

## SUSTAINING YOUR HAPPINESS

I have an unconventional view on what will truly define your happiness and I think it all comes down to how you handle these two slippery suckers: The Good in the Bad and the Bad in the Good

### THE BAD IN THE GOOD

One day you'll look around and as much as you may be happy – you might have the house, a family and maybe a job you like, but on this day, you'd rather be somewhere else. It's just a feeling that you have – you don't really want to be somewhere else, but maybe you're exhausted, sick of all the mundane repetitive tasks of life, the same old commute, the same old routines. On this day you want something exciting. An escape, an 'up-feeling'.

Maybe you'd like to be a rock-star for the weekend and have all the sex and excess that money and fame can buy. Which brings us to the next category.

### THE GOOD IN THE BAD.

It's amazing how stress works, where the very things we crave for an instant de-stress, often have a bad-side. We don't think, 'this is a temporary bad-feeling, it will pass', no we crave a hit of alcohol, sugar or sex! We feel bad so we look for a way to feel good. If we follow our cravings through, then we often end up getting something good (like the sugar hit) often followed by the bad: in the dentists chair, on the scales and so-on.

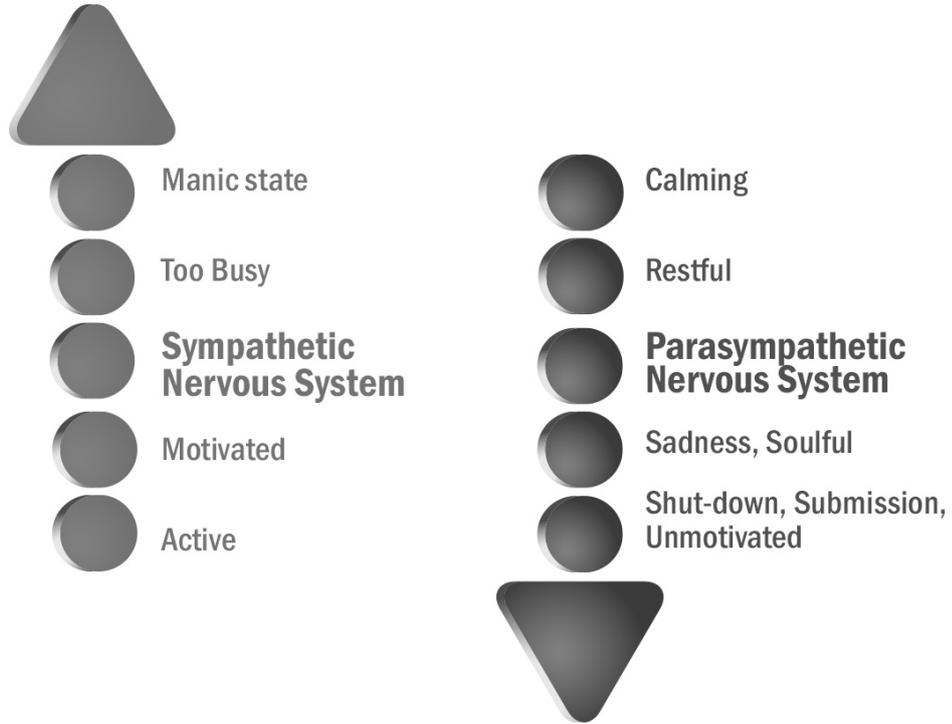
Often we just want our sympathetic nervous system (SNS) to be activated for that an up-feeling so we are feeling excited. Such as playing sport, doing cool stuff and having sex. Or even just thinking about sex. This is the good feeling of the SNS – action and excitement. The down side is the fight-flight side to the SNS where adrenalin is pumping, not because we're excited but because we have a deadline/frustration/negativity. It's all go, go, go and unless we get a break, we burn out.

If we do get a break, the Parasympathetic Nervous System (PSNS) kicks in as we stop, rest and relax. This is great when you're on holiday. Say you've just had a swim on the beach and you lie back on your towel and relax. But there's also a dark side to the PSNS, and if we do burn-out, or become depressed, we feel stuck in a hopeless place. As much as we'd love to feel great, now our outlook is all negative. We feel like crap and our bodies are worn out.

Many men steer clear of the PSNS because they are just so used to being busy that stopping feels 'not-right'. Some see their self-worth as defined by how much they do, rather than it being ok to just 'Be'. You wanna watch out for that one, as it can burn your adrenal glands out.

On the other hand, the reason that many men avoid mundane parenting tasks (the bad in the good) is because it activates the PNS, not in a calming way, but in a defeated and depleted way. This mundane side to parenthood is a constant in the early years. On a bad day, being a hands-on dad means that the drudgery really gets you down. On a good day, you don't mind changing nappies or hanging out the washing. You smile at hanging out their superman outfit and feel good about providing for your kid's every need, or chat to your baby on the change-table.

# THE NEED FOR BALANCE



**Life is all about balance.**

But as the saying goes, balance is the way, not the goal.

If we get too much of the bad in the good, the good in the bad can invite you down it's path. Be careful how deep you go down that path, as, at a certain point, it's all bad in the bad and you may sabotage any good you have!

Sometimes you need to get some bad in the good happening – but you control the 'bad' – for example Mitch likes to fish for Tuna in the top-end amongst shark-infested waters. It'd be bad if he fell overboard but he won't. Benny loves doing hot-yoga – the intensity of doing a strenuous yoga-workout above 37 degrees is bad but good for him.

At the end of the day, it's about protecting your happiness from sabotage, and really allowing yourself to enjoy and appreciate what you've got in your life, even if that means having to deal with the bad in the good!

How do I sabotage my 'Good'?

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My strategy to find the positive ways to deal with the 'bad in the good':

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