

What we have learned in this chapter	Your reflections
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everyone wants to be happy and to avoid pain and suffering, but how we go about trying to be happy does not always bring the results we hope for and can even result in stress.</li> <li>• Happiness is trickier than we thought and much less reliable – hoping for it can even be a source of stress – whereas suffering can present us with challenges that can in the end be beneficial.</li> <li>• Recently scientists have discovered how to 'measure' happiness by monitoring blood flow to the emotional centres of the brain.</li> <li>• Current research into happiness shows us that:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Technology has not resulted in giving us more free time</li> <li>* The amount of choice we have can be overwhelming</li> <li>* Improvements in our standard of living do not necessarily lead to an increase in happiness</li> <li>* We adapt to what we have and then want more</li> <li>* We compare what we have to what others have</li> <li>* We remember causes of happiness inaccurately and are not good at forecasting what will make us happy in the future</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

- \* 40 per cent of our potential for happiness is in our own hands
- \* Happiness can improve our resilience and even our chances of living longer
- \* 46.9 per cent of the time we are not focused on what we are doing, and this makes us dissatisfied
- There are two kinds of happiness:
  - \* Short-term, easily attained, pleasure-based
  - \* Lasting happiness, requires effort, value-based
- Lasting happiness can be developed through peace of mind and heart, and self-awareness.
  - \* It is a powerful source of self-compassion and a starting point for compassion for other people
  - \* Contentment is a good starting point
- Recognising and understanding the causes of our suffering will help us to change it.
- Stress is a manifestation of suffering.
- Recognising that suffering is an inevitable part of life touches a deep tenderness in us, which is the basis of compassion.
- Suffering is caused by our misperception of how things are – we think things are independent – in other words, capable of standing alone and never going to change – when the opposite is true.
- We can address this misperception by developing our quality of awareness through the practice of meditation.
- Meditation is one of the most effective ways to work with stress and is an act of self-compassion.