

Introduction

So what is happiness?

Some people argue happiness comes from:

- Worldly pleasures
- Faith and religion
- Selfishness
- Selflessness

Whilst others say wanting happiness prevents us from getting it.



This diversity of opinion, whilst frustrating, makes sense as we are all unique and understand happiness very differently.

Sonja Lyubomirsky describes happiness as:

“the experience of joy, contentment, or positive well-being, combined with a sense that one’s life is good, meaningful, and worthwhile”

The Dalai Lama XIV states:

“Happiness is not something ready-made. It comes from your own actions.”

So, it seems obvious if not always appreciated that we need **to work** at increasing our happiness.

So whatever happiness means for you, here are some proven ways to increase your happiness levels and general wellbeing; something we can all benefit from right now:

Realising Your Strengths

Getting in touch with and using your strengths, rather than just focussing on your weaknesses is very powerful.

Finding your signature strengths & finding new and more frequent uses for them helps you gain confidence, overcome challenges and grow.



How To use Your Strengths:

- Use your skills to help others make their life easier
- Use your energy to respond enthusiastically & positively
- Use your expertise and wisdom to teach valuable lessons to those who want to learn
- Use your kindness to give comfort to others
- Use your empathy to support friends and family
- Use your introversion to listen actively and carefully to those around you



Write down 3 things that went well today and why they went well.

Do this every day for a week and see if you feel happier.

Savouring the Moment

Savouring is the act of stepping outside of an experience to review and appreciate it.

Savouring intensifies and lengthens the positive emotions that come from doing something you enjoy or love.

We often fail to stay in the moment and really enjoy what we're experiencing. But by 'fast forwarding' to the future we often don't enjoy the present moment and can end up thinking more negative thoughts like:

- It's going to end soon
- It's never going to be as good next time
- I don't deserve it

Which will just pull your mood down and increase your anxiety levels.



Pick one experience to truly **savour** each day. It could be a nice shower, a delicious meal, a great walk outside, or any experience that you really enjoy.

Enhance your savouring experience by:

- Sharing the experience with another person – that amplifies it
- Thinking about how lucky you are to enjoy such a moment
- Keeping a souvenir or photo of that activity
- Every night, writing down what you savoured

"When we appreciate the good, the good appreciates" - Tal Ben-Shahar

Having Gratitude

"People who habitually acknowledge and express gratitude see benefits in their health, sleep, relationships and they perform better"

Martin Seligman – Flourish

Gratitude is a positive emotional state where you recognize and appreciate what you have received in life. Research shows that taking time to experience gratitude can make your life more satisfying.

When we feel gratitude, we benefit from the pleasant thought of a positive memory in our life. When we express gratitude to others, we strengthen our relationship with them.

Gratitude means moving from counting your burdens to counting your blessings. Gratitude connects us all.

VIP POINT

Grateful people **don't** ignore the negative aspects of their life; they simply choose to appreciate what is positive as well

"Grateful people report more emotions, more vitality and optimism and greater life satisfaction as well as lower levels of stress and depression"

The Book of Joy – Dalai Lama & Desmond Tutu

Exercise



Cultivate the habit of gratitude.

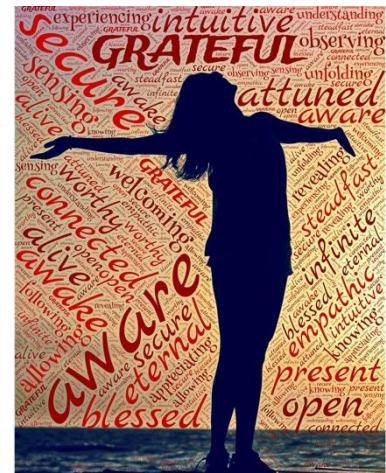
I am sure that many of you are sick of counting down the days, calories, grey hairs, and the pennies, so let's put a different lens on this situation and start to try and count our blessings!

What are you going to count?

For the next seven days, take 5-10 minutes each night to write down 3-5 things you are grateful for.

They can be little things or big things.

You can just write a word or a short phrase but be mindful of the things you're writing about.



Worry Box

If a worrying thought pops into your head:

Ask yourself "can I do anything about this worry". If you can't then be firm but kind to yourself and try to let it go. Distract yourself and usually within 90 seconds you will have forgotten it and moved onto something else.

If you can do something about the worry, then take action.

Don't put off trying to 'do' something about it. Delaying or procrastinating will allow the worry to spread from just nagging at the back of your mind, to then trying to get your full attention and distracting you from getting on with more important or enjoyable and fulfilling tasks.

Silver Lining

Use this time to re-evaluate your priorities and expectations - see what changes you can make in your day to day life because taking it one day at a time is probably enough right now!

See if you get to a place where you feel more in charge of your life and less disappointed in others (who may very well be doing the best they can right now, in these uncertain times)

Shared Space

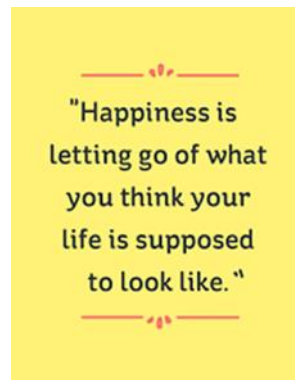
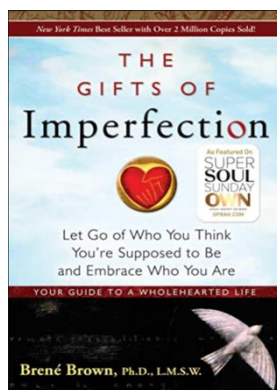


TED TALKS
IDEAS WORTH SPREADING

For anyone who finds it hard to show their vulnerable side, listen to this great Ted Talk from Brené Brown who wonderfully explains the benefits of allowing yourself to be vulnerable.

https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_the_power_of_vulnerability?language=en

And for anyone who likes reading self-help books, you cannot beat "The Gifts of Imperfection" which is about letting go of who you think you should be and embracing who you really are. Read it and see if it doesn't make you kinder and gentler with yourself as well as with others! This would be my dessert island book along with my kohl eye liner, M&S Belgian Dark Chocolate Rice Cakes and a posh hand cream!



Question to Ask Yourself this week

What can I do today to make someone else a bit happier?

