



Tal Ben-Shahar

AUTHOR

Organisations are running out of ways to hide a wellbeing problem. Burnout is metabolising into attrition, quality issues and performance drag, and the response so far has mostly been wellness apps and resilience platitudes. Leaders who cannot describe what actually drives human flourishing in their workforce end up paying for the symptoms without treating the cause.

Tal Ben-Shahar is a Harvard-trained positive psychologist whose SPIRE framework gives organisations a practical way to raise wellbeing and leadership performance at the same time.

Tal Ben-Shahar's 2026 Biography

Why organisations work with Tal Ben-Shahar

- The Harvard credential is unusually specific. His Positive Psychology course became the most-taken class in the university's history, which means his material has been pressure-tested in a room he did not own rather than rehearsed for conferences.
- His SPIRE framework, the basis of the Happiness Studies Academy curriculum, gives organisations a shared language for wellbeing that is specific enough to act on and simple enough to deploy at scale.
- Potentiallife, co-founded with a former McKinsey senior partner, has translated positive psychology into a leadership development platform rather than a keynote; he speaks from inside that operating experience.
- Eight books, *Happier* a New York Times bestseller, translated into 25 languages, makes him one of the most cited authorities on happiness science that a buyer can put in front of a large internal audience.
- His work connects wellbeing to performance in a way most wellness speakers cannot, which is what senior leadership teams need when they are being asked to justify the investment.

Biography highlights

- PhD in Organizational Behavior and BA in Philosophy and Psychology, Harvard University
- Former teacher of Positive Psychology 1504 at Harvard, the most-taken course in the university's history
- Co-founder of the Happiness Studies Academy and creator of the SPIRE wellbeing framework
- Co-founder of Potentiallife, a positive-psychology-based leadership development platform
- Author of eight books including the New York Times bestseller *Happier*, translated into 25 languages

AVAILABLE FOR

- Coaching
- Executive Training
- Masterclass
- Speaking

TAL'S SPEAKING THEMES

- Employee Wellbeing
- Leadership
- Mental Health in the Workplace
- Peak Performance
- Resilience & Stress Management

LANGUAGES: English

- Helped establish the Maytiv Center for positive psychology at IDC Herzliya (now Reichman University)

Biography

A generation of Harvard students sat in Positive Psychology 1504 because it was the most-enrolled course in the university's history. The argument that drew them is the argument Tal Ben-Shahar has since built into an international body of work: that happiness is not a soft subject, it is a measurable driver of performance, judgment and resilience, and the organisations that understand it will outperform the ones that treat it as HR decoration.

His academic grounding is Harvard across the board, with a BA in Philosophy and Psychology and a PhD in Organizational Behavior. The teaching track ran alongside a popular-writing career that now spans eight books, including the New York Times bestseller *Happier*, translated into 25 languages. These are not motivational titles, they are the popular expression of an empirical research tradition he has been teaching since the early 2000s.

The organisational application comes through two vehicles. The Happiness Studies Academy, which he co-founded, is the home of the SPIRE framework, which codifies wellbeing as the integration of spiritual, physical, intellectual, relational and emotional health. Potentiallife, co-founded with former McKinsey senior partner Angus Ridgway, delivers a positive-psychology-based leadership programme at corporate scale, with a platform that tracks behaviour in and out of work.

For senior leadership teams, the combination is what matters. Ben-Shahar can translate a research finding into a board-level case for investment, and translate that case into a programme employees will actually use. In a period when wellbeing spend is under scrutiny and the cost of burnout is appearing on the P&L, that is a short list of people who can hold both ends of the conversation.

Key speaking topics

- Positive psychology and the science of wellbeing
- The SPIRE framework for wholeperson wellbeing
- Positive leadership and performance
- Resilience and happiness in uncertain times
- Burnout, meaning and motivation at work
- Organisational applications of happiness research

Ideal for

- CHROs, chief wellbeing officers and people-and-culture leaders designing enterprise-wide wellbeing strategy
- CEOs and executive teams looking to connect wellbeing investment to performance outcomes
- Leadership development and learning functions building positive leadership capability at scale
- All-hands, leadership offsites and customer or partner conferences where a credible, research-anchored wellbeing voice is required

Audience outcomes

- A research-grounded vocabulary for talking about wellbeing with the

same rigour the organisation applies to strategy or finance

- A working grasp of the SPIRE framework and how its five dimensions map to concrete workplace practices
- Specific habits and behavioural shifts drawn from positive psychology that leaders can apply to themselves and their teams
- A clearer view of the link between individual flourishing, leadership effectiveness and organisational performance
- Reference points from Harvard teaching and from Potentiallife's corporate deployments rather than generic wellness advice

Tal Ben-Shahar's 2026 talks & topics

Leading in Uncertain Times

A practical session on how leaders sustain performance and judgment under sustained pressure, built around the SHARP model (Strengths, Health, Absorption, Relationships, Purpose).

Key takeaways:

- A concrete vocabulary for what leaders should pay attention to under prolonged uncertainty
- Routines and habits that protect decision quality when conditions are volatile
- Language for helping a leadership team recognise and address early signs of burnout

Positive Psychology: The Science of Happiness

An evidence-based introduction to optimal human functioning, drawing on the material that built the most-taken course in Harvard's history.

Key takeaways:

- The research base for what actually increases wellbeing, and what does not
- The SPIRE framework and how its five elements apply to individuals and teams
- Specific interventions supported by empirical research that audiences can adopt immediately

Positive Leadership: Strategies for Success

An applied session on how positive psychology reshapes how leaders motivate, coach and make decisions, incorporating Appreciative Inquiry and strengths-based approaches.

Key takeaways:

- How a strengths-based lens changes performance conversations and team design
- The behaviours that distinguish leaders who generate energy in a team from those who consume it
- A practical view of how positive leadership connects to retention, engagement and output

Tal Ben-Shahar's Videos

