

22 Things Happy People Do Differently

April 08, 2013
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Many people spend their lives *waiting* to be happy. You may think, “if only I had more money,” or “could lose weight,” or *you* fill in the blank, *then* I would be happy.

Well here’s a secret: you can be happy right now. It’s not always easy, but you can choose to be happy, and in the vast majority of circumstances there’s no one who can stop you except for yourself.

The truth is, happiness doesn’t come from wealth, perfect looks or even a perfect relationship. Happiness comes from *within*. This is why, if you truly want to be happy, you need to work on yourself, first.

22 Positive Habits of Happy People

What’s the secret to being happy? You can learn how to do it, just as you can learn any other skill. Those who are happy tend to follow a certain set of habits that create peace in their lives; if you learn to apply these habits in your own life, there’s a good chance you’ll be happy too.

The featured article compiled 22 such behaviors that you can use to enhance your life and your happiness:¹

1. Let go of grudges

Forgiving and forgetting is necessary for your own happiness, as holding a grudge means you’re also holding onto resentment, anger, hurt and other negative emotions that are standing in the way of your own happiness. Letting go of a grudge frees you from negativity and allows more space for positive emotions to fill in.

2. Treat everyone with kindness

Kindness is not only contagious, it’s also proven to make *you* happier. When you’re kind to others, your brain produces feel-good hormones and neurotransmitters like serotonin and you’re able to build strong relationships with others, fostering positive feelings all around.

3. Regard your problems as challenges

Change your internal dialogue so that anytime you have a “problem” you view it as a challenge or a new opportunity to change your life for the better. Eliminate the word “problem” from your mind entirely.

4. Express gratitude for what you have

People who are thankful for what they have are better able to cope with stress, have more positive emotions, and are better able to reach their goals. The best way to harness the positive power of gratitude is to keep a gratitude journal or list, where you actively write down exactly what you’re grateful for each day. Doing so has been linked to happier moods, greater optimism and even better physical health.

5. Dream big

Go ahead and dream big, as you’ll be more likely to accomplish your goals. Rather than limiting yourself, when you dream big you’re opening your mind to a more optimistic, positive state where you have the power to achieve virtually anything you desire.

6. Don’t sweat the small stuff

If the issue you’re mad about will be irrelevant a year, a month, a week or even a day from now, why sweat it? Happy people know how to let life’s daily irritations roll off their back.



7. Speak well of others

It may be tempting to gather around the office water cooler to get and give the daily gossip, but talking negatively about others is like taking a bath in negative emotions; your body soaks them up. Instead, make it a point to only say positive, nice words about other people, and you'll help foster more positive thinking in your own life as well.

8. Avoid making excuses

It's easy to blame others for your life's failures, but doing so means you're unlikely to rise past them. Happy people take responsibility for their mistakes and missteps, then use the failure as an opportunity to change for the better.

9. Live in the present

Allow yourself to be immersed in whatever it is you're doing right now, and take time to really *be* in the present moment. Avoid replaying past negative events in your head or worrying about the future; just savor what's going on in your life *now*.

10. Wake up at the same time every morning

Getting up at the same time every day (preferably an early time) is deceptively simple. Doing so will help regulate your circadian rhythm so you'll have an easier time waking and likely feel more energized. Plus, the habit of rising early every day is one shared by many successful people, as it enhances your productivity and focus.

11. Don't compare yourself to others

Your life is unique, so don't measure your own worth by comparing yourself to those around you. Even regarding yourself as better than your peers is detrimental to your happiness, as you're fostering judgmental feelings and an unhealthy sense of superiority. Measure your own success based on your progress alone, not that of others.

12. Surround yourself with positive people

The saying "misery loves company" is entirely true. That's why you need to choose friends who are optimistic and happy themselves, as you will be surrounded with positive energy.

13. Realize that you don't need others' approval

It's important to follow your own dreams and desires without letting naysayers stand in your way. It's fine to seek others' opinions, but happy people stay true to their own hearts and don't get bogged down with the need for outside approval.

14. Take time to listen

Listening helps you soak in the wisdom of others and allows you to quiet your own mind at the same time. Intense listening can help you feel content while helping you gain different perspectives.

15. Nurture social relationships

Positive social relationships are a key to happiness, so be sure you make time to visit with friends, family and your significant other.

16. Meditate

Meditation helps you keep your mind focused, calms your nerves and supports inner peace. Research shows it can even lead to physical changes in your brain that make you happier.

17. Eat well

What you eat directly impacts your mood and energy levels in both the short and long term. Whereas eating right can prime your body and brain to be in a focused, happy state, eating processed junk foods will leave you sluggish and prone to chronic disease. My [free nutrition plan](#) is an excellent tool to help you choose the best foods for both physical and emotional wellness.

18. Exercise

Exercise boosts levels of health-promoting brain chemicals like serotonin, dopamine, and norepinephrine, which may help buffer some of the effects of stress and also relieve some symptoms of depression. Rather than viewing exercise as a medical tool to lose weight, prevent disease, and live longer – all benefits that occur in the future – try viewing exercise as a daily tool to immediately enhance your frame of mind, reduce stress and feel happier.

19. Live minimally

Clutter has a way of sucking the energy right out of you and replacing it with feelings of chaos. Clutter is an often-unrecognized source of stress that prompts feelings of anxiety, frustration, distraction and even guilt, so give your home and office a clutter makeover, purging it of the excess papers, files, knick knacks and other “stuff” that not only takes up space in your physical environment, but also in your mind.

20. Be honest

Every time you lie, your stress levels are likely to increase and your self-esteem will crumble just a little bit more. Plus, if others find out you're a liar it will damage your personal and professional relationships. Telling the truth, on the other hand, boosts your mental health and allows others to build trust in you.

21. Establish personal control

Avoid letting other people dictate the way you live. Instead, establish personal control in your life that allows you to fulfill your own goals and dreams, as well as a great sense of personal self-worth.

22. Accept what cannot be changed

Everything in your life is not going to be perfect, and that's perfectly all right. Happy people learn to accept injustices and setbacks in their life that they cannot change, and instead put their energy on changing what they can control for the better.

A Healthy Lifestyle Naturally Enhances Happiness

You may have noticed that some of the habits of happy people are one in the same with those that are essential for leading a healthy lifestyle – exercising and eating right, for example. Once you adopt a happiness mindset, and even before you do, embracing healthy habits will help keep your mood elevated naturally even in the midst of stress. Happy people tend to be *healthy* people, and vice versa, so in addition to healthy food and exercise, the following lifestyle strategies can also help to support emotional wellness:

- **Proper sleep:** Sleep deprivation is linked to psychiatric disorders such as anxiety and bipolar depression, while getting the right amount of sleep has been linked to positive personality characteristics such as optimism and greater self-esteem, as well as a greater ability to solve difficult problems.²
- **Animal-based omega-3 fats:** Low concentrations of the omega-3 fats EPA and DHA are known to increase your risk for mood swings and mood disorders. Those suffering from depression have been found to have lower levels of omega-3 in their blood, compared to non-depressed individuals. Krill oil is my preferred source of omega-3 fats.
- **Regular sun exposure:** This is essential for vitamin D production, low levels of which are linked to depression. But even beyond vitamin D, regular safe sun exposure is known to enhance mood and energy through the release of endorphins.
- **Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT):** If difficult life circumstances and the negative emotions they create are making happiness hard to come by, try EFT, which is a form of do-it-yourself psychological acupressure. This simple technique can help clear your body and mind of negative emotions so you can implement positive goals and habits more easily in your life.