The increasingly materialistic society we live in has led many of us to believe that happiness is something to be chased, to obtain. The ultimate end goal that leads to everlasting bliss and contentment. 

Paradoxically, research shows that the more people chase materialistic pleasures as a means to seek happiness, the more depressed, anxious and less satisfied with life they are.

“We get a lot wrong about what will make us happy,” says Dr. Samantha Boardman, New York-based positive psychiatrist and author of Everyday Vitality: Turning Stress Into Strength. “All too often we choose mind-numbing, effort-sparing options like scrolling through our phones or binge-watching shows instead of engaging in meaningful, revitalizing activities. These are uplift imposters. Think of these as empty calories—the emotional equivalent of junk food,” says Dr. Boardman.