

# How to be happy

1st August 2023

Have you noticed how some people just seem to be happier than others, even though they have many of the same problems and challenges? Although the meaning of happiness varies from person to person and from culture to culture, all human beings have the capacity to be happy.

Tips and tools you can use

In the same way that our brains develop learning patterns, we can also train ourselves to experience gratitude, resilience, optimism, and meaning more easily. Here are some tips to help you experience these feelings more readily:

- Every day write down three things that went well and why they went well.
- Plan a list of enjoyable things you would like to do more often. Schedule them into your calendar and commit to follow through with them.
- Make a list of people who make you happy and plan to spend more time with them. If some of these people are now far away from you, plan how you can be in touch with them more often or more effectively. In addition to email and phone calls, consider whether occasional audio or web chats would add more value to your communications.
- Consider your personal growth goals and make a commitment to ongoing learning and developing new skills.
- Endeavor to perform every task to the best of your ability.
- Get physically active. Exercise releases endorphins, which leads to a sense of wellbeing. Whether it's in a club, on your own, indoors or outdoors, there are lots of ways to get active. Pick something you are most likely to enjoy and to commit to over time.
- Begin 'positive self-talk.'
- Find meaning in your life, whether that is being part of a faith community, volunteering, or developing your virtues.
- Set realistic goals. Start with one positive goal for each day. Think about what you can do to change or prevent negative experiences from happening again.
- Reflect on whether you are trying to do too much. If you find that you are going through the day without taking the time or finding the energy to think about what you are doing and about happiness, ask yourself, "how can I change?"

© LifeWorks 2020

heartbeat+

# How to be happy

1st August 2023

Resilience and optimism have been shown to reduce our risk of poor health and death.

## Being grateful

- Each day, write down a few things for which you are deeply grateful.
- Try not limit your thinking to the extreme terms, "never," "always," "everything," and "nothing." Building resilience and optimism is important. Don't be afraid to fail and always "try, try again."
- Learn from children, for whom a pretty stone or shell can be a precious treasure.
- Appreciate life. Enjoy the rain; it will be hot and sunny again soon enough. Identify a role model for yourself—alive, deceased, famous, not famous, real or fictional. Someone you admire and who seems to have achieved the goals or the attitude you strive for. When in doubt, ask yourself what your role model would do or say in the same circumstance.
- Commit to looking for both big and small events/circumstances that are positive. This will give you the strength to tackle the negative.

## The power of laughter

- Remember that, like exercise, laughter releases endorphins.
- Start by exercising your smiling muscles. Put on a smile at least once a day.
- Share humor and joy with family and friends.
- Broaden your horizons, try something new and don't take it too seriously if you fail. It's okay to sing off key, fall off your bike, or make a funny painting.

## Time for yourself

Make time just for yourself every day. Be mindful of your attitudes and experiences. When it comes to taking time for you, it's not always quantity that counts, but quality. There are many ways to create quality time including:

- praying, meditating, and reflecting
- visualizing
- making or listening to music

© LifeWorks 2020

heartbeat+

# How to be happy

1st August 2023

- gardening (indoor or outdoor)
- taking physical care, such as grooming yourself, cleaning, or exercising
- seeking a positive environment, such as being in nature, enjoying the company of good friends or listening to those who inspire you
- preparing good food, getting a massage for weary muscles and a weary brain, or buying a present for yourself

## Time for others

Keeping up relationships with people you have known is also important. Here are some ways to show your appreciation of others:

- Recognize people as individuals, not just as part of a group or family.
- Be prepared to practise forgiveness.
- Meet with someone you haven't seen in a while.
- Connect with an aging or ill relative or friend.
- Help someone by looking after their children so they have time to themselves.
- Contribute to a worthy cause.

Helping others often creates positive feelings and brings meaning to our lives. Building and maintaining meaningful relationships is important for emotional wellbeing. With little effort it is possible to experience more gratitude, resilience, optimism, meaning—and therefore happiness—in our lives.