

## “Why Do We Do the Things We Do?”

For every thing we do, there always is a reason why we do it. Moreover, we often can trace the causes of our behavior back to broad life-goals that we have. For example, you currently are participating in a psychology experiment. Why are you doing this? Perhaps to satisfy a course requirement. Why are you satisfying the course requirement? Perhaps to pass a psychology course. Why pass the course? Perhaps because you want to earn a college degree. Why earn a college degree? Maybe because you want to find a good job, or because you want to educate yourself. And perhaps you wish to educate yourself or find a good job because you feel that doing so can bring you happiness in life.

Research suggests that engaging in thought exercise like that above, in which one thinks about how one’s actions relate to one’s ultimate life goals, can improve people’s life satisfaction. In this experiment, we are testing such a technique. This thought exercise is intended to focus your attention on why you do the things you do.

For this thought exercise, please consider the following activity:  
“Improving and Maintaining One’s Physical Health.”

1a. In the space below, please list one way in which improving and maintaining your physical health could help you meet an important life goal that you have.

-----

1b. How much will improving and maintaining your health help you meet this important goal? *Please circle one:*

A little          Somewhat          Pretty Much          Very Much          Very, Very Much

2a. In the space below, please list one way in which improving and maintaining your physical health could help you meet another important life goal that you have.

-----

2b. How much will improving and maintaining your health help you meet this important goal? *Please circle one:*

A little          Somewhat          Pretty Much          Very Much          Very, Very Much

3a. In the space below, please list one way in which improving and maintaining your physical health could help you meet another important life goal that you have.

-----

3b. How much will improving and maintaining your health help you meet this important goal? *Please circle one:*

A little          Somewhat          Pretty Much          Very Much          Very, Very Much

## “Why Do We Do the Things We Do?”

To show how the activity of “improving and maintaining your physical health” can help you meet important life goals that you have, please fill in the 4 blank boxes below, in the series on the right. Beginning in the lowest blank box (the one just above the box labeled “Improve and Maintain Health”), fill in each box by answering the question “Why do I engage in the behavior described in the immediately lower box?”

To help you with this exercise, the rectangles on the left show how our example, participating in a psychology experiment, can be linked to important life goals.

