

# Get

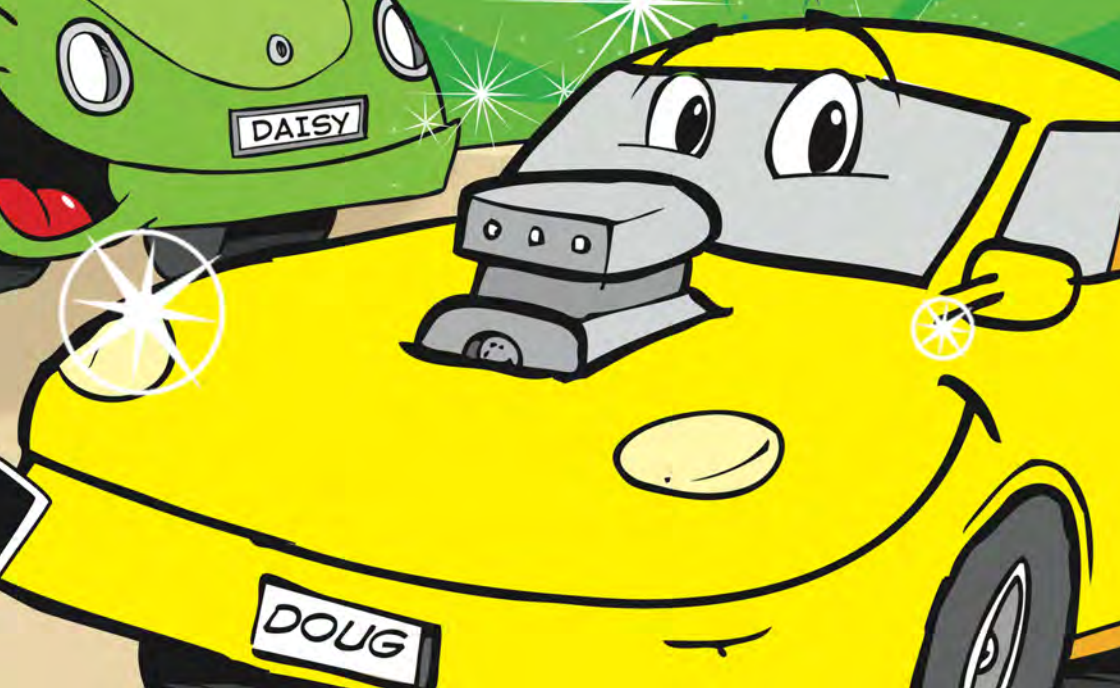
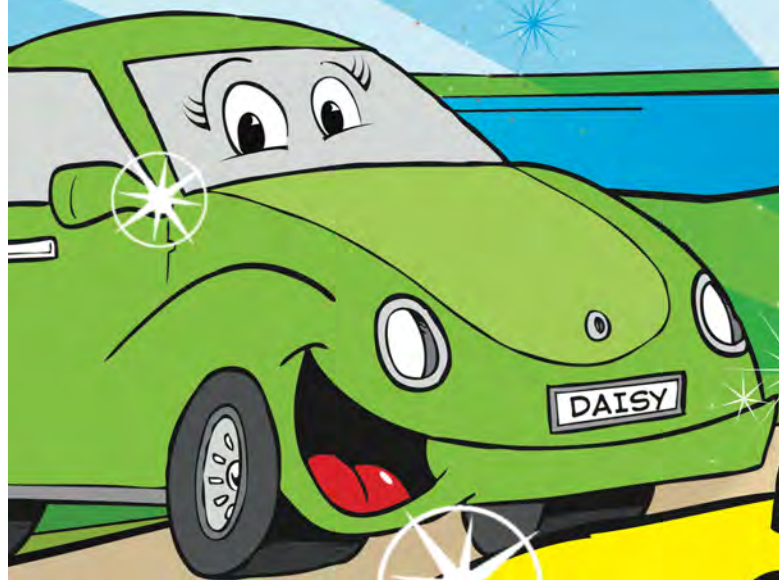


By Ivan Honey &  
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# Happier

# Project

Discover the  
keys to your  
**AMAZING** life!





## THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING AND RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION

'The Get Happier Project' is an integrated approach to personal well-being and social and emotional learning. At the same time it provides the resources for effective classroom and group management and improved relationships.

The evidence is clear, that happier students, caring and relational classrooms, and a sustainable whole school approach to wellbeing, will result in improved learning outcomes.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Daniel Goleman's 1995 book *Emotional Intelligence*<sup>2</sup> helped the world become aware that the Emotional Quotient (EQ) can actually be equally important as the Intelligence Quotient (IQ). Emotional intelligence is the ability to manage emotions in a healthy and productive manner. Knowledge is important but if you don't have an effective way to communicate your knowledge, you won't be able to work well with people, you can't manage upsetting emotions, and you will have more difficulties in life. ***EQ really matters for us to live a happier, healthier and successful life!***

'The Get Happier Project' helps children to learn these essential life skills in a fun, enjoyable and connecting way.

## TOOLS TO MANAGE LIFE'S CHALLENGES

Many young people enter their teenage and adult years with little understanding of themselves or the skills to manage the complex challenges of adult life. Puberty and the teenage years are often an intense and challenging time for young people. Dramatic changes in hormonal levels, academic and peer pressure, and entry into the adult world create a high level of risk and potentially disastrous outcomes.

Unfortunately, many children reach this stage of life without the skills to be resilient, emotionally intelligent, mentally healthy and happy. They do not have simple strategies for problem solving or effective decision-making. Young people are being asked to play the game of life without having first learnt the rules.

As a result many young people enter adulthood with mental health conditions such as depression, and make harmful decisions that lead to drug use, suicide or premature death on our roads. Suicide has now become the major cause of death for people under 25 years of age. Adolescents may use bullying behaviours or become victims of the world around them. Others drift through life never achieving their potential, and struggle with the symptoms of mental ill health. Now more than ever, the argument for helping build self-esteem, and EQ in children is irresistible.



Dr Michael Carr-Gregg,<sup>3</sup> psychologist and well known advocate for children and mental health, points out that the early onset of puberty places young people in a situation where they enter this phase psychologically unprepared.

He highlights the figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics indicating that one in four young people have experienced a mental disorder in the previous twelve months. One in five adolescents graduate from secondary school with a major mental health condition.

If children are able to develop and consolidate a framework to learn positive social and emotional skills and attitudes in their preteen years, they are well prepared for the challenges of life. Schools and classroom teachers are uniquely positioned to make an enormous impact on student's lives by including a social and emotional learning component in their standard curriculum. Assisting young people to develop such a framework is the major purpose of '*The Get Happier Project*'.

### **SUPPORTING TEACHERS IN AN AGE OF EXTREME CHANGE.**

Teachers face the challenges of teaching students with social and emotional difficulties, diverse needs within the classroom, disengaged students, behavioral problems and increasing complexity within their role and the curriculum. This all takes place in the context of constant change both within broader society and the schooling system itself. These evolutionary changes are discussed by many writers such as Sir Ken Robinson<sup>4</sup> and Daniel Pink.<sup>5</sup>

As a result of these drastic social shifts teachers are often required to implement short term, quick-fix programs in relation to behaviour management that only deal with the symptoms of the underlying causes. The underlying causes of these challenges relate to the fact that many disengaged children have not learnt the skills or strategies to understand and manage their own behaviour. When confronted with the primitive psychology of reward and punishment, their behaviour deteriorates even more. These factors compound to compromise teacher health and wellbeing, resulting in high levels of stress and burnout.<sup>6</sup>

As teachers struggle to manage this complex classroom situation, many competent students do not learn how to achieve their emotional or academic potential. Daniel Pink<sup>7</sup> convincingly describes the shifts over the past 200 years, as we moved from the Agricultural Age to the Industrial Age to the Information Age. As a result of increasing rates of affluence, technological innovation, and increased globalization we have now entered what he calls the Conceptual Age. Handy<sup>8</sup> (1990) anticipated this shift with a call for "upside-down" thinking to cope with a patternless, discontinuous post-modern world.



The Conceptual Age focuses on the importance of creativity, innovation and design skills to improve economic competitiveness and human wellbeing. Allan Greenspan<sup>9</sup> (Former Chairman Federal Reserve Board USA) spoke of the need to equip workers not simply with technical know how, but with the ability to create, analyze, and transform information, and interact effectively with others.

Sir Kenneth Robinson argues that our current approach to education is founded in the industrial age. He asks,

***“How can we best prepare children for a future that cannot be anticipated and requires a totally different range of skills for success?”.***

Daniel Pink says that in the Conceptual Age, the right brain functions of creativity, design, relationships, purpose, meaning and innovation are now a key focus. He defines the crucial skills for the Conceptual Age as critical thinking, collaboration, creativity and communication.

We are only just beginning to understand the impact of these ideas on how we go about educating new generations, so that they can confidently enter a world where they will be working in jobs that currently do not exist.

***What is required is an approach to learning that matches the best thinking about human development and the rapidly changing world.***<sup>10</sup>

## **A NEW VISION FOR THE FUTURE**

Imagine a classroom in which children have the capacity to manage their feelings, negotiate differences, accept

their own uniqueness, assist each other work through problems and excel when working as a team. These children can relate well to others, are curious and think divergently when faced with a challenge. They are proactive and see many solutions and opportunities in each task. These children are aware of and respect the world around them and trust their ability to solve problems creatively. They leave school and achieve highly in their areas of interest and strength.

‘The Get Happier Project’ has been designed to equip children and teachers to achieve this vision, and successfully navigate the challenges of the Conceptual Age.



## **EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE PROGRAMS REALLY WORK**

The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has found that universal school-based SEL programs yield benefits in three major areas: feelings and attitudes, indicators of behavioral adjustment, and school achievement. More specifically, youth show improvement in social and

emotional skills, school bonding, pro-social norms, self-perceptions, positive social behaviours, and academic achievement. Significant reductions occur in areas such as conduct problems, substance use, and internalizing symptoms. The gains produced by school based programs translate into:

- **23%** improvement in social and emotional skills
- 9%** improvement in attitudes about self, others and school
- 9%** improvement in school and classroom behaviour
- 9%** decrease in conduct problems (misbehaviour and aggression)
- 10%** decrease in emotional distress such as anxiety and depression
- 11%** increase in achievement test scores

Based on the studies that collected follow-up data in each of the above categories, the positive benefits to students are found to persist over time. Programs are most effective when conducted by teachers rather than researchers, and the programs need to be well implemented in order to obtain positive results<sup>11</sup>.

## NEUROPLASTICITY

In the last few decades, there has been a monumental shift in psychology. Research has discovered the amazing capacity of the brain to alter neural pathways as a result of learning and practice of new behaviours. The new science of Neuroplasticity pioneered by researches such as Norman Doiege (The Brain That Changes Itself<sup>12</sup>).

In the book, 'The Brain That Changes Itself' we see evidence of that even people with organic brain damage can still learn and achieve.

This supports cognitive based approaches to understanding and managing our lives.

Cognitive based approaches are highly effective and have a large evidence base. The enormous changes we make when we learn these skills are actually changing the neural pathways in our brain.

Rather than label children, we can now deliberately teach and train them to improve emotional capacity and skill. Now we know the psychology of high performance and happiness, and we know this can be taught, we must do it. Not only for the sake of the wellbeing of our children, but for our societies emotional and economic health<sup>13</sup>

'The Get Happier Project' provides the opportunity for children to learn the following skills:

1. Problem solving, self-evaluation, creative thinking, goal setting, and planning.
2. To recognise the importance of choice and responsibility in their lives.
3. To develop positive and effective thought patterns and actions, which lead to happiness, mental well-being and positive relationships.
4. To place these ideas within a framework which increases the retention and use of the skills.
5. To build high levels of self esteem.

Many people will ask,

*“How can I possibly fit additional programs into my curriculum?”*

**The answer is simple but not always easy!** Most teachers wish that they were able to spend less time disciplining students and more time teaching, sharing and learning. So when we are able to create a positive, relational and safe learning space, and skill students to become happy, independent learners and problem solvers, we achieve so much more.

This frees up space and time that was previously spent managing passive or actively resistant behaviours. *‘The Get Happier Project’* is an integrated and holistic program that concurrently completes requirements from other curriculum areas. It has been shown to cover the following areas of the Australian Curriculum and classroom practice:

- ✓ Literacy, oral and written language,
- ✓ Critical and creative thinking,
- ✓ Personal and social competence,
- ✓ Ethical behaviour,
- ✓ Intercultural understanding,
- ✓ Social and Emotional Learning,
- ✓ Working in groups and teams,
- ✓ Developing group cohesion,
- ✓ Self Discipline and
- ✓ Art and Craft.

Click below to watch Daniel Pink and Sir Kenneth Robinson’s RSA Animate Talks on these topics.

Sir Ken Robinson:

<http://youtu.be/zDZFcDGpL4U>

Daniel Pink:

<http://youtu.be/QQPCbXVXQWI>

## WHO CAN USE THE GET HAPPIER PROJECT?

### Teachers

*‘The Get Happier Project’* is designed to be used in the classroom/group/one-on-one environment. As a teacher you can use the resources to help your students to manage their feelings and behaviours, make positive choices in social and emotional situations, and to establish a foundation for finding happiness that will last a lifetime. The program will also transform your classroom into an environment which becomes kind, caring, and respectful, and students become independent problem solvers.

### Speech-Language

#### Pathologists/Therapists

SLPs can use these lessons with children who have challenges in pragmatic language and social emotional development. The engaging story line and characters paired with the discussion questions in *‘The Get Happier Travel Journal’* and *‘Teacher’s Guide’* provide a foundation on which to build.

### School Counselors

Counselors can choose specific sections of *The Amazing Adventures of Doug Dragster™* to create sessions that bring out relevant learning points (record these in *‘The Get Happier Travel Journal’*). They can also use *‘Doug Dragster’s Magic Book’* and the *‘Ministry of Cars Fact Sheets’* to teach students about themselves and a wide range of problem solving skills. Using the program in conjunction with *‘Doug Dragster’s Get Happier Toolbox™’* is an ideal way to bring the concepts to students in a counselling session.



Using the therapeutic card set to help individual students or groups of students will build on the knowledge and reinforce the skills students gain through the class sessions.

### Special Education Teachers

Teachers assisting in classrooms or in special day classes can use the lessons to bring social and emotional learning to students who struggle with these skills. The sessions can be broken down into smaller, shorter elements to keep students engaged.

### Other Specialists

Many other specialists who work with children (Occupational Therapists, Teachers of the Hearing Impaired/Visually

Impaired/Orthopedically Impaired etc) often find that collaborating with the classroom teacher and building upon the social and emotional foundations being taught in the classroom, is an excellent way to deliver services to these children.

### Play/Drama/Family Therapists

Therapists will find the resources in 'The Get Happier Project' can enhance their therapeutic interventions for struggling children in school or in a clinical setting. 'Doug Dragster's Get Happier Toolbox'<sup>TM</sup> is a therapeutic card set, specifically designed by a Psychologist with over 40 years experience to assist in creating enduring and transformational change in children.



*The Get Happier Project*

[www.gethappier.net](http://www.gethappier.net) Ph: +61 3 54395551

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDZFcDGpL4U&feature=youtu.be>
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- 12 Doidge, N. (2007). The brain that changes itself: Stories of personal triumph from the frontiers of brain science. New York: Viking.
- 13 Daiali Lama Quote.

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