

# MEDIA Coverage



October 9, 2023

## You can now get your Master's in Happiness, from anywhere in the world, via Centenary University

By Priscilla Liguori



You can now get your Master's in Happiness. Yes, that's a thing, and Centenary University says it's the only school offering it around the globe.

*"While success doesn't lead to happiness, happiness does lead to more success," said Tal Ben-Shahar, a professor at Centenary University.*

Ben-Shahar wondered: why are there academic fields for all type of things, but not one for happiness, when happiness is so important?

The Harvard grad co-founded the Happiness Studies Academy.

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He's now launched the world's first Master's in Happiness program at Centenary University.

"The key in our program is that we focus on scientific interventions," said Ben-Shahar. "No, this is not some self-help, or New Age approach to happiness. We rely on the greatest minds and hearts in our intellectual history, whether it's from philosophy or psychology or economics or neuroscience."

Ben-Shahar says this makes a Master's in Happiness Studies different than a positive psychology program. The goal of this degree is pretty simple: increase levels of wellbeing among yourself and others.

"Our world needs that now," said Ben-Shahar.

The pathway to achieve this goal is not as clear. But the online program has 150 students from 15 countries who all weigh in with unique experiences.

"Welcome," Ben-Shahar said to his students.

## 69 NEWS JOINED AN ONLINE CLASS.

"Why do most people live unhealthy lives, despite knowing what a healthy life looks like and second, how do we bridge that knowing-doing gap?" Ben-Shahar asked his students.

## A CLASS DISCUSSION FOLLOWED.

"We're in automatic pilot," said student Javier Torres.

"There's so much information out there," said a student named Nelly.

The students incorporate the data they examine into their own lives, test it, and share results.

"Before I was doing meditation regularly, I just was running nonstop," said student Meredith Marr.

"I am dealing with my father who just is retiring after 50 years," said student Meg Nocero.

"We will have several attempts before we make one of the exercises into our routines," said student Luyun Xu.

Vanessa Valentine is among the first students getting her Master's in Happiness.

"I hope to use the degree for mostly leadership skills and also skills just within my own personal life," said Valentine.

In case you're wondering, Valentine said, "I'm definitely, if not happier, more aware of my happiness."

Ben-Shahar says Happiness Studies is an interdisciplinary field that's open to anyone with a BA and helpful, no matter what you do.

"There is an upside for increasing levels of wellbeing on the personal level and on the professional level, in just about every profession, whether you're a teacher or a manager or a therapist or a coach or a lawyer or a doctor," said Ben-Shahar.

The plan is to expand this program and create what's being called a happiness continuum. Centenary soon hopes to offer a PHD in happiness and a bachelor's degree in that or a related field.