Neuroscience and Happiness Summary

Current brain research confirms what our religious traditions have been teaching for thousands of years: Being grateful, generous people, connected to one another while nourishing our spirituality, are all essential characteristics of happy people. We explore the basics in neural plasticity and brain health, then look at the activities and dimensions of sustainable happiness. Finally, we will see how these practices can be easily incorporated into our daily lives.

*Begin with a few minutes of standing Yoga stretches*

1. Briefly explore several “Myths of Happiness” (video clip of Shawn Achor from Harvard)
2. Why study “Happiness” (video clip of Martin Seligman, Princeton) and what Positive Psychology examines
3. The 40% Solution (Sonja Lyubormirsky, UC Riverside) - What we can do to increase our everyday happiness levels
4. Brain research basics - (video clip of Dan Siegel, UCLA) How our brains respond to training.
5. Activities to Boost Happiness and Build Neural Connections -
   a. Gratitude
   b. Social Relationships/Kindness
   c. Managing Stress, Building Resilience
   d. “Flow” (M. Csikszentmihalyi)
   e. Living in the Present/Savoring the Good
   f. Fostering Mindfulness
   g. Meditative Prayer (If time allows, lead a guided meditation for a few minutes.)
   h. Physical Activity

6. How to easily incorporate these activities into our daily lives
7. Final Thoughts/Summary
8. Questions? Comments? Discussion?