

## Pass It On®...

### **Arthur Brooks, the Professor of Happiness.**

*Being happy in this life doesn't come easy for any of us. Harvard Professor Arthur Brooks has discovered timeless ways to find fulfillment and happiness, no matter our situation.*

His class on happiness has the longest waiting list in Harvard's catalog. He recently published a book with Oprah Winfrey. He is in demand on college campuses nearly everywhere.

Arthur Brooks is not a rocket scientist, a pop star or a professional athlete. Yet he gives us all what we want a little more of: happiness. He speaks to us because life is complicated, communities are stressed, families are overworked and the future seems uncertain.

Understanding what drives Brooks to make the world a happier place requires a look at his humble beginnings. He grew up in Spokane, Washington, and played the French horn.

"Music is a kind of meditation on things that are beautiful," he says. "But I wanted more."

He left the California Institute of the Arts to join the City Orchestra of Barcelona, Spain. While working full time, Brooks earned his master's degree in economics. Then, he moved back to California to work for RAND Corporation while earning his Ph.D.

Being curious is a good thing, and learning is a good thing. Curiosity gives us a better understanding of the world and our place in it. But Brooks wanted to implement what he was learning. Later, he began teaching at Georgia State University and then Syracuse University. He discovered that he was interested in the economics of behavior, or how the way people feel determines how they act, and how they act determines how they feel.

Diving into human emotions and how they motivate and shape us became Brooks' passion. He became an advisor in public policy and studied productive societies. What he discovered was that, aside from some cultural differences, the most productive societies were also the happiest.

"Happiness isn't found in some finite checklist of goals that we can diligently complete and then coast," he says. "It's how we live our lives in the process. That's why the four pillars of happiness are faith, family, community and meaningful work."

Faith keeps us humble and teachable. When you believe there is a power greater than you, you accept corrective criticism more readily. Family often supports us when we need them and provides a place where we also teach, love and serve. Community is our broader obligation to provide for, protect and encourage others. And when we have work with a purpose, we move forward through menial tasks, knowing we are building something greater than ourselves.

Learning to be happier takes practice. Daily practices such as taking note of what we are grateful for, meditating on a higher power, connecting with family and serving in our communities make our lives match our beliefs. When we live what we believe, we do become happier. And maybe more importantly, we make those around us happier, too.

**Be Happy...** [PassItOn.com](https://passiton.com)

By The Foundation for a Better Life®

*The Foundation for a Better Life® promotes positive values to live by and pass along to others.*

Copyright © 2024 | The Foundation for a Better Life®  
All rights reserved. | [www.passiton.com](https://www.passiton.com)

Available under a Creative Commons Attribution NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 License (international):  
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>