

# Shawn Achor

## New York Times Bestselling Author and Positive Psychology Expert

Please contact a GDA agent for information.

### Topics

- Education
- Peak Performance
- Personal Growth
- TED-Talks
- Thought Leader
- Workplace Culture

### About Shawn Achor

After spending twelve years at Harvard University, **Shawn Achor** has become one of the world's leading experts on the connection between happiness and success. His research on mindset made the cover of *Harvard Business Review*, his [TED talk](#) is one of the most popular of all time with over 25 million views, and his lecture airing on PBS has been seen by millions. Shawn's talks have taken him to more than 50 countries to speak to a wide range of audiences including six battalions of Marines at Camp Pendleton, all the NBA team owners, CEOs in China, doctors in Dubai, school children in South Africa, farmers in Zimbabwe, leaders at the Pentagon, and to half of the Fortune 100 companies. Shawn is one of only two speakers to ever be invited to speak to the White House staff at Camp David.

Shawn is the *New York Times* best-selling author of [The Happiness Advantage](#) and [Big Potential](#). His [Happiness Advantage training](#) is one of the largest and most successful positive psychology corporate training programs in the world.

Shawn's research has been published in the top psychology journal for work he did at UBS in partnership with Yale University to transform how stress impacts the body. He also did a two-part series with [Oprah](#) at her house to discuss his mission to bring positive psychology to the world.

### Select Keynotes

- **The Happiness Advantage: Linking Positive Brains to Performance**

Most business is done under the guideline that: if you work harder, you will be more successful, and then you will be happy. This formula is scientifically backward. What over a decade of research shows is that training your brain to be positive **first** actually leads to greater success at work. In fact, only 25% of job success is predicted by intelligence, the rest is determined by your optimism, social support network and the ability to manage energy and stress in a positive way. Based on Shawn's book, *The Happiness Advantage* (2010) and research studying top performers at Harvard, the world's largest banks and Fortune 500 companies, Shawn explains what positive psychology is, how much we can change, and practical applications and strategies for reaping the Happiness Advantage in the midst of change and challenge.

- **The Ripple Effect: How to Make Positive Change Easier**

Common sense is not common action. This is because awareness does not necessarily equal transformation because we require a certain level of "activation energy" to start a change. Shawn's research in the field of positive psychology reveals how small shifts in our mindset and behavior can ripple out to a team and even an entire organization. Audiences will learn about the latest scientific research on mirror neurons and mental priming to explain how positivity and negativity spread, case studies on how to become a lightning rod for change, and findings on how a positive ripple effect profoundly affects an organization's ability to transition and change.

- **Resilient Optimism: Restoring a Culture of Confidence**

Confidence, trust and job satisfaction are at historic lows. At the start of the economic collapse, Shawn worked with the world's largest banks to restore confidence and forward progress. By researching the managers who maintained high levels of success and leadership during this challenging time, he found that our brains develop confidence based on the belief that our behavior matters towards creating the outcomes we desire. To overcome learned helplessness, we must create "wins" for our brain and train ourselves to be rational optimists. Based on the



science of positive psychology and case studies of working with companies in the midst of an economic collapse, Shawn provides practical applications for raising the belief that individual behavior matters and strategies to help leaders to keep teams motivated and engaged.

#### • **Rethinking the Formula for Success: The Power of Positive Education**

At schools and companies alike, we often are taught: "If I work harder, then I will be successful, and then I will be happy." This formula is scientifically backwards. Shawn explains how when we flip the formula, and focus on being positive *first*, we raise nearly every educational and business outcome. By demonstrating how happiness is a choice, we can help students not only cultivate positive habits and mindsets, but achieve higher levels of success as a result. Based on Shawn's study of 1600 Harvard students, his seven years as a Freshmen Proctor, and his subsequent work at schools and companies in over 50 countries, Shawn uses the latest research, interactive experiments, and humorous stories, to show how simple changes to our mindset and habits can bring this research to life and create happiness and success for our schools and for ourselves.

#### • **Positive Genius: The Key to Raising Success, Spreading Happiness & Sustaining Positive Change**

Why are some people able to make great changes, while others stay the same? Based on the research in *Before Happiness* (2013) and cutting edge of positive psychology and neuroscience, Shawn takes us to the beginning of human potential. Each of us has a picture of reality, and this mental picture determines our likelihood of success and our ability to harness our brain's IQ, emotional and social intelligence. Using his signature humor, new case studies and interactive experiments that engage the audience, Shawn clearly demonstrate how each of us can become a "positive genius," someone who can continually use true facts to see the most helpful and positive reality and then share this reality with others. In this program, participants will learn how to harness the latest research on managing stress that Shawn did with Yale University, how to navigate multiple realities at work, cancel internal and external noise, add vantage points to planning, use success accelerants to speed goal completion and use meaning markers to spread positive genius throughout a team, family and an entire organization.

#### **Select Book Titles**

- **2026:** The Power of Beliefs: How Strengthening Seven Core Beliefs Predicts Greater Success and a Better Life
- **2020:** How to Make a Shark Smile: How a Positive Mindset Spreads Happiness (Children's Book)
- **2018:** Big Potential: How Transforming the Pursuit of Success Raises Our Achievement, Happiness, and Well-Being
- **2013:** Before Happiness: The 5 Hidden Keys to Achieving Success, Spreading Happiness, and Sustaining Positive Change
- **2012:** The Orange Frog : How One Spark Change An Island
- **2010:** The Happiness Advantage: The Seven Principles of Positive Psychology That Fuel Success and Performance at Work
- **2007:** Happier: Learn the Secrets to Daily Joy and Lasting Fulfillment

#### **Select Articles**

- [You Have to See Your Happiness to Believe It](#)
- [How You Can Stay Forever Young](#)
- [Three Ways to Spread Positivity](#)
- [The Busier You Are, the More You Need Mindfulness](#)

#### **Select Testimonials**

"One of the world's leading experts on human potential."

— Arianna Huffington

"An amazing event! It was such fun and so stimulating to have Shawn at Facebook! As we strive to help the world become more open and connected, remaining positive and grateful for meaningful and productive relationships is essential! Shawn's ideas and research is very insightful to us as we think about our mission. Thank you!"

— Facebook

"Thank you so much for your help in coordinating this event with Shawn. He was AMAZING and brought the perfect message for our graduation celebration dinner! We are not doing a survey for this event, but he truly knocked it out of the park. He was a pleasure to work with and showed up a little early to mingle with our participants and was happy to sign books for the excited audience."

— Holdsworth Center

"We can't thank Shawn enough for making this year's Johnson & Johnson OCMO Leadership Team meeting such a success. His presentation was a highlight of our event. Our meeting objectives focused on audience engagement, leadership skills, structured networking and fun – Shawn helped us achieve all of these and then some. I've already witnessed my colleagues engaging in the happiness habits, and I'm practicing them myself!"

– *Johnson & Johnson*

Our expectations for Shawn's talk at our recent H.R. Conference was quite high, given what I had seen of his TED talk and having read much of *The Happiness Advantage* = and all those expectations were exceeded! While I knew the content would be powerful and anticipated the delivery would be engaging, I underestimated the positive impact it would have on the audience beyond the conference. The attendees have been quite energized and have begun taking actions to be happier and more grateful in their own lives. Further, while the learning will be applicable at our workplace, I think the attendees felt the impact was transferable to all aspects of their lives (and their families).

– *Wendy's*