

UPF Netherlands celebrates the International Day of Happiness in Amsterdam

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March 21, 2024



A celebration of the International Day of Happiness was organized in Amsterdam on March 21 2024, by the Scientology Church and the Universal Peace Federation Netherlands.

'Happiness is not an end in itself; but is an emotion you will experience when you overcome the barriers on the way to your goal.' This was one of the wise lessons we heard from Happiness Consultant Isabel Costa, during the celebration of the World Day of Happiness last March 21.

It was an inspiring evening with a particularly varied program with four fascinating speakers, each of whom addressed the subject of HAPPINESS from their own experience.

At the beginning of the evening, presenter Gerbrig Deinum reflected on the origins of the International UN Day for Happiness, which was proclaimed by the United Nations in 2013 by resolution. The resolution to have a Day of Happiness came from the former king of Bhutan, a country situated between Tibet and India - where happiness for the people is a more important topic than the gross national product. Bhutan is slightly smaller in area than the Netherlands, it is one of the poorest and most underdeveloped countries in the world, and yet its population is one of the happiest. Gross National Happiness became a system of thinking in Bhutan, in which prosperity is described, not only in economic terms, but also in terms of happiness and mental as well as social development.

Four speakers shared their views and experiences about happiness.

1st speaker: Robert Kruijt

Robert Kruijt, head of External Affairs of Scientology Amsterdam, spoke about the booklet 'The Way to Happiness' by the founder of Scientology, L. Ron Hubbard. After explaining this global Scientology campaign, which gives people tools for a happier life, Robert read the last and his most favorite chapter from the booklet: 'Flourish and Prosper'.

The message in this chapter is that there may be people around you who want to bring you down, but it is important that - regardless of any opposition - you make sure that you are doing well in every way. By 'flourishing and prospering', those who give you a hard time will eventually give up and you will continue to improve.

2nd speaker: Raoul Etienne

That happiness has everything to do with your own mindset was evident from Raoul Etienne's inspiring and very personal story about his life. Raoul told how he had trapped himself because of wrong choices in the past and, at one point, literally felt like he had nowhere to go. The turning point came when he first decided to drastically change his diet and became vegan. This had an immediate effect on his energy

level, and he started to feel better and better.

The next point he applied to his life was a lesson he had learned from his father in his youth: to read widely and learn when life seems difficult. Raoul began to delve into religion, philosophy, and various other subjects. By using what he learned in his life, he also got new goals to strive for. As a convinced vegan, it became his dream to make cool sneakers without leather. He decided to use his creativity and started to design completely vegan sneakers.

After studying this a lot and working very hard, Raoul recently launched his own clothing and shoe brand, The Redi Pill. He traveled throughout the Netherlands with samples from his first collection to find sales channels. "Learning and (continuing to) develop yourself" was what became the success formula for Raoul to tackle his life and give it a new twist.



3rd speaker: Patricia Haveman

Since 2015, Patricia has been traveling all over the world with a message of hope and happiness. Over the years, she has visited more than 60 countries and started many projects that were then continued by the local population. Patricia believes in a united world, with respect and a dignified existence for everyone. When she arrives somewhere, she starts a project from scratch, calling on everyone's talent. According to Patricia, "By translating your talent to someone else, to society, to your environment, you experience how you can directly contribute to the quality of a life of others. Your initiative can inspire others to do the same. And this not only enriches your own happiness, but you immediately influence the lives of many others."

Patricia especially likes to work with children because they are still very pure. That is why she often starts her projects at a local school, to reach an entire community from there. For example, she visited a school in Cape Town, South Africa, at the beginning of this year.

Patricia continuously collects clothing, toys, and other items in the Netherlands, which she receives from her now large network. These are donated, among other things, to refugees and children in the AZCs (Centers for Asylum Seekers) in the Netherlands. When Patricia visits other countries, she always takes a suitcase full of donated items with her, in order to distribute these to the poorest children and families. Everywhere she goes, she makes new contacts and a group is created that will continue her Mundo Younido projects when she returns to the Netherlands.

Over the years, Patricia has received many recognitions and awards for everything she does (below is a selection of her awards, there are many more). She has been in the media a lot and a book is currently being written about her life. Patricia believes that everyone can always do something to create a better world. According to her, "that doesn't always have to be far away, you can also create very big effects close by."

For example, a project was recently created very spontaneously in the Netherlands after a friend's 9-year-old son asked Patricia what he could do to help her. Since war broke out in Ukraine in 2022, Patricia and her foundation had already helped around 5,000 Ukrainian refugees, including children, throughout the Netherlands with the basic necessities of life, such as clothing, food and cosmetic care products. Patricia

therefore suggested that the child asks other children in his class at school to donate toys and clothing for Ukrainian children in a shelter in Diemen. She was very surprised by him: after a few weeks it turned out that the little boy had collected so much stuff that she was able to turn it into a much larger project and distribute the things with him throughout the Netherlands!

Patricia said, "children have so much strength! That such a little boy, on his own and completely from his heart, works for other children makes me so happy and gives hope for the future." Patricia further indicates that she has experienced that the right people always come her way at the right time to help her. "When you work from your heart, it seems as if you naturally attract happiness," she affirmed. Finally, it is good to mention that Patricia started the Global Some Day Campaign in 2023, in which she connects children worldwide by singing a song she composed herself: Some Day (see the video on YouTube).



4th speaker: Isabel Costa

As a 'Happiness Consultant', the Portuguese Isabel Costa helps people on the path to peace, well-being, and inner happiness. Isabel was in another capacity as a peace ambassador for the Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP) in the Netherlands, but she was happy to visit us this evening to give a lecture about Happiness.

Isabel Costa's story connected seamlessly with the previous speakers and used them as an example to show how you can influence your own happiness. For example, she stated how important it is to have a clear goal in mind and to pursue it. Getting to the goal can bring us even more happiness than finally reaching the goal. Once a goal has been achieved, there is no longer a reason or purpose to go for it and the inner drive and passion decreases. That is why it is important to keep setting new goals for yourself.

Isabel talked about the problems people can encounter when they look for happiness outside themselves, such as in the area of materialism. She also discussed the negative experiences we all have throughout our lives and how they can dull us from life. Yet we are all still the cheerful, interested child we once were. It is precisely by not seeing yourself as a victim, but continuing to motivate yourself despite everything that we will be able to fully enjoy life again. Happiness lies within you and is not determined by your environment.

Isabel ended her lecture with a meditative moment, in which everyone present came closer to themselves.

Both Scientology Church as well as the Universal Peace Federation in The Netherlands look back on a successful evening!