Science of Happiness Cadette Badge

There are so many amazing skills to learn and lots of badges to help inspire you. The Girls Guide to Girl Scouting has a variety of badges that will allow you to start new hobbies and find out incredible things. You can do the activity on your own or with your friends and all the badges will allow you to build a skill that will help you with your Girl Scout Leadership Experience. Badges have five steps. You need to complete all five steps to earn the badge. You don’t have to do all the activities perfectly. After all, you’re learning something new. Do the best you can and you’ll soon find that you can do things you never thought you could do! The Girls Guide to Girl Scouting and badges can be purchased at either the Monmouth or Ocean Council Shops or online. If you have further questions about how to earn a Cadette badge please contact BJ Wood at (732) 938-5454, ext. 132 or bjwood@girlscoutsjs.org.

In this badge, you are the test subject, and your life is the laboratory. You’ll find out how scientists measure happiness, and you will put their results into action. You will also get to perform a happiness experiment on your friends or family—all with the goal of making your world a happier place.

Steps:
1. Make yourself happier
2. Think differently for happiness
3. Get happy through others
4. Do a helpful happiness experiment
5. Create a happiness action plan

Step 1: What would make you happiest? Money? Clothes? Living in a mansion on a tropical island? Such things may keep you happy for a little while, but science shows they aren’t what keep you happy in the long run. What is? Pleasure, engagement, and meaning! Get into the state of “flow”. When you hit your flow, you are really into whatever you are doing. You get so focused that you may not notice the time flying away! Try getting into the flow of playing a sport, reading a great story, or doing a cool craft project for at least a half hour a day. Try this for at least two weeks and see how you feel!

Step 2: Sometimes you can’t change what happens in your day, but you can change how you react to it. Scientists say that people who stay positive and optimistic are happier, even if more bad things happen to them. Focus on what is realistic. Sometimes our worries make us focus on the very worst outcome, even when that’s pretty unlikely to happen. During the next two weeks, when you start to feel negative about something that’s coming up, write down what you think the worst part could be, what the best part could be, and what you think will most likely happen. When you look at all sides realistically, does it help you feel more comfortable?

Step 3: One of the most common ways to find engagement and meaning is in our relationships. A good way for you to be happy on the inside is to care about others and focus on relationships with people on the outside. In steps 1 and 2 you worked on yourself, so now it’s time to work on your relationship with others. Make a gratitude visit. Thank a mentor, friend, teacher, coach, or family member who has helped you in some way. Visit them face to face and tell them why you are thanking them and how they have helped you. After you have done that, ask yourself how you feel. What was hard or easy about this? How long did the effect last?

Step 4: The science of how you think, psychology, used to focus only on mental illnesses. Now scientists also try to find out what makes people stay well—just as exercising keeps your body strong, staying happy keeps your spirit strong. So “positive psychologists” test people’s happiness. Design your own five questions happiness survey. Happiness surveys usually include statements that subjects agree or disagree with on a scale. Use what you have learned about happiness to make some statements for your survey. Give it to a group of friends or family members—maybe you can help them find their strengths, point out where they might be more optimistic, or share the power of gratitude!
Step 5: Now that you are becoming an expert in what makes you happy, take what you have learned about yourself and put it into action. Find a happiness helper. Share what you discovered with a friend or family member, and together, make a list of five ways that person can help you stay happy. In the process, list five things that make your helper happy too, so that you can look out for each other’s happiness!