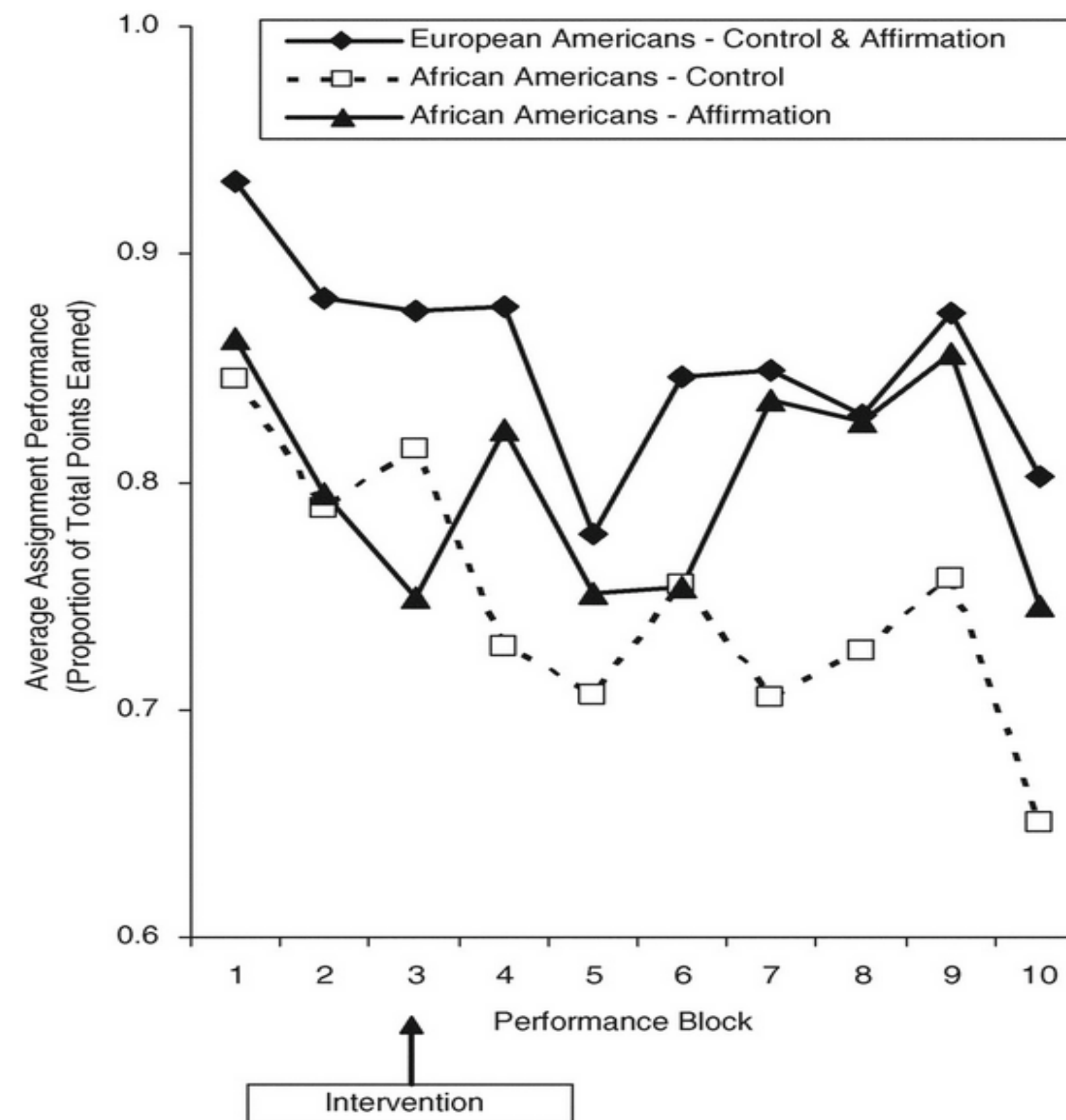
Values list to choose from:

- Being independent
- Contributing to the society
- Music or art
- Being humble
- Honesty
- Relationships with family and friends
- Leadership skills
- Belonging to a social group
- Creativity, learning and gaining knowledge
- Making sure one's life is exciting and full of novelty
- Ensuring safety and stability
- Sense of humor
- Being kind and respectful to others
- Making the world a more fair place where justice prevails
- Devoting oneself to the welfare of those close to oneself
- Preservation of the natural environment
- Career
- Athletic ability
- Spiritual or religious values
- Government or politics

# VALUES AFFIRMATION INTERVENTION

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- "Treatment students were asked to indicate their most important value. ... Treatment students then wrote a brief paragraph about why their selected value(s) were important to them."

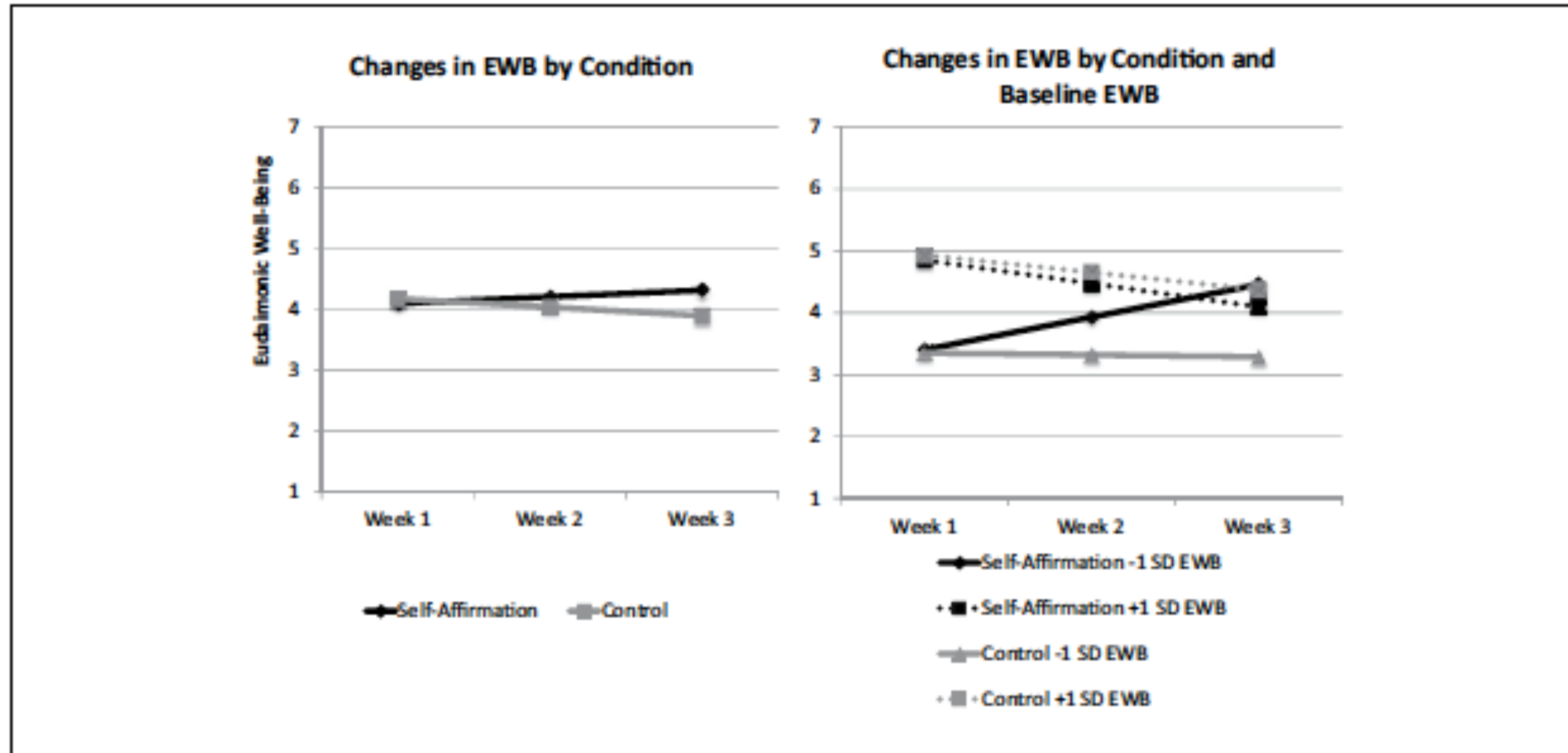


**Source:** Cohen, G. L., Garcia, J., Apfel, N., & Master, A. (2006). Reducing the racial achievement gap: A social-psychological intervention. *Science*, 313(5791), 1307–1310.



# VALUES AFFIRMATION INTERVENTION

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Source: Nelson, S. K., Fuller, J. A., Choi, I., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2014). Beyond self-protection: Self-affirmation benefits hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 40(8), 998–1011.

**Q & A**

**IS HAPPINESS THE ULTIMATE GOAL?**



# HAPPINESS IN ANCIENT TIMES

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# WHY HAPPINESS DOESN'T WORK AS A GOAL?

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1. Wrong targets
2. Less happier
3. Less social
4. Double burden



"I actually detest the word happiness, which is so overused that it has become almost meaningless. It is an unworkable term for science, or for any practical goal such as education, therapy, public policy, or just changing your personal life."

-Martin Seligman, the founder of Positive Psychology



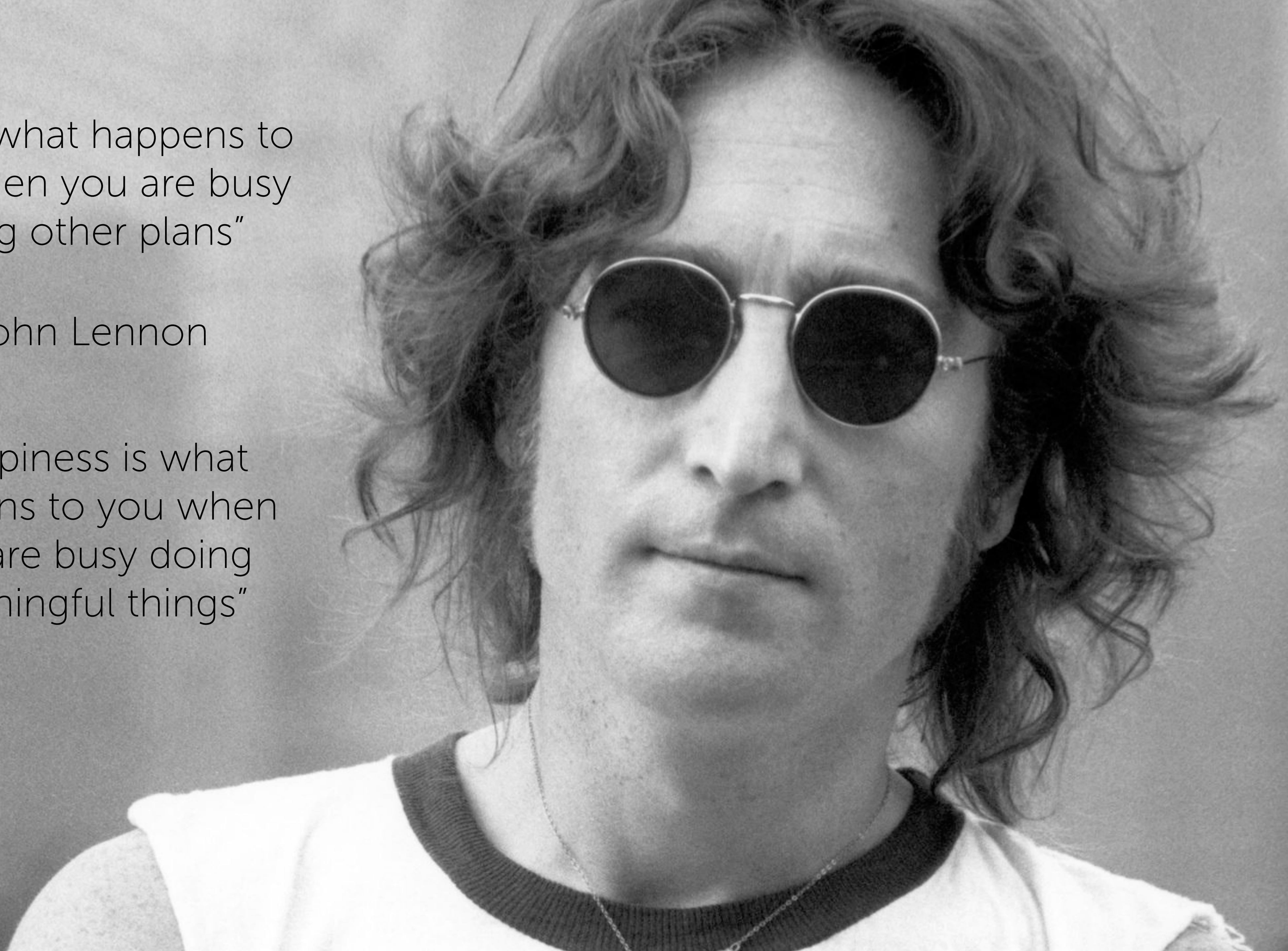
**HAPPINESS AS THE BY-PRODUCT OF BASIC NEED  
SATISFACTION / MEANINGFULNESS**



"Life is what happens to  
you when you are busy  
doing other plans"

-John Lennon

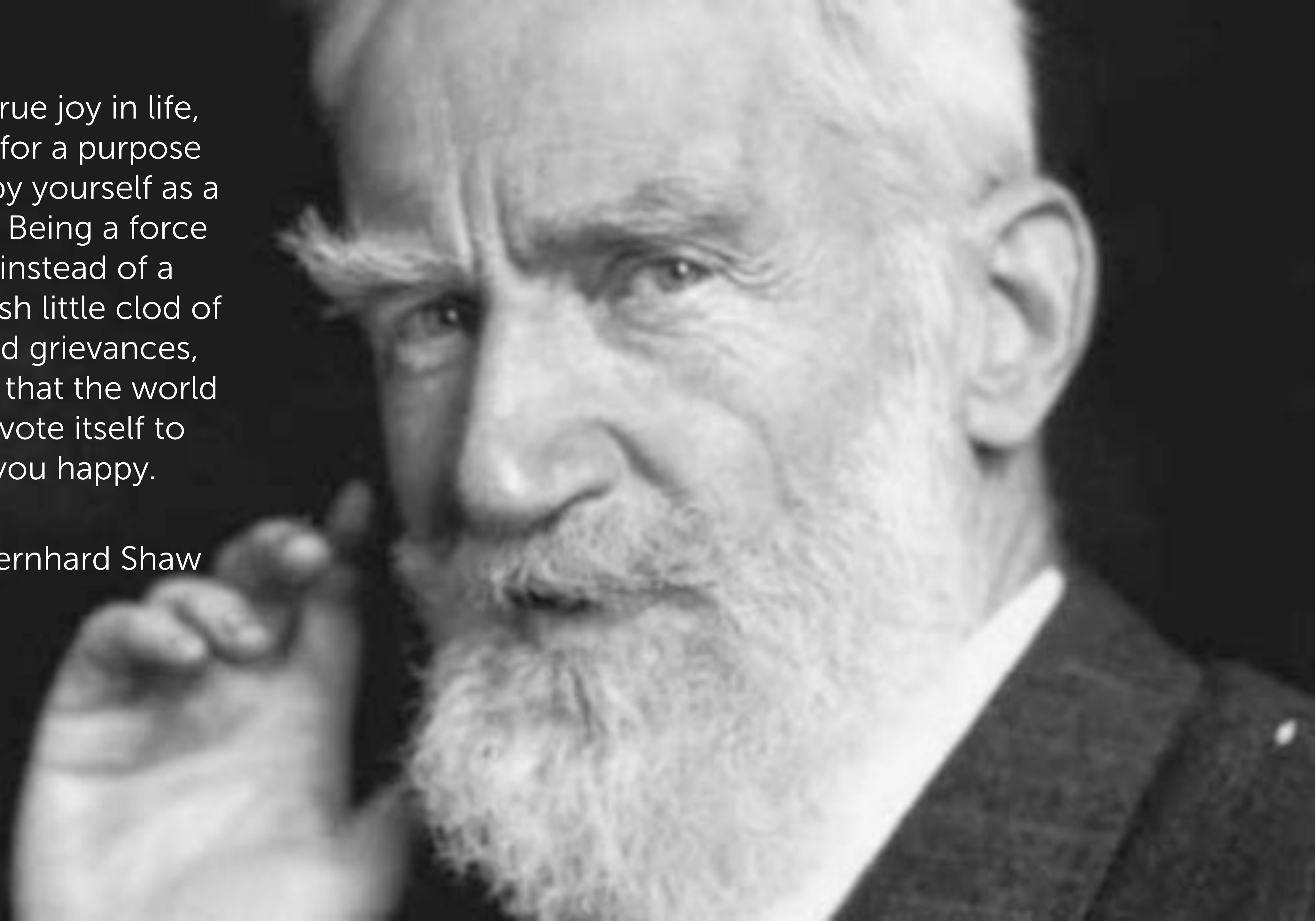
"Happiness is what  
happens to you when  
you are busy doing  
meaningful things"





This is the true joy in life,  
being used for a purpose  
recognized by yourself as a  
mighty one. Being a force  
of nature instead of a  
feverish, selfish little clod of  
ailments and grievances,  
complaining that the world  
will not devote itself to  
making you happy.

- George Bernhard Shaw



# Life as a project / Life as a story

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Life is music.

So let's sing and dance as long as the music is  
still playing!





**THANK YOU!**

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