

Happiness: How to Be Happy in Life



Objectives

- Define personal happiness
- Global views of happiness
- Identify obstacles to happiness
- Learn productive strategies to increase happiness

Happiness is good for you..

Happiness brings a multitude of physical, mental and emotional health benefits:

- Higher productivity
- More energy
- Greater creativity
- Better relationships
- Improved immune system
- Reduced stress and anxiety
- More value driven life
- Satisfied with decisions
- Less negative comparisons
- More resilience
- More cooperative
- More charitable
- Increased self-confidence
- Deeper concentration
- More hopeful
- Less likely to dwell on things and reflect negatively

Global Views of Happiness

- What can we learn from the Bhutanese “Gross Happiness Factor”?
- Great Britain is now teaching happiness classes in elementary schools
 - Recognized that you can teach happiness as a skill
- New global research studies show that factors determining happiness include:
 - Education, nutrition, freedom from fear and violence, gender equity, having choices
 - Surprisingly less important were wealth and climate
 - One of the most important factors for individual happiness is personal choice
- The hope of social psychologists is for more governments to explore this research and advise policy makers how these factors that improve individual happiness can be integrated into government

Exercise: What makes you happy?

- What do you purposefully do to make yourself happy?
- What do you think are the things that provide happiness?
- How often do you prioritize your own happiness?



Common Assumptions about Happiness

Other people make us happy or unhappy.....

I'll be happy when....

Money and things make us happy...

“They” are happier than me because “they” have.....

I'll be happy if....

Common Obstacles to Happiness

- Comparing yourself to others
- Striving for perfection
- Having unrealistic expectations
- Believing someone or some thing will make you happy
- Waiting for happiness to come
- Fear of failure
- Loneliness and disconnection from others



Key Points about Happiness

- Authentic happiness comes from within
- Happiness takes intentional effort
- Happiness comes from our relationships with other people and the emotions that help us make those connections
- Better to invest in activities you enjoy rather than things
- Happiness requires action: set goals and challenge yourself
- Find an optimal level of happiness



Strategies to Increase Happiness

- Nurture social relationships
- Be optimistic
- Be more empathetic and forgiving
- Practice gratitude and show appreciation
- Help others
- Perform acts of kindness
- Pursue meaningful activities that have personal meaning to you
- Use your strengths
- Challenge yourself
- Try new things
- Take chances
- Reframe your thoughts
- Have self acceptance
- Manage your expectations
- Keep your perspective
- Live a healthy lifestyle
- Use the mind body connection
- Mindfulness
- Seek balance in the three key life spheres:
work/personal/self

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