

# 強顏歡笑

qiang3 yan2 huan1 xiao4

Dubai has given itself until 2021 to be ranked one of the 10 happiest places in the world. It will do an online survey soon to find out just how happy everyone is. It's all very good, except those who indicate being "unhappy" will get a call from the police to ask why they are not happy.

Getting the police involved in such an exercise is rather strange. Some suggest it may be a tactic to (1) coerce people to take the survey and, (2) say they are happy. The survey asks people to choose between a frown, a smile and an unimpressed straight line. With the "threat" of "police intervention," everyone might just pick "smile," but it may just be "強顏歡笑" (*qiang3 yan2 huan1 xiao4*).

"強" (*qiang3*) is "to strive to," "by force," "顏" (*yan2*) is "the face," "歡" (*huan1*) means "cheerful" and "笑" (*xiao4*) is "to laugh," "to

## Idiom by Lon Yan

smile." Literally, "強顏歡笑" (*qiang3 yan2 huan1 xiao4*) is "force face joyous smile," "forcing a cheerful smile."

The idiom means "to put on an air of cheerfulness," "to try to look happy when one is sad," "to assume a joyous mood reluctantly." The "笑" (*xiao4*) "smile" in the idiom is a forced smile.

Former TVB general manager Stephen Chan Chi-wan was seen smiling to reporters after his earlier acquittal for bribery was reversed. *The Standard* report said he "put on a brave face." Putting on a brave face has a similar meaning in this context as "強顏歡笑."

**Terms containing the character "強" (*qiang3*) include:**

強調 (*qiang3 diao4*) - to emphasize, to highlight

強盜 (*qiang3 dao4*) - a bandit, a robber

強迫 (*qiang3 po4*) - to force, to compel

強大 (*qiang3 da4*) - big and powerful