

RSTCA Foundation

Art of Happiness & Human Brain

Learn about how to become happy using Covert Hypnosis Model

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INTRODUCTION

What is happiness?

It seems like an odd question, but is it? Do you know how to define happiness? Do you think happiness is the same thing to you as it is to others?

What's the point of it all? Does it even make a difference in our lives?

In fact, happiness does have a pretty important role in our lives, and it can have a huge impact on the way we live our lives. Although researchers have yet to pin down the definition or an agreed-upon framework for happiness, there's a lot we have learned in the last few decades.

To dive into the science of happiness, what it actually is, and why it matters, read on!

A Look at the *Oxford English Dictionary's* Definition of Happiness

First, let's take a look at the definition of happiness so we're all on the same page. *Oxford English Dictionary's* definition of "happiness" is a simple one: "*The state of being happy.*"

Not exactly what we were looking for, was it? Perhaps we need to dive a little deeper. *Oxford English Dictionary's* definition of "happy" is a little more helpful: "*Feeling or showing pleasure or contentment.*"

That's better! So, happiness is the state of feeling or showing pleasure or contentment. From this definition, we can glean a few important points about happiness:

Happiness is a state, not a trait; in other words, it isn't a long-lasting, permanent feature or personality trait, but a more fleeting, changeable state.

Happiness is equated with feeling pleasure or contentment, meaning that happiness is not to be confused with joy, ecstasy, bliss, or other more intense feelings.

Happiness can be either feeling or showing, meaning that happiness is not necessarily an internal or external experience, but can be both.

Now we have a better grasp on what happiness is—or at least, how the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines what happiness is. However, this definition is not the end-all, be-all definition of happiness. In fact, the definition of happiness is not a "settled" debate.

What Is the Meaning of Happiness in Positive Psychology?

The meaning of happiness in Positive Psychology really depends on who you ask.

Happiness is often known by another name in **positive psychology** research: subjective **well-being**, or SWB. Some believe happiness is one of the core components of SWB, while others believe happiness is SWB. Regardless, you'll frequently find SWB used as a shorthand for happiness in the literature.

And speaking of the literature, you will find references to SWB everywhere. A quick Google search for the word “happiness” offers over 2 million results (as of January 6th, 2019). Further, a scan for the same term in two of psychology’s biggest online databases (PsycINFO and PsycARTICLES) returns 19,139 results from academic and other journals, books, dissertations, and more.

Is It Difficult to Define Scientifically?

With so many takes on happiness, it’s no wonder that happiness is a little difficult to define scientifically; there is certainly disagreement about what, exactly, happiness is.

According to researchers Chu Kim-Prieto, Ed Diener, and their colleagues (2005), there are three main ways that happiness has been approached in positive psychology:

Happiness as a global assessment of life and all its facets;

Happiness as a recollection of past emotional experiences;

Happiness as an aggregation of multiple emotional reactions across time (Kim-Prieto, Diener, Tamir, Scollon, & Diener, 2005).

Although they generally all agree on what happiness feels like—being satisfied with life, in a good mood, feeling **positive emotions**, feeling enjoyment, etc.—researchers have found it difficult to agree on the scope of happiness.

However, for our purposes in this piece, it’s enough to work off of a basic definition that melds the *OED*’s definition with that of positive psychologists: happiness is a state characterized by contentment and general satisfaction with one’s current situation.

Pleasure vs. Happiness

With the close ties between pleasure and happiness, you might be wondering how to differentiate between them. After all, the *OED* definition of happiness describes it as a state of feeling pleasure!

The association between the two makes sense, and it’s common to hear the two words used interchangeably outside of the literature; however, when it comes to the science of positive psychology, it is important to make a distinction between the two.

Happiness, as we described above, is a state characterized by feelings of contentment and satisfaction with one’s life or current situation. On the other hand, pleasure is a more visceral, in-the-moment experience. It often refers to the sensory-based feelings we get from experiences like eating good food, getting a massage, receiving a compliment, or having sex.

Happiness, while not a permanent state, is a more stable state than pleasure. Happiness generally sticks around for longer than a few moments at a time, whereas pleasure can come and go in seconds (Paul, 2015).

Pleasure can contribute to happiness, and happiness can enhance or deepen feelings of pleasure, but the two can also be completely mutually exclusive. For example, you can feel a sense of happiness based on meaning and engagement that has nothing to do with pleasure, or you could feel pleasure but also struggle with guilt because of it, keeping you from feeling happy at the same time.

Happiness vs. Meaning

Happiness and meaning have an even more distinct line between the two. Rarely are happiness and meaning confused or used interchangeably, and for good reason—they describe two very different experiences.

“Humans may resemble many other creatures in their striving for happiness, but the quest for meaning is a key part of what makes us human, and uniquely so.”

-Roy Baumeister et al. (2013)

Unlike happiness, meaning is not a fleeting state that drifts throughout the day; it's a more comprehensive sense of purpose and feeling of contributing to something greater than yourself.

As the quote from Baumeister and colleagues (2013) suggests, there are important distinctions between the methods of searching for and the benefits of experiencing happiness and meaning. Scott Barry Kaufman at Scientific American (2016) outlines these distinctions that Baumeister and his fellow researchers found between the two:

Finding one's life easy or difficult was related to happiness, but not meaning;

Feeling healthy was related to happiness, but not meaning;

Feeling good was related to happiness, not meaning;

Scarcity of money reduced happiness more than meaning;

People with more meaningful lives agreed that “relationships are more important than achievements;”

Helping people in need was linked to meaning but not happiness;

Expecting to do a lot of deep thinking was positively related to meaningfulness, but negatively with happiness;

Happiness was related more to being a taker rather than a giver, whereas meaning was related more to being a giver than a taker;

The more people felt their activities were consistent with the core themes and values of their self, the greater meaning they reported in their activities;

Seeing oneself as wise, creative, and even anxious were all linked to meaning but had no relationship (and in some cases, even showed a negative relationship) to happiness (Kaufman, 2016).

Basically, although the two overlaps and each can contribute to the experience of the other, the two can be mutually exclusive (Baumeister et al., 2013).

The Origins and Etymology of Happiness (Incl. Root Words)

According to [Etymology Online](#), the word for “happy” in most languages came from the word for “lucky.” This suggests an interesting trend—perhaps our ancestors believed that happiness was largely a by-product of luck?

It also points to a possible difference of general opinion between earlier generations and our own 20th and 21st-century generations: that happiness was not a vital factor in a good life, but essentially a bonus that some lucky individuals got to experience.

Here's what author Darrin McMahon writes about the origins and root words of the word “happiness:”

"It is a striking fact that in every Indo-European language, without exception, going all the way back to ancient Greek, the word for happiness is a cognate with the word for luck. Hap is the Old Norse and Old English root of happiness, and it just means luck or chance, as did the Old French heur, giving us bonheur, good fortune or happiness. German gives us the word Gluck, which to this day means both happiness and chance" (McMahon, 2006).

What Does Self-Happiness Mean?

Although the term is not used very often, "self-happiness" refers to a sense of happiness or satisfaction with one's self. It is often associated with self-confidence, self-esteem, and other concepts that marry "the self" with feeling content and happy.

In general, it means that you are pleased with yourself and your choices, and with the person that you are.

The Psychology Behind Human Happiness

Now that we know what happiness is, let's dive a little deeper. What does psychology have to tell us about happiness?

There are many different theories of happiness, but they generally fall into one of two categories based on how they conceptualize happiness (or well-being):

Hedonic happiness/well-being is happiness conceptualized as experiencing more pleasure and less pain; it is composed of an affective component (high positive affect and low negative affect) and a cognitive component (satisfaction with one's life);

Eudaimonic happiness/well-being conceptualizes happiness as the result of the pursuit and attainment of life purpose, meaning, challenge, and personal growth; happiness is based on reaching one's full potential and operating at full functioning (AIPC, 2011).

Some theories see happiness as a by-product of other, more important pursuits in life, while others see happiness as the end-goal for humans. Some theories state that pursuing happiness is pointless (although pursuing other important experiences and feelings may contribute to greater happiness), and some assume that happiness can be purposefully increased or enhanced.

Although they differ on the specifics, these theories generally agree on a few points:

It's good to be happy, and people like being happy;

Happiness is neither a totally fleeting, momentary experience nor a stable, long-term trait;

At least some portion of our happiness is set by our genetics, but the amount varies from about 10% up to 50%;

The pursuit and attainment of pleasure will rarely lead to happiness;

There are many sources that contribute to or compose happiness (AIPC, 2011).

What Sources Create True Personal Happiness?

Taking together all the various theories and findings on happiness, we know that there are at least a few factors that are very important for overall happiness:

1. Individual income;

2. Labor market status;
3. Physical health;
4. Family;
5. Social relationships;
6. Moral values;
7. Experience of positive emotions (AIPC, 2011).

All of these factors can contribute to a happy life, but research has found that good relationships are a vital ingredient (Waldinger & Schulz, 2010).

When we are happy in our most important **relationships** (usually our spouse or significant other, our children and/or our parents, other close family members, and our closest friends), we tend to be happier.

We have some control over how our relationships go, so that leads us to an interesting and important question: can we increase our own happiness?

Can Individuals Learn How to Be Happy?

The answer from numerous studies is a resounding YES—you CAN learn how to be happier.

The degree to which you can increase your happiness will vary widely by which theory you subscribe to, but there are no credible theories that allow absolutely no room for individual improvement. To improve your overall happiness, the most effective method is to look at the list of sources above and work on enhancing the quality of your experiences in each one of them.

For example, you can work on getting a higher salary (although a higher salary will only work up to about \$75,000 USD a year), improve your **health**, work on **developing** and maintaining high-quality relationships, and overall, find ways to incorporate more **positive feelings** into your daily life. This does assume basic access to safety as well as social equality.

8 Examples That Describe What a Happy Life Looks Like

Given our definitions, what does a happy life look like? Of course, what it looks like will depend on the individual—a happy life for one person may be another's nightmare! However, there are a few examples that can display a wide range of lives that can be conducive to happiness:

1. A woman who lives alone, has excellent relationships with her nieces and nephews, gives to charity, and finds meaning in her work;
2. A man who is happily married with three healthy children and a relatively low-paying job;
3. A widow who enjoys regular visits with her children and grandchildren, along with volunteering for local charities;
4. A cancer patient who has a wonderful support system and finds meaning in helping others make it through chemotherapy;
5. A social worker who works 70-hour weeks with no overtime pay, to ensure the children on her caseload are in good hands;
6. An unmarried man in a monastery who has no earthly possessions and no salary to speak of, but finds meaning in communing with his god;
7. A teenager in a foster home who has several close friends and enjoys playing football on his school's team;
8. A man who lives with several pets, enjoys a high salary, and loves his job.

Each of these was pulled from real-world examples of people who are happy. They may not seem like they have it all, but they all have at least one of the ingredients from the list of sources mentioned earlier. We don't need to have everything we

want in order to be happy—true happiness can be obtained by finding joy in what we already have, however much or little that may seem.

What are some visions you associate with happiness? Are there any similarities with these dreams?

Why is Happiness So Important?

You might be wondering why happiness is considered such an important aspect of life, as there are many components of a meaningful life.

In some ways, science would agree with you. It appears that **life satisfaction**, meaning, and well-being can be linked with happiness, but happiness is not necessarily the overarching goal for everyone in life. It is still important because it has some undeniably positive benefits and co-occurring factors.

June Silny at Happify outlines 14 answers to the question, “*What’s so great about happiness, anyway?*”

1. Happy people are more **successful** in multiple life domains, including marriage, friendship, income, work performance, and health.
2. Happy people get sick less often and experience fewer symptoms when they do get sick.
3. Happy people have more friends and a better support system.
4. Happy people donate more to charity (and giving money to charity makes you happy, too).
5. Happy people are more helpful and more likely to volunteer—which also makes you happier!
6. Happy people have an easier time navigating through life since optimism eases pain, sadness, and grief.
7. Happy people have a positive influence on others and encourage them to seek happiness as well, which can act as reinforcement.
8. Happy people engage in deeper and more meaningful conversations.
9. Happy people smile more, which is beneficial to your health.
10. Happy people exercise more often and eat more healthily.
11. Happy people are happy with what they have rather than being jealous of others.
12. Happy people are healthier all around and more likely to be healthy in the future.
13. Happy people live longer than those who are not as happy.
14. Happy people are more productive and more creative, and this effect extends to all those experiencing positive emotions.

The Relationship Between Mental Health and Happiness

As you can probably assume from the list above, there is a strong relationship between mental health and happiness! When happy people are healthier, have better relationships, make friends more easily, and find more success in life, it’s easy to see why happiness and mental health are related.

The sources that contribute to happiness are the same as those that provide people with a buffer or protection against mental illness, which explains the close relationship between the two.

A recent study explored the association between happiness and mental health in college students and found that a relatively strong, positive correlation connects the two factors (Shafiq, Nas, Ansar, Nasrulla, Bushra, & Imam, 2015). This correlation held, even when gender and socio-demographic variables were added to the mix.

The close tie between mental health and happiness is reason enough to make happiness an important priority for parents, educators, researchers, and medical professionals alike, along with the simple fact that we all like to feel happy!

6 Videos That Explain Happiness

If you're interested in learning more about happiness from a scientific perspective, there are a few videos you might want to check out, including:

1. Positive Psychology: The Science of Happiness by Professor Tal Ben-Shahar from WGBH Forum.
 - a. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KB8Usl6aX2I>
2. Shawn Achor – The Happiness Advantage: Linking Positive Brains to Performance TEDTalk from TEDx Talks
 - a. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GXy_kBVqIM
3. Positive Psychology – Happier by Professor Tal Ben-Shahar, Ph.D. from FightMediocrity
 - a. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=74Wei0-vAZs>
4. How to be Happy – The Science of Happiness and Feeling Positive in Life from Memorize Academy
 - a. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hsPpaHbvQs>
5. The Surprising Science of Happiness TED Talk by Dan Gilbert from TED
 - a. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4qldgn_C0AU
6. How to Be Happy – The Secret of Authentic Happiness – Martin Seligman from Practical Psychology
 - a. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mp8xNlK-ITs>

HOW TO BECOME HAPPY

Ten Tips for Happiness

1. Reach out to others. You may have good people in your life but have been out of touch. Picking up the phone and giving old friends a call can brighten both of your days and perhaps your lives as well.
2. Remember that happiness is an inside job. That means that no one but you can really make you happy, even though it may not feel that way. When I see a smile on the face of someone I care about, it makes me happy, especially if I helped put it there. Maybe it is an inside job after all.
3. Don't put all your eggs in one basket. If you are relying on one set of circumstances or person to make you happy, it probably won't happen. You need to broaden your scope of friends and activities. Also, know that engaging in new adventures creates brain chemicals that add to your happiness.
4. Trust your gut. When we go against our instincts, and it backfires, we usually feel sad. Follow your intuition and let it guide you toward people and things that will make your life just a tiny bit better. Day by day, your happiness will grow.
5. Is meditation for you? Most books on happiness say that meditation is key, but most people don't know even how to get started. There are classes all over the place, CDs, downloads, and websites—and you can also try just being nature. The idea is to allow you to calm yourself, so you can feel the good things that your fear and sadness are pushing away.
6. Organize your thoughts. Many people push away happiness when they are overwhelmed. When you keep everything in your head, it can be difficult to get the perspective you need. Try making lists of the things that seem too big to manage on your own. You may find that you can do most of these things on your own and that the list isn't as long as you thought, but if you need help, ask for it.
7. Stay away from people who bring you down. This may sound simple, but if you are living with those people, it can be very complicated. In that case, a family therapy session could be very helpful. Many people don't recognize that they are making life difficult for others, and in a group setting with a trained professional, they can learn to behave differently without feeling attacked.
8. Look at the big picture. Most of the things that prevent us from feeling happy are day-to-day life issues. Once in a while, you go through something that makes the little things seem inconsequential, and this is when you need to remember that life is still going on, and whatever the issue is, it will end. Look at your life as a whole—not just the bad parts.
9. Value your values. We all have a value system, a way we have decided to go through life, which makes us feel like a good person. When you know what works and what doesn't, it can make your life a whole lot easier. The important thing to remember is to not lose sight of your values when life becomes a roller coaster. Keeping your values strong will help create happiness.
10. Play more. Sometimes we get so involved in doing our lives and problem solving that we forget to take time to have some fun. You may have to block out a day for fun in your calendar. But the important thing is to have a little joy every day to keep you going and growing.

16 proven ways that can make you more productive, happy and successful in life.

1. Be committed.

No matter what goals you have set for yourself in life, you have to be committed. It's through commitment that you'll continue to make the improvements needed to better yourself. Whether it's taking a chance on launching a startup, getting a gym membership to improve your physical well being, or taking a cooking class because you want to become a chef, commitment is what drives us all to become more successful.

2. People care about you, not your success.

Let's be honest. People don't care about the expensive clothes you wear, how big is the house you own or the car your drive. That's not to say that they don't respect your achievements or possessions. Instead, they care you as an individual and they'll support you no matter what -- because they love you. Believe it!

3. Be grateful everyday.

According to researchers Martin Seligman, Robert Emmons, and Michael McCullough, being grateful can result in feeling better about your life, more enthusiasm and more willingness to help others. Being grateful may even reduce coronary artery disease. Take the time to write down what you're grateful each and every day.

4. Take action.

In an article in The Atlantic, authors Katty Kay and Claire Shipman share studies on the confidence gap between men and women. The researchers discovered that confidence is just as important as competence. It was concluded in the article that "[T]aking action bolsters one's belief in one's ability to succeed."

5. Money can't buy happiness.

As The Beatles famously proclaimed, (money), "can't buy me love." You know what else money can't buy? Happiness. Just because you're earning six figures doesn't mean that you're necessarily content. Sure, money is obviously needed, and it makes some things easier. But, you should be focusing on your passion and not how much your paycheck is.

6. Don't take rejection personally.

At some point we all face rejection. Instead of taking it personally, use it as a learning experience. Why did a VC reject your proposal? Maybe there wasn't a market for your product. Perhaps you didn't have a convincing pitch. Maybe the VC's partner just called and said he'd spent their extra cash. Accepting and learning from rejection is one way to guide you to success.

With my online invoicing startup I get rejected daily, literally. I talked to 100+ VC's before I got one that believed in my product. Learn from rejection and use it as motivation to make things better!

7. Have a backup plan.

You never know when the unexpected is going to happen, but when it does happen, you're surrounded by chaos. Being prepared for the worst case scenario can at least make things a whole lot less chaotic. When my last business crashed, had I not had some cash set aside (that my wife kept away from me), we would have been in financial ruin. Having a three-to-six month nest egg will make the difference. I've found that having 12-24 months of cash to pay all bills just sitting there has significantly helped my marriage be more positive as well!

8. Improve your social skill.

After analyzing data from between 1972 and 1992, University of California, Santa Barbara, economist Catherine Weinberger found that “The people who are both smart and socially adept earn more in today’s workforce than similarly endowed workers in 1980.”

Related: Developing People Skills Is a Brilliant Career Move

9. Travel.

As Yii-Huei Phang states on The Huffington Post, traveling is a great way to “develop a person’s character” and become more open-minded. Additionally, while traveling is a great way to get away from the daily grind, it also helps you appreciate what you have back at home.

10. Don’t multitask.

If you’re feeling constantly burnt out it’s probably because you’re doing too much at one time. Research has found that “when you switch away from a primary task to do something else, you’re increasing the time it takes to finish that task by an average of 25 percent.” You’re also burning your reservoir of energy. Both of these issues decrease your productivity and prevent you from accomplishing tasks and goal.

11. Embrace a growth mindset.

Stanford psychologist Carol Dweck argues that we have two-mindsets; “fixed” and “growth.” A fixed mindset “assumes that our character, intelligence, and creative ability are static.” A “growth mindset,” however, “thrives on challenge and sees failure not as evidence of unintelligence but as a heartening springboard for growth and for stretching our existing abilities.”

12. Balance work and life.

When work interferes with life, it can result in employees getting burned out and decreases base morale in the office. While this may not be an option for employees, it proves that everyone needs time away from the office. If you’re able to spend less time in the office by working remotely or having flexible hours, you should be able to be productive in both your personal and professional life.

13. Don’t hold grudges.

There is really no need to hold onto a grudge. It can mentally wear you out and makes you miserable. And, doesn’t life seem to go a whole lot smoother when you’re not angry?

14. Stick it out.

After years of studying both children and adults, psychologist Angela Duckworth found that one of the characteristics of successful individuals is having grit. During her TED talk Duckworth stated, “Grit is passion and perseverance for very long-term goals. Grit is having stamina. Grit is sticking with your future, day in, day out, not just for the week, not just for the month, but for years, and working really hard to make that future a reality. Grit is living life like it’s a marathon, not a sprint.”

15. Live in the moment

You can’t change the past and you have no control of the future. Live in the moment and enjoy what’s in front of you right here, right now. When you’re busy making too many plans, you’re causing stress that prevents you from enjoying the present.

16. Take care of yourself, then help others.

According to Mark Snyder, a psychologist and head of the Center for the Study of the Individual and Society at the University of Minnesota, “People who volunteer tend to have higher self-esteem, psychological well-being, and happiness.”

Additionally, helping others is beneficial for our health. But, how can you help others if you haven't taken care of yourself first? Take care of your needs first and then begin to help others.

Anchoring



Anchoring in neuro-linguistic programming is a term used for the process by which you apply a gesture, touch or sound at the peak of a state, either in oneself or someone else. The said anchored state can then be recalled or re-activated by reapplying the gesture, touch or sound.

Anchoring is a neuro-linguistic programming term for the process by which memory recall, state change or other responses become associated with (anchored to) some stimulus, in such a way that perception of the stimulus (the anchor) leads by reflex to the anchored response occurring. The stimulus may be quite neutral or even out of conscious awareness, and the response may be either positive or negative. They are capable of being formed and reinforced by repeated stimuli, and thus are analogous to classical conditioning.

Basic NLP anchoring involves in essence, the elicitation of a strong congruent experience of a desired state, whilst using some notable stimulus (touch, word, sight) at the time this is most fully realized. In many cases, repetition of the stimulus will re-associate and restore the experience of the state.

There are refinements and sophistications in setting anchors this way, and subtleties involved in order to both set them with precision, and to avoid accidentally neutralizing them in the process of setting them up.

There are different definitions of anchoring; here are a few versions from different well known people in the field of NLP:

1. Tony Robbins:
 - a. Anchoring – The process by which any representation (internal or external) gets connected to and triggers a subsequent string of representations and responses. Anchors can be naturally occurring or set up deliberately. An example of an anchor for a particular set of responses is what happens when you think of the way a special, much-loved person says your name.
2. Robert Dilts:
 - a. Anchor: Stimuli that will consistently produce the same internal data in an individual. Anchors occur naturally. Bandler and Grinder discovered old modeling that you can deliberately set-up a stimulus with a gesture or a touch or a sound to hold a state stable. Where an external stimulus is paired with an internal state.
3. Michael Brooks:
 - a. An anchor is a representation—either internal as with a picture or feeling, or external as with a touch or sound—that triggers (elicits) another such representation. It's a sensory stimulus paired with either a response or a specific set of responses or states.

4. Leslie Cameron-Bandler:
 - a. In the same way that certain external stimuli become associated with past experiences (thus recalling the past experience) you can deliberately associate a stimulus to a specific experience. Once this association has taken place, you can then trigger the experience at will. It works in the same way that language does.
5. Bandler & Grinder:
 - a. Anchoring refers to the tendency for any one element of an experience to bring back the entire experience.
6. Sid Jacobson:
 - a. ...it [is] an NLP way of talking about classical (Pavlov's) conditioning, but it made a lot more sense.
7. Steve Andreas:
 - a. The way we naturally link things that happen at the same time. This knowledge gives us a way to take resources from one area of our lives and apply them in broader ways for our well-being.
8. Terry Elston:
 - a. People represent their inner worlds to the outside via a series of built in anchors, Andrew Salter remarked that we just jump from one reaction to another. What that means is we code our meaning via the associations we have made with them. If a certain look someone gives you is the look your father used to give you when you did something wrong, unless you have cleaned that up, you are likely to respond in the same way as you did with dad!

The first documented mention of Anchoring was from a man called Edwin Twitmire from his work on the knee jerk response (Edwin Twitmire doesn't get into the history books much, mostly because of a non-status name). The well named Ivan Pavlov is the one everyone remembers because of the dogs and bells (albeit he was using a tuning fork really).

Basic anchoring involves in essence, the elicitation of a strong congruent experience of a desired state, whilst using some notable stimulus (touch, word, sight) at the time this is most fully realized. In many cases, repetition of the stimulus will re-associate and restore the experience of the state.

There are refinements and sophistications in setting anchors this way, and subtleties involved in order to both set them with precision, and to avoid accidentally neutralizing them in the process of setting them up.

The notion of using anchoring was refined by Bandler and Grinder and uses the powerful unconscious resources of others to get the responses you desire. It is a natural process that usually occurs without our awareness, and may have positive impact, or be maladaptive. For example, a voice tonality that resembles the characteristics of one's perception of an "angry voice" may not actually be as a result of anger, but will usually trigger an emotional response in the person perceiving the tonality to have the traits of anger.

However, consciously creating an anchor means a resourceful state can be recalled at will. For example, touching the knuckle of the left hand after the anchor has been established so that this action produces the resourceful state.

Types of anchors

Anchors (the "trigger", or stimulus) can come in an infinitude of possible forms: verbal phrases, physical touches or sensations, certain sights and sounds, or internally, such as words one says to oneself, or memories and states one is in. An extreme view is that almost everything one perceives acts as an anchor, in the sense that perceiving it tends to trigger reflexively some thought or feeling or response.

Anchoring is a natural process that usually occurs without our awareness, and may have positive impact, or be maladaptive. For example, a voice tonality that resembles the characteristics of one's perception of an "angry voice" may not actually be as a result of anger, but will usually trigger an emotional response in the person perceiving the tonality to have the traits of anger.

There are certain speculations as to what criteria must be met before an Anchor can be properly formed. Most agree that the trigger must be

1. **Specific** – otherwise the subject will not begin to sensitize to it
2. **Intermittent** – if it were constant then desensitization would eventually occur
3. **Anchored to a unique, specific and prompt reaction** – otherwise the anchor will fail to elicit and reinforced any one single response due to many different reactions being associated to the trigger.

It is also important that reinforcement of an anchor (in other words, repeated formation with the aim of reinforcement) should have a “break” between each repeat, since the neurological ‘lesson’ is quite capable of working either way, and only one way is desired. This is an example of where precision and structure may create a difference between success and failure.

Examples:

If, when young, you participated in family activities that gave you great pleasure, the pleasure was associated with the activity itself, so when you think of the activity or are reminded of it you tend to re-experience some pleasurable feeling. Flicking through an old family photo album stirs pleasant memories and some of the feelings associated with them. A child's comforter in an unfamiliar situation. An old love song re-awakens a romantic mood. The smell of freshly baked apple pies brings back memories of a happy carefree childhood. Phobias in this sense can be studied as one example of very powerful anchor – see spider, feel terrified and nauseous. Revisiting an old school or a place with powerful memories.

An unusual use of anchoring was studied by Ellen Langer in her study of two groups of 75-80 year old men at Harvard University. For 5 days, both groups were isolated at a retreat, with one group was engaged in a series of tasks encouraging them to think about the past in general (to write an autobiography, to discuss the past etc), and the other group engaged in a series of tasks which anchored them back into a specific past time – they wrote an autobiography up to 1959, describing that time as “now”, watched 1959 movies, had 1959 music playing on the “radios”, and lived with only 1959 artifacts. Before and after the 5 days, both groups were studied on a number of criteria associated with aging. While the first group stayed constant or actually deteriorated on these criteria, the second group dramatically improved on physical health measures such as joint flexibility, vision, and muscle breadth, as well as on IQ tests. They were anchored back physically to being 50 years old, by the sights and sounds of 1959. (Langer, “Mindfulness”, Addison Wesley 1989)

How does an anchor develop?

The anchor develops when both of the two of the events happen together on a regular basis for a certain number of times; for example if every time you eat while watching television you may find yourself getting Hungry on watching television. An overly sensitive person is more likely to develop an anchor faster than anyone else, if two people experienced something while one of them were overly sensitive, the overly sensitive person may develop an anchor faster than the other person.

For example if two people work as field engineers in a mining company, the overwhelming work experience may be anchored to the work place in the overly sensitive person's mind and so he may find himself unable to continue work and he may even he quit, on the other hand the other person whom is not that sensitive to external conditions may find work tolerable.

Anchors are not a bad thing, they can be used to your side to enforce positive behavior or to help you in quitting bad habits, for example you can create an anchor that generates bad feelings on starting to smoke, and that way you can help yourself to quit smoking just by using an anchor.

How to remove an anchor

If you have some bad anchors that you want to get rid of, its still possible, for example if you feel bad whenever you workout you can easily remove that anchor, removing an anchor can simply be done by repeating one of the events alone without the other event being prevented by time, your subconscious mind will separate both events and so the anchor will be removed.

Usage

NLP anchoring is a process that goes on around and within us all the time, whether we are aware of it or not. Most of the time we are not consciously aware of why we feel as we do – indeed we may not realize we have responded in some cases, which makes it a much more powerful force in our lives.

NLP Anchoring is used to facilitate state management. In this sense an anchor is set up to be triggered by a consciously chosen stimulus, deliberately linked by practice to a known useful state, to provide reflexive access to that state at will. This may be used for exam nerves, overcoming fear, feelings such as happiness or determination, or to recollect how one will feel if a good resolution is kept. In Brief Treatment and Crisis Intervention Karin Jordan (2006) states that “after the preliminary assessment has been completed, the therapist should help the client develop an anchor. The anchor concept is rooted in neuro linguistic programming (Bandler & Grinder, 1979) and can serve as a tool used by clients to get a break from the traumatic event. To help the client work through traumatic events, an observable/concrete resource should be used as an anchor.”

Anchoring is also used by skillful film makers to evoke suspense in the audience. Think of your own psychological changes that occurred when you heard the soundtracks amplified, pounding heartbeat rhythm in the moments leading up to each of the appearances of the huge killer shark in the movie Jaws. What anchor was established in you by the crescendo of the sound of the music meeting the shark? Did your heartbeat increase? Did your palms begin to sweat? Did you have to see the shark, or was the thumping music enough to start your slide to the edge of your seat? Likewise the finale of classical symphonies, or “mood music” such as romantic, climactic, or apprehensive in films. Leitmotifs recurring themes in music and literature also serve to re stimulate a previously established response.

For trauma victims, sudden noises or movement can serve as terrifying anchors capable of recollecting the traumatic experience. In this case, amongst other approaches, NLP might be used in a slightly different way – to desensitize the stimulus and perhaps instead also sensitize it to some more neutral or positive feeling.

How to utilize naturally occurring states

How to use anchoring

OUTCOME:

The desired outcome for this section is for all participants to be able to anchor a specific state in a person, at any time in any modality.

THEORY:

Definition: An **Anchor** is an internal state that is triggered by an external stimulus. Any time a person is in an associated, intense state, if at the peak of that experience, a specific stimulus is applied, then the two will be linked neurologically

Anchoring can assist you in gaining access to past states and linking the past state to the present and the future.

PROCESS:

The Four Steps to Anchoring:

1. Have the person recall a past vivid experience.
2. Provide a specific stimulus at the peak (see chart below)
3. Change the person's state
4. Set off the anchor to test.

The Five Keys to Anchoring:

1. Intensity of the Experience 1

2. Timing of the Anchor T
3. Uniqueness of the Anchor U
4. Replication of the Stimulus R
5. Number of times N

APPLICATION OF AN ANCHOR:

State Elicitation Script

The best states to anchor are naturally occurring states. These days I use a different type of way in to the states. I now ask "What do you love to do in your life?" (that's if I have tripped upon those aspects already), then, when accessed "What's that like?" Almost using the meta-model to chunk down into fantastic experiences.

Next best are past, vivid, highly-associated states. Least preferable are constructed states. Here's the older style of accessing states:

Can you remember a time when you were totally ____X'd____?

Can you remember a specific time?

As you go back to that time **now** ... go right back to that time, float down into your body and see what you saw, hear what you heard, and really feel the feelings of being totally ____X'd____.

States for stacking anchors

To stack anchors elicit several instances of states and anchor them in the same place. The state chosen for a particular stacked anchor can be the same or different. (In collapse anchors, the states stacked should be different and in chaining anchors the states used for each stacked anchor should be the same).

A time when you felt totally powerful.

A time when you felt totally loved.

A time when you really felt you could have whatever you wanted, a time when you felt you couldn't fail, when you could have it all.

A time when you felt really energetic, when you had a ton of energy.

A time when you fell down laughing.

A time when you felt totally confident.

COLLAPSE ANCHORS

Get into rapport with the client.

Tell the client what you are about to do: "In just a moment I am going to do a process called Collapse Anchors (explain), and that will necessitate that I touch you. Is that O.K.?"

Decide on which Positive/Resource States are needed, and decide on the Negative State to be collapsed. Make it clear which states specifically are involved.

As you elicit the Positive States get into each one before you elicit it in the client.

Make sure that the client is in a fully associated, intense, congruent state for each of the states you anchor.

Anchor all the positive states in the same place, I.E. a knuckle or other easily identifiable place.

Anchor the negative state once.

Fire anchors at the same time until they peak, and the integration is complete.

(Watch the client; they will usually exhibit signs of asymmetry until the integration is complete.)

Release the negative anchor

Hold the positive anchor for 5 seconds and then release

Test: ""Now how do feel about that old state?""

Future Pace: ""Can you imagine a time in the future when you might be in a similar situation, and what happens?""

In Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) classical conditioning is usually referred to as anchoring. Think about the anchors in your life: alarm clocks, picture of your friends and loved ones; that look from your mother, etc. There are many examples of anchors we have in our lives, yet we still don't use this powerful techniques in our favour. Imagine the following scene: Man comes home from work, in a very bad mood, and the woman, as a response rushes to hug him. If she does that often enough, he will get the same bad feelings just from hugging her. Although this might not be her intention, it just happens.

So, how exactly does anchoring work? So, someone goes has an intense experience (positive or negative), and at the peak of that experience a specific stimulus is applied. This forms a neurological link between the emotional state and the stimulus...an anchor is born. Now, every time the stimulus is applied, the emotional response will be triggered.

Anchors can come in all shapes and sizes. They can be visual, verbal, gustatory, olfactory, or kinaesthetically. Ever heard a song that took you back in time to some memory, or smelt something that reminded you of that time you were a child? All these are anchors. And now that you know how anchoring works, let's look at how to produce one consciously.

In NLP there are several criteria that determine the strength of an anchor. The first one is the intensity of the state the person is experiencing. The more powerful the state, the more likely the anchor is to work later on. Next is the timing of the anchor. It will only work if applied before and until the height of the emotions.

If applied afterwards, it won't be as strong, but also might not work. The stimulus applied should also be a unique one, which is easily identifiable and reproducible. The final points are the replication of the stimulus (the anchor should be reinforced at times to keep it fresh) and also the number of times the anchoring has been done.

Sometimes once already is enough, sometimes you have to do it more often. In case this seems less than easy to remember, the mnemonic I TURN, coined by Tad James, will help (intensity, timing, uniqueness, reproducibility, and number of times)."

10 Simple Way to be Happy Daily

1. Exercise: 7 Minutes Could Be Enough

Think exercise is something you don't have time for? Think again. Check out the 7 minute workout mentioned in The New York Times. That's a workout any of us can fit into our schedules.

Exercise has such a profound effect on our happiness and well-being that it is an effective strategy for overcoming depression. In a study cited in Shawn Achor's book The Happiness Advantage, three groups of patients treated their depression with medication, exercise, or a combination of the two. The results of this study are surprising: Although all three

groups experienced similar improvements in their happiness levels early on, the follow-up assessments proved to be radically different:

The groups were then tested six months later to assess their relapse rate. Of those who had taken the medication alone, 38 percent had slipped back into depression. Those in the combination group were doing only slightly better, with a 31 percent relapse rate. The biggest shock, though, came from the exercise group: Their relapse rate was only 9 percent.

You don't have to be depressed to benefit from exercise, though. Exercise can help you relax, increase your brain power, and even improve your body image, even if you don't lose any weight.

We've explored exercise in depth before, and looked at what it does to our brains, such as releasing proteins and endorphins that make us feel happier.

A study in the *Journal of Health Psychology* found that people who exercised felt better about their bodies even when they saw no physical changes:

Body weight, shape and body image were assessed in 16 males and 18 females before and after both 6 × 40 minutes exercising and 6 × 40 minutes reading. Over both conditions, body weight and shape did not change. Various aspects of body image, however, improved after exercise compared to before.

Yep: Even if your actual appearance doesn't change, how you feel about your body does change.

2. Sleep More: You'll Be Less Sensitive to Negative Emotions

We know that sleep helps our body recover from the day and repair itself and that it helps us focus and be more productive. It turns out sleep is also important for happiness.

In *NatureShock*, Po Bronson and Ashley Merryman explain how sleep affects positivity:

Negative stimuli get processed by the amygdala; positive or neutral memories get processed by the hippocampus. Sleep deprivation hits the hippocampus harder than the amygdala. The result is that sleep-deprived people fail to recall pleasant memories yet recall gloomy memories just fine.

In one experiment by Walker, sleep-deprived college students tried to memorize a list of words. They could remember 81% of the words with a negative connotation, like "cancer." But they could remember only 31% of the words with a positive or neutral connotation, like "sunshine" or "basket."

The BPS Research Digest explores another study that proves sleep affects our sensitivity to negative emotions. Using a facial recognition task throughout the course of a day, researchers studied how sensitive participants were to positive and negative emotions. Those who worked through the afternoon without taking a nap became more sensitive to negative emotions like fear and anger.

Using a face recognition task, here we demonstrate an amplified reactivity to anger and fear emotions across the day, without sleep. However, an intervening nap blocked and even reversed this negative emotional reactivity to anger and fear while conversely enhancing ratings of positive (happy) expressions.

Of course, how well (and how long) you sleep will probably affect how you feel when you wake up, which can make a difference to your whole day.

Another study tested how employees' moods when they started work in the morning affected their entire work day.

Researchers found that employees' moods when they clocked in tended to affect how they felt the rest of the day. Early mood was linked to their perceptions of customers and to how they reacted to customers' moods.

And most importantly to managers, employee mood had a clear impact on performance, including both how much work employees did and how well they did it.

3. Spend More Time With Friends/Family: Money Can't Buy You Happiness

Staying in touch with friends and family is one of the top five regrets of the dying.

If you want more evidence that time with friends is beneficial for you, research proves it can make you happier right now, too.

Social time is highly valuable when it comes to improving our happiness, even for introverts. Several studies have found that time spent with friends and family makes a big difference to how happy we feel.

I love the way Harvard happiness expert Daniel Gilbert explains it:

We are happy when we have family, we are happy when we have friends and almost all the other things we think make us happy are actually just ways of getting more family and friends.

George Vaillant is the director of a 72-year study of the lives of 268 men.

In an interview in the March 2008 newsletter to the Grant Study subjects, Vaillant was asked, "What have you learned from the Grant Study men?" Vaillant's response: "That the only thing that really matters in life are your relationships to other people."

He shared insights of the study with Joshua Wolf Shenk at The Atlantic on how men's social connections made a difference to their overall happiness:

Men's relationships at age 47, he found, predicted late-life adjustment better than any other variable. Good sibling relationships seem especially powerful: 93 percent of the men who were thriving at age 65 had been close to a brother or sister when younger.

In fact, a study published in the Journal of Socio-Economics states that your relationships are worth more than \$100,000:

Using the British Household Panel Survey, I find that an increase in the level of social involvements is worth up to an extra £85,000 a year in terms of life satisfaction. Actual changes in income, on the other hand, buy very little happiness.

I think that last line is especially fascinating: Actual changes in income, on the other hand, buy very little happiness. So we could increase our annual income by hundreds of thousands of dollars and still not be as happy as we would if we increased the strength of our social relationships.

The Terman study, covered in The Longevity Project, found that relationships and how we help others were important factors in living long, happy lives:

We figured that if a Terman participant sincerely felt that he or she had friends and relatives to count on when having a hard time then that person would be healthier. Those who felt very loved and cared for, we predicted, would live the longest.

Surprise: our prediction was wrong... Beyond social network size, the clearest benefit of social relationships came from helping others. Those who helped their friends and neighbors, advising and caring for others, tended to live to old age.

4. Get Outside More: Happiness is Maximized at 57°

In The Happiness Advantage, Shawn Achor recommends spending time in the fresh air to improve your happiness:

Making time to go outside on a nice day also delivers a huge advantage; one study found that spending 20 minutes outside in good weather not only boosted positive mood, but broadened thinking and improved working memory...

This is pretty good news for those of us who are worried about fitting new habits into our already-busy schedules. Twenty minutes is a short enough time to spend outside that you could fit it into your commute or even your lunch break.

A UK study from the University of Sussex also found that being outdoors made people happier:

Being outdoors, near the sea, on a warm, sunny weekend afternoon is the perfect spot for most. In fact, participants were found to be substantially happier outdoors in all natural environments than they were in urban environments.

The American Meteorological Society published research in 2011 that found current temperature has a bigger effect on our happiness than variables like wind speed and humidity, or even the average temperature over the course of a day. It also found that happiness is maximized at 57 degrees (13.9°C), so keep an eye on the weather forecast before heading outside for your 20 minutes of fresh air.

The connection between productivity and temperature is another topic we've talked about more here. It's fascinating what a small change in temperature can do.

5. Help Others: 100 Hours a Year is the Magic Number

One of the most counterintuitive pieces of advice I found is that to make yourself feel happier, you should help others. In fact, 100 hours per year (or two hours per week) is the optimal time we should dedicate to helping others in order to enrich our lives.

If we go back to Shawn Achor's book again, he says this about helping others:

...when researchers interviewed more than 150 people about their recent purchases, they found that money spent on activities--such as concerts and group dinners out--brought far more pleasure than material purchases like shoes, televisions, or expensive watches. Spending money on other people, called "prosocial spending," also boosts happiness.

The Journal of Happiness Studies published a study that explored this very topic:

Participants recalled a previous purchase made for either themselves or someone else and then reported their happiness. Afterward, participants chose whether to spend a monetary windfall on themselves or someone else. Participants assigned to recall a purchase made for someone else reported feeling significantly happier immediately after this recollection; most importantly, the happier participants felt, the more likely they were to choose to spend a windfall on someone else in the near future.

So spending money on other people makes us happier than buying stuff for ourselves. But what about spending our time on other people?

A study of volunteering in Germany explored how volunteers were affected when their opportunities to help others were taken away:

Shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall but before the German reunion, the first wave of data of the GSOEP was collected in East Germany. Volunteering was still widespread. Due to the shock of the reunion, a large portion of the infrastructure of volunteering (e.g. sports clubs associated with firms) collapsed and people randomly lost their opportunities for volunteering. Based on a comparison of the change in subjective well-being of these people and of people from the control group who had no change in their volunteer status, the hypothesis is supported that volunteering is rewarding in terms of higher life satisfaction.

In his book *Flourish: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-being*, University of Pennsylvania professor Martin Seligman explains that helping others can improve our own lives:

...we scientists have found that doing a kindness produces the single most reliable momentary increase in well-being of any exercise we have tested.

6. Practice Smiling: Reduce Pain, Improve Mood, Think Better

Smiling can make us feel better, but it's more effective when we back it up with positive thoughts, according to this study:

A new study led by a Michigan State University business scholar suggests customer-service workers who fake smile throughout the day worsen their mood and withdraw from work, affecting productivity. But workers who smile as a result of cultivating positive thoughts—such as a tropical vacation or a child's recital—improve their mood and withdraw less.

Of course it's important to practice "real smiles" where you use your eye sockets. (You've seen fake smiles that don't reach the person's eyes. Try it. Smile with just your mouth. Then smile naturally; your eyes narrow. There's a huge difference in a fake smile and a genuine smile.)

According to PsyBlog, smiling can improve our attention and help us perform better on cognitive tasks:

Smiling makes us feel good which also increases our attentional flexibility and our ability to think holistically. When this idea was tested by Johnson et al. (2010), the results showed that participants who smiled performed better on attentional tasks which required seeing the whole forest rather than just the trees.

A smile is also a good way to reduce some of the pain we feel in troubling circumstances:

Smiling is one way to reduce the distress caused by an upsetting situation. Psychologists call this the facial feedback hypothesis. Even forcing a smile when we don't feel like it is enough to lift our mood slightly (this is one example of embodied cognition).

7. Plan a Trip: It Helps Even if You Don't Actually Take One

As opposed to actually taking a holiday, simply planning a vacation or break from work can improve our happiness. A study published in the journal *Applied Research in Quality of Life* showed that the highest spike in happiness came during the planning stage of a vacation as people enjoy the sense of anticipation:

In the study, the effect of vacation anticipation boosted happiness for eight weeks. After the vacation, happiness quickly dropped back to baseline levels for most people.

Shawn Achor has some info for us on this point, as well:

One study found that people who just thought about watching their favorite movie actually raised their endorphin levels by 27 percent.

If you can't take the time for a vacation right now, or even a night out with friends, put something on the calendar—even if it's a month or a year down the road. Then, whenever you need a boost of happiness, remind yourself about it.

8. Meditate: Rewire Your Brain for Happiness

Meditation is often touted as an important habit for improving focus, clarity, and attention span, as well as helping to keep you calm. It turns out it's also useful for improving your happiness:

In one study, a research team from Massachusetts General Hospital looked at the brain scans of 16 people before and after they participated in an eight-week course in mindfulness meditation. The study, published in the January issue of *Psychiatry Research: Neuroimaging*, concluded that after completing the course, parts of the participants' brains associated with compassion and self-awareness grew, and parts associated with stress shrank.

Meditation literally clears your mind and calms you down, it's been often proven to be the single most effective way to live a happier life. According to Achor, meditation can actually make you happier long-term:

Studies show that in the minutes right after meditating, we experience feelings of calm and contentment, as well as heightened awareness and empathy. And, research even shows that regular meditation can permanently rewire the brain to raise levels of happiness.

The fact that we can actually alter our brain structure through mediation is most surprising to me and somewhat reassuring that however we feel and think today isn't permanent.

9. Move Closer to Work: A Short Commute is Worth More Than a Big House

Our commute to work can have a surprisingly powerful impact on our happiness. The fact that we tend to commute twice a day at least five days a week makes it unsurprising that the effect would build up over time and make us less and less happy.

According to *The Art of Manliness*, having a long commute is something we often fail to realize will affect us so dramatically:

... while many voluntary conditions don't affect our happiness in the long term because we acclimate to them, people never get accustomed to their daily slog to work because sometimes the traffic is awful and sometimes it's not.

Or as Harvard psychologist Daniel Gilbert put it, "Driving in traffic is a different kind of hell every day."

We tend to try to compensate for this by having a bigger house or a better job, but these compensations just don't work:

Two Swiss economists who studied the effect of commuting on happiness found that such factors could not make up for the misery created by a long commute.

10. Practice Gratitude: Increase Happiness and Satisfaction

This is a seemingly simple strategy but I've personally found it to make a huge difference to my outlook. There are lots of ways to practice gratitude, from keeping a journal of things you're grateful for, sharing three good things that happen each day with a friend or your partner, and going out of your way to show gratitude when others help you.

In an experiment where participants took note of things they were grateful for each day, their moods were improved just from this simple practice:

The gratitude-outlook groups exhibited heightened well-being across several, though not all, of the outcome measures across the three studies, relative to the comparison groups. The effect on positive affect appeared to be the most robust finding. Results suggest that a conscious focus on blessings may have emotional and interpersonal benefits.

The *Journal of Happiness studies* published a study that used letters of gratitude to test how being grateful can affect our levels of happiness:

Participants included 219 men and women who wrote three letters of gratitude over a 3 week period. Results indicated that writing letters of gratitude increased participants' happiness and life satisfaction while decreasing depressive symptoms.

67 Tips on Happiness, Fulfillment & Life

“The meaning of life is that it is to be lived.”– Bruce Lee

- Always have a quest.
- Don't feel the need to justify your opinion.
- Cut your expenses in half. Then cut them again.
- Don't die without any scars. Like Tyler Durden advised.
- Remember that everyone wants to feel important.
- Don't fall into “the busy trap.” It's okay to not always be “on your grind,” 24/7.
- Learn something from everyone you meet.
- Take more risks without fear of making mistakes.
- Sweat every day.
- Get Facebook and email off your phone.
- No one ever got rich checking their email more often.”– Noah Kagan
- 11) Never “grow up.”
- 12) If you haven't worn something in more than two months get rid of it.
- 13) Send more hand written notes.
- 14) Not everyone will like you. You need to be okay with that.
- 15) You don't have to respond to every Tweet, email, call or text message. That's a form of slavery.
- 16) Question authority.
- 17) Learn to do something artistic- paint, draw, play an instrument.
- 18) Keep your cell phone off the dinner table.
- 19) Get punched in the face at least once. Everyone needs that. (Keeping your phone on the table is a good way to facilitate that)
- 20) Say “please” and “thank you” more than everyone else.
- 21) Repeat a persons name aloud when you first meet them.
- 22) Never waste time arguing on the internet.
- 23) Carry a book with you wherever you go. A real book.
- 24) When you're with friends or family members, be with them 100%. Don't think about work or check your phone.
- 25) Make a difference in someone's life.
- 26) Never discuss how much money you make.
- 27) Go for a walk every day.
- 28) Be the first one to try everything.
- 29) Slow down.
- Nature does not hurry, yet everything is accomplished.”– Lao Tzu
- 30) Don't watch the news. It's depressing. If something important happens you'll know.
- 31) Tell your friends you love them.
- 32) Smile before you pick up the phone and say “hello.”
- 33) Give advice only when it's asked for.
- 34) Don't give it a second time if the person didn't listen the first.
- 35) Do things that make you uncomfortable.
- 36) Everyone's looking for a leader. Stand up and lead.
- 37) Turn off your cell phone after 8pm. Or at least set some kind of boundaries.
- 38) Get out of debt. Take it from someone who was buried in it.
- 39) Spend more time doing only things you're passionate about.
- 40) Change the way things are normally done.
- 41) Say less, listen more.

- 42) Think long and hard before you make the decision to go to college or grad school. Read *The Education of Millionaires* before you do. And visit this website.
- 43) Challenge the status quo. Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it is time to pause and reflect.” – Mark Twain
- 44) Spend some time to come up with a really fucking cool bucket list and start working your way through it.
- 45) Make more time to spend with your friends and family.
- 46) Get your hands dirty.
- 47) Daydreaming and saying “I want” or “I wish” are the signs of an amateur. Be a pro.
- 48) Do things that scare the shit out of you.
- 49) Remove all stressful people and situations from your life.
- 50) Whenever you see a member of the military, thank them.
- 51) Pick up the check.
- 52) Travel more. This doesn’t always cost as much as you think. Read this book for some ideas.
- 53) Help others make their dreams come true.
- 54) Anger, jealousy and bitterness ruin your life. Be happy for everyone.
- 55) Laugh every day.
- 56) Pay your credit cards off each month. Too many people spend money they haven’t earned, to buy things they don’t want, to impress people they don’t like.” – Will Rogers
- 57) Reinvent yourself.
- 58) Dream bigger. Most people don’t think they can accomplish big things so they settle for mediocrity. Don’t be like everyone else.
- 59) Quit your job. Life shouldn’t be spent doing shit you hate. Benefits and security aren’t worth your happiness.
- 60) Save more of your money. Trust me on this.
- 61) Read *The War of Art* by Steven Pressfield.
- 62) Everyone wants to change the world. That doesn’t make you unique. Acting on that desire does.
- 63) Eat your steak rare.
- 64) Drink your coffee black.
- 65) Try completely unplugging one day per week. Or at least, per month.
- 66) Remember the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, “Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.”
- 67) Call your mom more often. Now would be a good time.

52 Tips for Happiness, Health and a Better Life

Happiness

1. Smile more
2. Surround yourself with good company
3. Find someone to love and that loves you
4. Enjoy nature and the outdoors -- there is a lifetime's worth of wonder there
5. Make more time for travel and adventures
6. Seek out people, places and situations that give you that warm fuzzy feeling inside and make you laugh outside
7. Get out of debt and once out do your best to stay out
8. Find and follow your passion
9. Save a little more often
10. Fill your life with things and people you are passionate about
11. Help others and give back

12. Be grateful for the way things are
13. Stop comparing
14. Do something silly (but not reckless) once every now and again and remember we all have an inner child
15. Wake up early and catch the sunrise every now and again
16. Dream big and invest time, energy and effort into trying to make those dreams happen
17. Live a life on your own terms

Health

18. Floss
19. More vegetables and fruits
20. Less sugar and processed nonsense
21. Find a form of exercise/sport you enjoy doing that supports good health and doesn't beat you up and do it (exercise can and should be hard at times but you should enjoy it!)
22. Make exercise and good nutrition life habits
23. Stress and worry less
24. Make sure your exercise program fits your own personal goals and suits your body type and is something you can do for life (remember, it should build you up not break you down)
25. If you eat meat make it organic as much as you can
26. Strength train one to three times a week (free weights, bodyweight, kettle bells and so on)
27. Walk more
28. Less sitting
29. Use the stairs more often
30. Sprint occasionally (but as with all things exercise, ease into these and learn proper form!)
31. Stretch (gently) what's tight and strengthen what's weak
32. Improve your posture

A Better Life

33. Simplify, unclutter and make space
34. Recognize and enjoy the many small pleasures in your life
35. Enjoy the moment -- it won't last forever
36. Make time for family and friends
37. Take on less but make that less the important stuff to you
38. Slow down -- you can't sprint all the way
39. Surround yourself with good, positive people who have your best interests at heart
40. Never stop learning
41. Judge others less
42. Learn how to say no without guilt
43. Learn how to say yes without doubt
44. Not everyone will like you or have your best interests at heart, be okay with that but avoid these people if you can
45. More action less analysis - get out of the blocks
46. Read more
47. Repeat this to yourself regularly "You are good enough right now"
48. Avoid gossipers, critics, haters and other energy and soul suckers
49. Learn something new
50. Check email less
51. Put the smartphone down and unplug from the interwebs/Matrix occasionally -- there's a whole world out there
52. Find and live your purpose

How to Be Happy: 23 Ways to Be Happier

1. Find out what to do first.

How are you supposed to build the right happiness skills if you don't know which ones you are struggling with in the first place? This is why it's helpful to take a quiz to explore your happiness strengths and weaknesses. Get a better understanding of what these skills are all about, and learn how to improve upon your weaknesses and build your "happiness strengths."

2. Give yourself a confidence boost.

Why would you bother increasing your happiness if you didn't think you could be successful at it? You wouldn't. That's why it's so important to build your self-efficacy — to prove to yourself that you can increase your happiness. The best way to do this is by starting with easier skills — skills like gratitude or prioritizing spending time doing fun things. Get a quick win, and you'll be more confident that you really can change your life.

3. Fuel your progress by learning how to feel better about yourself.

You wouldn't practice math to get better at cooking. And you wouldn't learn another language to lose weight. To be happier, you'll likely make more progress by focusing on the skills that are most closely linked to happiness. In my research, the skill that usually turns out to be most closely linked to happiness is: positive self-views. Learning how to feel better about yourself — for example, by imagining your best possible self, noting your positive qualities, or identifying your strengths — can go a long way to increasing your happiness.

4. Create balance and overcome burnout.

How are you supposed to have the energy to be happier if you're stressed, exhausted, and miserable from work? It will be really hard. Building new skills, skills that will help you be happier, will take time and energy. So it's helpful first to create better work-life balance.

5. Build a growth mindset for happiness.

A growth mindset refers to the belief that we can change ourselves. When we build a growth mindset for happiness, we believe we can change our happiness. This is super important, because if we don't believe we can increase our happiness, we won't even bother to try.

6. Make positive memories.

Every region in our brains can be strengthened through practice. If our brains are really good at remembering negative things that happen, it can be useful to strengthen the regions of the brain responsible for remembering positive things.

7. Find those silver linings.

Everything we experience can be a bummer if we choose to see it that way. But when you search for the benefits or silver linings in your life, you may be surprised to discover a lot of good. Keep practicing to increase the positive and decrease the negative to cultivate happiness. Also, this skill has been linked to a better ability to cope with stress and be more resilient.

8. Take breaks from social media.

Facebook tends to have a negative effect on our happiness. By choosing to take breaks from Facebook — or changing the way we use social media — we can boost our happiness.

9. Spend smarter for more happiness.

How we choose to spend our money impacts what we can do and how we live in ways that impact how happy we are. When we choose a less fancy house or car — things that don't bring us much happiness — we have more money to spend on adventures or on gifts for friends: things that actually do make us happier.

10. Communicate kindly.

When we are kind to others, we feel better about ourselves. We can do nice things for others, be empathetic, or we can just treat each other with respect, communicating kindly rather than assuming the worst.

11. End your negative patterns of thinking.

Let's face it: Sometimes we are what's making us miserable. We just can't stop thinking about how so-and-so wronged us, or how our life didn't turn out as we hoped. Negative thought processes — like worrying, ruminating, self-judgment, and fearing rejection — just keep us miserable and unable to move forward. When you find yourself thinking negatively, pause and refocus your thoughts. In time, your brain will be able to do this more easily on its own.

12. Find clarity.

How are you supposed to move your life forward when you don't even know what you feel or why you feel it? To become happier, try to gain clarity on your emotions; find out what you're feeling and what caused those feelings.

13. Live your values.

When you start to explore yourself and your values, you may discover that you've known all along what would make you happy, but you're just not doing it. To be happier, get clear on your values, so that you can live your life autonomously, according to your own principles and values.

14. Pay attention to the good.

Sure, sometimes life is hard. But by paying attention to the good, you can rise above it and be more resilient. When you find the good, savor the moment, and bring it with you to maintain happiness even during hard times. Or try thinking about a time in the future when you'll feel better.

15. Use your imagination to create the life you seek.

Did you know that your brain has a difficult time differentiating between things that happen in your imagination and things that happen in real life? So when you imagine something — even happiness — your brain acts as if it's real. We can use imagination to help create happiness out of thin air and enjoy our experiences more.

16. Stay mindful.

Sometimes we want to escape. The world seems dark and scary, but by practicing mindfulness we experience more fully both the positive and the negative — we are more fully engaged in our lives.

17. Explore what happiness means to you.

We all define happiness in different ways. When you know what happiness means to you, you'll have an easier time finding it. So explore happiness — what it means, what it looks like, and what it feels like — to more easily create it.

18. Go after life.

How are you supposed to change your life by doing the same things you've always done? It's pretty tough. Instead, push yourself to overcome fear and approach life with enthusiasm. Try "doing the opposite" to see how it feels and to make your brain more flexible.

19. Speak up and be yourself.

When we let people walk all over us, we're unhappy. But when we advocate for our own needs assertively and express ourselves, we feel more in control of our lives. Learning how to express yourself can help you overcome interpersonal challenges, which can make you unhappy.

20. Find your purpose.

We all want to feel like we made some sort of positive impact in this world, but sometimes we are uncertain of the type of impact we want to make. Explore exactly what gives you a sense of purpose and how you want to pursue this purpose to give your life a greater sense of meaning.

21. Build meaningful connections.

Did you know we enjoy just about everything more when we do it with others? This is why one of the best things you can do for your happiness is to build meaningful relationships and social connections. To strengthen these relationships, practice kindness and gratitude towards the people you care about.

22. Get off the hedonic treadmill.

The "hedonic treadmill" refers to the tendency for us to return to our original happiness level over time. To boost your baseline-level happiness, you can try changing your physiology through nutrition and exercise. To maintain your happiness, you have to get out of your comfort zone and keep adding variety to your happiness plan.

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23. Hold yourself accountable.

We are more likely to do the things we say we're going to do if we schedule time in our calendars to do them. We can also more easily stay on track if we get accountability from others. So if you really want to be happier, don't let yourself get away with being unhappy.

Tips for Happiness in Daily Life:

1) Endeavor to change the way you look at things. Always look at the bright side. The mind might drag you to think about negativity and difficulties. Don't let it. Look at the good and positive side of every situation.

2) Think about solutions, not about problems.

3) Listen to relaxing, uplifting music.

4) Watch funny comedies that make you laugh.

5) Each day, devote some time to reading a few pages of an inspiring book or article.

6) Watch your thoughts. Whenever you catch yourself thinking negative thoughts, start thinking of pleasant things.

7) Always look at what you have done and not at what you haven't.

Sometimes, you begin the day with the desire to accomplish several objectives. At the end of the day, you might feel frustrated and unhappy, because you haven't been able to do all of those things.

Look at what you have done, not at what you have not been able to do. Often, even if you have accomplished a lot during the day, you let yourself feel frustrated, because of some minor tasks you didn't accomplish.

Sometimes, you spend all day successfully carrying out many plans, but instead of feeling happy and satisfied, you look at what was not accomplished and feel unhappy. It is unfair toward yourself.

8) Each day do something good for yourself. It can be something small, such buying a book, eating something you love, watching your favorite program on TV, going to a movie, or just having a stroll on the beach.

9) Each day do at least one act to make others happy.

This can be a kind word, helping your colleagues, stopping your car at the crossroad to let people cross, giving your seat in a bus to someone else, or giving a small present to someone you love. The possibilities are infinite.

When you make someone happy, you become happy, and then people try to make you happy.

10) Always expect happiness.

11) Do not envy people who are happy. On the contrary, be happy for their happiness.

12) Associate with happy people, and try to learn from them to be happy. Remember, happiness is contagious.

13) Do your best to stay detached, when things do not proceed as intended and desired. Detachment will help you stay calm and control your moods and reactions. Detachment is not indifference. It is the acceptance of the good and the bad and staying balanced. Detachment has much to do with inner peace, and inner peace is conducive to happiness.

14) Smile more often.

How to Be Happy in 14 Little Steps

Set boundaries.

If self-care is a priority for your overall happiness, it's important to give yourself permission to say 'no.' "Be diligent about your boundaries," advises Virginia Williamson, a Connecticut-based marriage and family therapist.

"It's easy to fall into a pattern of overextending ourselves, both personally and professionally, only to feel taken advantage of, run down, or resentful. Create limits for yourself and others, and be consistent about maintaining them. This sets the stage for happier relationships, which greatly impacts the quality of our lives."

A strategy to get the better hang of saying 'no,' and bringing happiness into your life? According to psychotherapist Laura Leinwand, instead of responding with immediate rejection, set a deadline—allowing yourself to become comfortable with whatever decision you make, while also honoring your relationships.

And while the concept of 'no' may at first seem a bit self-centered, Leinwand explains that "healthy boundaries and enables others to have clarity about what they can expect from you."

To get started, put a few drops on your palms, rub them together, and gently waft them over your face. This simple ritual is both calming and elevating. Plus, it makes you pause and luxuriate in a moment.

"Appreciating the present is one of the best ways to feel lighter and happier," says Kovacs.

Recite affirmations to combat negative emotions.

"Affirmations are statements or propositions that are declared to be true," explains author Shawngela Pierce, who studies naturopathic medicine.

Regarding how they can make you happy, Pierce references a 2015 brain-imaging study published in the Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience Journal, where scientists reviewed what happens in the brain when people practice self-affirmation. They found that participants who were affirmed showed increased activity in the region of the brain that processes self-worth and valuation.

35 Quotes to Use as Mantras for Positive Thinking

One easy way to get in the daily habit of using affirmations is to come up with five aspirational sentences about yourself beginning with the words, "I am." For example, "I am living my best life," "I am loved," or "I am healthy." Then, repeat those statements aloud first thing in the morning and again before you go to sleep at night. This will boost your self-esteem and program your subconscious to think more positive thoughts.

Bring nature into your home.

Your spirit isn't the only thing that may be in need of a happiness makeover. Sprucing up your home and integrating more natural elements, like plants, wood, organic soy candles, or wallpaper covered with nature scenes, could be the key to greater health and happiness. Or, you know, you could just tune into decluttering queen Marie Kondo's show on Netflix to freshen up your home.

While you've got the design bug, be mindful of certain colors that are said to naturally make you happier. Color expert Sue Kim told Country Living that yellow, sky blue, violet, green, and sage, are shades known to give mood boosts.

I Refuse to Follow Marie Kondo's Book Advice

"Everything we surround ourselves with impacts our emotional state," says holistic interior designer Nora Bouz, who is also the founder of Lucida, Wellbeing by Design, an interior design practice. "When we are mindful of what goes into our homes and how they're arranged, they will transform into powerful places that support healthy habits and increase joy. Being out in nature (and therefore bringing natural elements into your home) can help reduce stress and induce positive emotions, a 2010 study by the Environmental Health and Preventive Medicine found."

Ready to get started? "Common houseplants, such as Peace Lilies, Areca Palms, Dwarf Date Palms, and Boston Ferns, have the ability to remove toxins from the air, according to the NASA Clean Air Study," Bouz says. If you don't exactly have a green thumb, use fabric and wallpaper with plant motifs that will at least instill the feeling of nature," she says.

6 Decor Mistakes That Make You Feel Stressed

Also, keep your windows clean so that natural light can enter your home. In areas where you spend extended periods of time and natural light is not accessible, use daylight bulbs which mimic the sun's color temperature, she suggests.

And don't forget about sound. Noise machines that loop birds, water, and wind, also help bring the outdoors in.

Or, better yet...actually go outside.

"Have you ever noticed that your mood elevates when you spend time outside," asks registered dietitian and performance nutritionist Kristin Koskinen, RDN, LD, CD. "That's because human skin is able to create serotonin, a feel-good neurohormone. Exposure to sunshine helps the brain to regulate sleep cycles. Sitting by a sunny window is nice, but for the full serotonergic benefits, you need to get some skin in the outdoor game.

Lincoln-Nichols also advocates for incorporating more vitamin D into your diet. Foods with vitamin D include a variety of fish, yogurt, eggs and (fortified) orange juice.

"Low levels of the 'sunshine vitamin' have been associated with feelings of depression and sadness," adds Lincoln-Nichols. "Make it a habit to regularly (and safely) soak up adequate amounts of sunlight, especially if you live in a temperate climate with long days and short nights. Just don't forget the SPF!

Have more chocolate to boost your levels of happiness.

When it comes to your emotions, trust your gut. According to research from the California Institute of Technology, about 90 percent of your serotonin is produced in the gastrointestinal tract. Serotonin is a neurotransmitter found in the brain that scientists refer to as the 'happy chemical' because it contributes to well-being.

10 Foods That'll Make You Sleepy

"We are what we eat, and studies have shown that the connection between gut and brain greatly affect our mood," says Dixie Lincoln-Nichols, certified health and wellness coach and creator of Inside Outer Beauty Market. "Eat foods that increase happy feelings. Dark chocolate, for example, reduces the stress hormone cortisol. Protein-packed quinoa contains flavonoids, which are a group of plant chemicals found in fruits, veggies, grains, tea, and wine. Flavonoids have been said to have a calming effect."

Take a walk.

It's been proven that exercise can affect your mood. Sure, a sweat session at the gym can serve as a distraction from whatever problems you're facing. But you don't need an intense hour of spin class or running on the treadmill to reap the benefits either.

A 2016 study conducted by psychologists at Iowa State University found that going for a 12-minute stroll, even without a walking partner or being outdoors, could improve your mood significantly. You can even exercise while cleaning or doing the laundry. Got a stack of heavy towels or pants? Use them as resistance during a set of lunges or squats, or you can lift your hamper above your head a few times to strengthen your arms and shoulders.

"We need our physical choices to help our emotional state," explains Fati Marie, personal growth and positive mindset coach at Four Moons Spa. "Moderate exercise allows the body to get into the balanced state that it needs to stabilize hormones and release endorphins."

Make a bucket list.

Giving yourself something to look forward to is yet another way of how you can become happier. In the 2007 Journal Of Experimental Psychology, researchers tested how people respond to future events versus reflecting back on them after they happen.

Turns out, study participants' emotional reactions heightened when they thought about the occasion before it actually occurred. For example, the subjects got more excited about a ski trip in the future than they did about a getaway in the past. Whether it's anticipating a new book or movie that's coming out, trying out a dish at a trendy restaurant, or planning a vacation, you'll feel happiest creating a list of things you want to see, do, or experience, rather than checking them off and remembering how fun they were.

Need a few ideas to get you started? Here we have a full list of simple activities that you can do alone (or with close friends).

Keep a gratitude journal.

While adopting an attitude of gratitude won't necessarily change your circumstances, it can shift your energy and alter your perspective.

"Don't just say you're thankful for a specific thing or person. Instead analyze how grateful you are," recommends Dr. Caroline Leaf, neuroscientist and author of *Think, Learn, Succeed*, who has also served as an advisor on a mental health initiative committee for the White House. "Keep a record of every time you're grateful, every time you're feeling down, and how your attitude affects your ability to think and act in a particular situation," she recommends. Also, try setting a daily phone alert to remind you to take a second to appreciate your life.

If you think about it, writing to expel negative thoughts is a concept as old as time. That's why we have so many great books in the world. To get you started on picking the perfect journal, we've got a suggested list of 20 notebooks where you're bound to find the one that's right for you.

Listen to music to drown out negative thoughts.

Besides the fun you'll have dancing to upbeat tunes, there's actually science to back up the notion that uplifting songs can positively impact your brain.

"Music has been found to reduce pain, alleviate anxiety, increase immune functioning, and increase positive emotions," says Azizi Marshall, founder and CEO of the Center for Creative Arts Therapy, an arts-based psychotherapy practice and training center in Chicago. "Music has a direct link to your emotions, so when you're stressed out, sing along and feel the anxiety leave your body."

Pay it forward.

Being kind to others and giving back ignites the pleasure centers in the brain that are responsible for releasing endorphins. It's what is commonly referred to as "the helper's high," according to scientists of the Greater Good Science Center (GGSC) at the University of California, Berkeley.

"I know life already feels too hectic, so the idea of adding more to your plate seems ridiculous," suggests mental health professional Kryss Shane, MS, LMSW. "However, sometimes doing for others can bring a sense of peace and a new perspective to your own life."

Shane suggests using something you're good at to help. If you love to bake, bring cookies to a local hospital's staff. Or, if you adore shopping, find a charity that accepts toys, winter coats, or other items for people in your community who can't afford them. Perhaps you're great at giving advice. Contact your local high school and offer to mentor an academic or sports team. "By combining what you love to do and focusing on those in need, you get to see how your talents can bring happiness to others."

Spend less time on your phone.

Disconnecting from technology, social media, and work frees up time to engage in other hobbies and activities that bring you joy. But let's face it: If you have a job that requires you to check your email frequently, or you can't resist posting that adorable photo on Instagram, perhaps you can start with the small goal of not checking your phone 20 minutes before bed.

Researcher YoungAh Park, PhD of Kansas State University reports that people who unplug after work hours solve problems in a more proactive manner and are more engaged at work.

"One cause of stress and burnout can be the lack of an end to our workday," says certified life coach and public health professional Nancie Vito, CHES. "It isn't very relaxing to constantly check email or respond to texts, etc. We need time to replenish and recharge our batteries."

Flipd, the free Android and iOS app, allows you to lock time-consuming apps and games for a set of period of time, helping you to create a distraction-free zone without thinking about it. If you have an iPhone, take advantage of the settings available with the new 12.1 operating system. Think of the "Downtime" function as giving your screen a nap. When you select this, only the apps and phone calls you select will get through so you won't miss a call from the babysitter, but you can ignore, well, everyone else. Or, try "App Limits," which lets you schedule daily times to use certain apps. For example, if you're at work, you can obstruct Facebook, or when you're at home, you can block the workplace chat app, Slack.

Fake it 'til you make it.

There's a reason why Dick Van Dyke encouraged fans to "put on a happy face" in the 1963 musical film, *Bye Bye Birdie*. It actually works. Smiling, particularly when you don't feel like it, can impact how you feel and reduce stress. However, in spite of the benefits, you shouldn't feel pressured to do so. There's nothing more annoying (and, frankly, sexist) than walking down the street and having a stranger tell you to smile.

An amusing study by the University of Cardiff in Wales found that people who could not frown due to botox injections were happier on average than those who could frown. Similarly, research from the University of Kansas showed that smiling helps reduce the body's response to stress and lower heart rate in tense situations.

Read a book or watch TV.

As if you needed another excuse to bury your nose in a good book.

In a study by Mindlab International at the University of Sussex, researchers concluded that reading for six minutes a day can reduce stress levels by 68 percent. A 2015 study found that those who read for 30 minutes a week are 20 percent more likely to be satisfied in their life than non-readers, and 21 percent less likely to experience feelings of depression.

101 Ways to Feel Happy on a Daily Basis

1. Smile.
2. Connect with nature.
3. Surround yourself with positive people in person or online.
4. Do something you've always enjoyed.
5. Do something you've never done before but have always wanted to try.
6. Learn something new.
7. Smell something that makes you happy: a mandarin, your lover's perfume, chocolate, you decide.
8. Reward yourself for your good habits.
9. Eat something that makes you happy, but not too much if it's fattening.
10. Spend time with a good friend.
11. Touch something that makes you happy: a cat, velvet, the bark of a tree? Take time to notice.
12. Don't worry now, worry later.
13. Say, or sing, something that makes you happy.

14. Challenge yourself, I dare you.
15. Look at something that makes you happy.
16. Stop procrastinating, do something.
17. Take a small step towards your goal.
18. Congratulate yourself.
19. Tell someone you love them.
20. Do a good deed.
21. Face your fears.
22. Read a book you love.
23. Get outside.
24. Spend time with inspiring people or read about someone who inspires you.
25. Clear out your junk, literally.
26. Let go of negative memories.
27. Dwell on positive things from your past.
28. Be creative.
29. Dare yourself to do something.
30. Give someone an unexpected gift.
31. Change your habits just this once, do something unexpected.
32. Watch the sunset.
33. Get up for sunrise.
34. Open a savings account.
35. Be active.
36. Plan for success.
37. Eat something healthy.
38. Trust your instincts.
39. Follow your passion.
40. Throw a party, or plan to soon.
41. Avoid drama queens and energy suckers, you know who they are.
42. Write stuff down, keep a diary.
43. Set a goal.
44. Clean your house, bit by bit.
45. Say "no".
46. Spend a day alone.
47. Devote a day to family.
48. Pick up the phone and call someone you haven't spoken to for a while.
49. Wear your favourite outfit.
50. Be present.
51. Go for a bike ride.
52. Do something you loved as a kid that you haven't done for years.
53. Forgive someone, especially yourself.
54. Go slow.
55. Have a meal somewhere different: try a picnic.
56. Avoid advertisements.
57. Pick a bunch of flowers and put them in your house.
58. Ban all media for the day.
59. Let something slide.
60. Display a colorful fruit bowl and eat one or two pieces a day.
61. Be romantic.
62. Play a game: try Uno or Monopoly with the kids and chess or poker with your friends.

63. Make a smoothie.
64. Have a siesta.
65. Do something you've been putting off.
66. Dream big.
67. Start small.
68. Seek out supportive and like-minded people.
69. Understand that all things come to an end.
70. Feed the ducks.
71. Persevere: pick up something you gave up on.
72. Start a new habit, a good one.
73. Look at yourself in the mirror, pick what you like best and flaunt it.
74. Seek sensuous activities and enjoy them.
75. Look around for funny things and have a laugh.
76. Rest up.
77. Change your routine.
78. Take a photo, and look back at old ones.
79. Stretch your body.
80. Meditate.
81. Write a mantra.
82. Focus.
83. Don't buy something — and see if you miss it. Put the cash in a savings account instead.
84. Notice what makes you happy and use it in sad times.
85. Ignore people who annoy you, stop being with them.
86. Play hide and seek with some kids.
87. Put a picture of something you want on your wall.
88. Tell someone your dreams.
89. Love yourself.
90. Be grateful.
91. Visualise.
92. Unblock.
93. Use your brain: try a crossword or sudoku.
94. Make a good choice.
95. Acknowledge your feelings.
96. Go on a journey, long or short.
97. Talk to someone you wouldn't normally connect with.
98. Be grateful for life.
99. Write a poem.
100. Teach someone something you know well.
101. Choose to be happy every day.
102. If you haven't already had your happy fix today, or if you want to feel even happier, try these 101 quick, simple ideas. But maybe not all on the same day.

CAUSE OF HAPPINESS

Causes of Happiness

Is happiness even possible in the modern world?

In the *Conquest of Happiness*, published in 1930, Bertrand Russell examined the reasons why so many people seem anxious, upset or depressed in the early 20th century.

He concluded that the main causes of modern unhappiness were meaninglessness, competition, boredom, fatigue, envy, guilt and shame, persecution mania and fear of public opinion.

Then he started observing those who seemed genuinely happy. As he saw it, there was a lot of diversity among happy people.

He knew a happy gardener in his 70s, who biked 16 miles a day and hunted rabbits like “the heroes of Valhalla who spent every day hunting wild boar.”

He knew revolutionaries under repressive regimes who were willing to die for a cause, who “even if being executed enjoys more happiness than is possible for the comfortable cynic.”

He knew “one of the leading literary men of America,” whose writing seemed melancholy but when his baseball team was playing he “yelled with joy as his favorites had achieved victory.”

Ultimately, he boiled the secrets of happiness to two key traits:

“Let your interests be as wide as possible, and let your reactions to the things and persons that interest you be as far as possible friendly rather than hostile.”

The following is a summary of Russell’s suggestions for “escaping from psychological sources of misery” — zest, affection, family, work, perspective, balance and radiance.

This is Part 2 in a 2-part series.

Part 2: The Causes of Happiness

Zest

If Russell traveled to a new city, you can bet that he wouldn’t eat at the TGI Friday and get coffee at Starbucks.

For Russell, the first secret to happiness was to simply be interested in new experiences. This meant take notice of people around you, experiment with new hobbies, be curious, TRY THINGS!

If you want to watch football, watch football! If you want to read, read! If you want to play chess, be a damn chess master!

Russell called this zest.

Zest was originally a culinary French word that means “the peel of an orange or a lemon.” The zest for life is seasoning; the flavoring that makes something enjoyable. Who wants a bland life? Add some zest!

A component of Russell’s zest ideal was physical energy. He also uses the term vigor. When he describes this zest for life, I can’t help but picture the adventure archetype of Teddy Roosevelt.

“Adventurous men enjoy shipwrecks, mutinies, earthquakes, conflagrations, and all kinds of unpleasant experiences, provided they do not go so far as to impair health” Russell writes. “They say to themselves in an earthquake, for example, ‘So that is what an earthquake is like,’ and it gives them pleasure to have their knowledge of the world increased by this new item.

There are two benefits to taking adventures, both now and in the future. Psychologist Daniel Kahneman would call these experiences the “experiencing self” and the “remembering self.”

Zest creates fun experiences in real time, as they are happening. But they also give you lasting memories.

According to Kahneman, we remember the peak and the end of an experience. Let’s say, for example, if you run into logistical difficulties planning a camping trip, in the future you’ll likely remember most intense hiking experience you had during that vacation.

“The man whose attention is turned outward can find within, in those rare moments when he examines his soul, the most varied and interesting assortment of ingredients being dissected and recombined into beautiful or instructive patterns,” Russell writes.

But zest don’t mean you have to go to the ends of the earth seeking excitement. You can simply pay attention. Open your eyes. Be aware.

As Yogi Berra put it, “You can observe a lot just by watching.”

In Buddhism, there’s the idea of cultivating “beginner’s mind.” It’s the idea of approaching familiar experiences with childlike wonder and enthusiasm, rather than boredom or cynicism.

“Young children are interested in almost everything that they see and hear; the world is full of surprises to them, and they are perpetually engaged with ardor in the pursuit of knowledge,” Russell writes.

Russell uses the example of Sherlock Holmes finding a random hat on the street. For most people, this wouldn’t be something they really pay attention to. For Holmes, the famous (if fictional) observer, he invented a whole backstory for how the hat arrived in that location at that moment.

“Life could never be boring to a man to whom casual objects offered such a wealth of interest,” Russell writes.

This goes back to a familiar Russell theme: You do you. Take interesting in what you want to take interest in. Don’t feel like you have to conform to a certain image because of society’s expectations or social judgement.

But he also adds a word of caution. Zest doesn’t mean that you should be wildly uninhibited, or seek dangerous adventure because you’re running away from something in your life. You can’t always go dancing in the streets just because you feel like it.

Don’t overdo it.

Iggy Pop's Lust for Life poses a similar warning. The upbeat chorus ("I got a lust for life") might sound like the ideal of a hero living with zest, but it's actually about a real-life heroin dealer whose life falls apart from drugs and alcohol. The song was used in the movie Trainspotting, which shows heroin addiction in all its horrors.

So don't do drugs, kids.

Russell's advice was to be as zestful, but keep it clean and wholesome.

Affection

"Friendship is unnecessary, like philosophy, like art...it has no survival value; rather it is one of those things that gives value to survival." — C.S. Lewis

Russell believed that to be truly happy, we have to freely give and receive affection.

The problem, he says, is we often get in our own way. We hold back.

"People are slow to give admiration for fear it should be misplaced; they are slow to bestow affection for fear that they should be made to suffer either by the person upon whom they bestow it or by a censorious world," he writes. "All this tends to produce timidity and anger against mankind."

This makes me think of the phrase "Never mistake kindness for weakness." But we often do, and it stops us from being open, generous and affectionate to each other.

"Of all the forms of caution," Russell writes, "caution in love is perhaps most fatal to true happiness."

That's a nice sentiment that fits well in a tweet.

But reality check, it's 2018 and outrage is everywhere, the president says he doesn't want people from "shithole countries" and his son compares refugees to poison Skittles. That's not super affectionate.

Cue Carrie Bradshaw typing voiceover:

I couldn't help but wonder, if love without caution is necessary for happiness — which Russell argues — is happiness even realistic?

I'm cautiously optimistic. Here's why:

Three years ago, I started seeing some of the most hateful things I've ever seen published on the Internet. It just became part of my daily routine.

Wake up. Check Facebook and Twitter. See posts with threats, violence, anger and hatred directed at Marquette University. Which basically meant it was all hurled at me as the social media manager.

We were being targeted by Westboro Baptist Church and others who held similar extreme views.

My job was to mop up the attacks of their hateful views, and those like them. I would hide or delete the worst offenders. Others I just read and ignored. Sometimes the barrage was just too much to delete, report or block.

It was a dark time. You develop a thick skin and become numb to the incoming shrapnel. You try not to take anything personally. And you move on.

I thought of that time when listening to Note to Self. The topic was how to react when someone says something racist or otherwise offensive on Facebook. Do you unfriend them? Confront them? Silently ignore them?

If you're like any human, you've probably tried all three approaches at different times. Maybe you unfriended ignorant friends from high school. Maybe you confronted your crazy uncle with indignant, righteous anger. Maybe you just kept scrolling when someone said something stupid but you were too tired to react or engage.

It turns out, there is a helpful formula to follow spelled out by Note to Self host Manoush Zomorodi and the National Council for Community Justice. It's called LARA, an acronym for Listen, Affirm, Respond and Add.

The whole point of LARA is to find common ground. It's not to blast the person's ignorance and show how much better you are. Ultimately, it's about forging understanding and making connections.

OK, so maybe you think this sounds way too trite. If you spend more than five minutes on social media, you know disagreements can quickly escalate and rarely do they end with a chorus of Kumbaya. There's no way this would actually work in the face of such extreme views like, say, Westboro Baptist Church.

That's what I thought, anyway. Until I read The New Yorker piece on Megan Phelps-Roper. It's a long read, but completely worth it. It tells how the granddaughter of Fred Phelps started questioning the ingrained worldview she was taught while being raised in the Westboro Baptist Church.

It all started with debates on Twitter. What changed her thinking was seeing the humanity in the people she was taught to believe were evil.

In particular, it was a Jewish blogger named David Abitbol who caught her off guard with persistent but polite disagreement with her beliefs and tactics. After years of dealing with hate groups, Abitbol realized that relating to hateful people was the best strategy to disarm them. Here's an excerpt from the article:

He saw that Phelps-Roper had a lot of followers and was an influential person in the church, so he wanted to counter her message. And he wanted to humanize Jews to Westboro. "I wanted to be like really nice so that they would have a hard time hating me," he said. One day, he tweeted about the television show "Gossip Girl," and Phelps-Roper responded jocularly about one of its characters. "You know, for an evil something something, you sure do crack me up," Abitbol responded.

The changing of Phelps-Roper's heart and mind happened gradually. It evolved over DMs on Twitter and even messages through the game Words With Friends.

Ultimately, Phelps-Roper made the gut-wrenching decision to leave behind her family, her church, her philosophy and everything she knew up to that point in her life.

Phelps-Roper and her sister had already escaped and moved on when her former church arrived on our campus to protest last fall. The Westboro Baptist Church announced their arrival in advance and reached out to media outlets for maximum exposure. They are professional protesters who know how to amplify their messages to provoke anger and outrage.

I remember students using love to combat hate with signs that proclaimed what they believed. Wyatt Massey described the scenes:

Under the emotionless gray sky of a Milwaukee winter, students filled the streets of Wisconsin Avenue with passion, carrying signs that read "God Loves All" or "Love, Not Hate."

It was a special day. Not just because students stood up against hate, but for a more powerful reason.

It's not often people carry a sign that says what they believe.

The writing on your heart

Of course, I was happy to see the church members pack up their hateful signs and leave town.

But just maybe another member was listening, doubting what they thought they knew, and ready to open their mind.

If we can show affection for the Westboro Baptist Church, we can show affection for all. Even shithole countries.

Family

Russell starts his reasoning for why family life is essential to happiness by enumerating all the ways... family life kinda sucks.

(My 7-year-old daughter is reading this over my shoulder as I type this right now, and tells me that “sucks” is a bad word. Sorry, Clara.)

Russell doesn't sugar coat it. Family life is expensive, noisy, stressful, noisy exhausting and noisy. Kids keep you up all night and get you up way too early on the weekends.

And the chatter. Did I mention the chatter? Dear Lord, the nonstop chatter.

Russell also notes that parents who were once sure of children's obedient roles were now questioning everything, and unsure of the actual best way to parent.

“If they order the children to do things, they may be producing a sense of sin,” he writes, using sense of sin as a synonym for guilt and shame. “If they do not, the children may acquire habits which the parents think undesirable.”

Russell foreshadowed the modern parent predicament with the belief that no matter what you do, you're going to screw your kid up at least a little.

After considering all the considerable problems, Russell still considers “the happiness of parenthood greater than any other that I have experienced.”

“To be happy in this world, especially when youth is past, it is necessary to feel oneself not merely an isolated individual whose day will soon be over but part of the stream of life flowing on from the first germ to the remote an unknown future.”

Russell viewed family as a “human nature” need, but also acknowledged that it's not the only way to feel connected with others and future generations. It wasn't just about having kids, either. He noted the unconditional love of one's parents, which can be comfort in times when you're down and out.

Today, certainly, many take a much broader view. We can define family, profound connection to others and contributing to the next generation in different ways beyond passing along genetic material.

Those who are “capable of some great and remarkable achievement which sets its stamp upon future ages” may gratify this same feeling through work, Russell says.

One of my favorite professors, Dr. Gary Meyer, once told me a story about backpacking after college. His travels brought him in contact with a man with a burly beard straight out of the mentor archetype. He looked how Meyer imagined the Biblical figure Moses, who had wandered the desert where Meyer and the man now worked in an orchard.

The man pulled my professor aside and gave him some life advice. He said that every person should do three things before they die: Plant a tree, write a book and make a baby. In other words, create.

Years later, Meyer shared this lasting perspective in his symbolic Last Lecture. The Last Lecture series was inspired by Dr. Randy Pausch's final lecture, which shared everything Pausch wanted his children to know before he died of pancreatic cancer.

“After much thought, it occurred to me that the important things we do in life are those that somehow live on, things that in some way connect us to the world after we have left it,” Meyer said in his Last Lecture. “I believe that goodness lives on through others and affects others in the most significant, profound and often unpredictable ways.”

You don't have to take the meaning of family literally to see the importance of creating for a meaningful life. My professor interpreted this to mean that he needed to contribute to the next generation, grow the world's body of knowledge and care for our earth in some generative way before he died. It's the circle of life.

Work

I remember watching the stock market collapse on September 29, 2008. The Dow fell 777.68 points, the largest point drop in any single day in history.

I had been unemployed for four months after my last job eliminated our department. I was interviewing for jobs at the time, and as I watched the stock market crash, I wondered if this meant I wasn't going to get hired anywhere.

My heart raced every time the phone rang. It could be someone telling me I got a job I was interviewing for, or I didn't get the job.

That summer was one of extreme highs and lows. After I lost my job, I embarked on a two-week bike trip, crashing with strangers to save money. But I also constantly worried about the mortgage, bills, and trying to find work.

Freelance writer was not the glamorous, carefree lifestyle it sounds like. I took any crappy, low-paying assignment I could get. Instead of being my own boss, every assignment editor was now my boss.

The worst part was because there were no work hours, it was all working hours. It felt like there was no designation between work and leisure, sleeping and waking, workday and holiday.

I stopped showering and shaving regularly — why bother? — to the point where I could smell myself. The days blurred into each other.

I was lucky. Two weeks after that stock market crash, I landed the job I still have today.

Other people clearly can handle working for themselves better than I did, and if I continued maybe I would have settled into a routine.

But years later, I felt the same sense of unreality from the lack of structure during an extended paternity leave. I couldn't wait to get back to the office.

at home on paternity leave: pls get me back to work

For all the hassles of dressing up, commuting, attending meetings and doing what you're told, it can be better than the alternative.

Russell is right. Work can make you happy for structural reasons alone.

"It is positively agreeable to be told what to do at each hour of the day, provided the orders are not too unpleasant," Russell writes.

We all need to meet needs like food, water, shelter, income and just doing something productive with our days. That's basic Maslow's Hierarchy stuff.

But beyond that, Russell advises that in order to be happy we need work that has some sort of meaning, purpose and higher calling.

"Without self-respect genuine happiness is scarcely possible," Russell writes. "And the man who is ashamed of his work can hardly achieve self-respect."

Russell is kind of like a 1930s Simon Sinek, before there were Ted Talks. He advises people to choose a career that they believe in, even if it means taking a lower paying job.

"Consistent purpose is not enough to make a life happy, but it is an almost indispensable condition of a happy life," he writes. "And consistent purpose embodies itself mainly in work."

Years later, Sinek and others would preach the same gospel about meaningful work. Start with why; find your purpose.

Purposely work won't always be easy. But without it, it's hard to be happy.

Perspective

A prehistoric display at the Milwaukee Public Museum, showing where we stand today

Sometimes I get a weird impulse when I see people retweet our current president on Twitter talking about something monumentally petty, like a news anchor's facelift, or TV ratings, or crowd sizes or the size of his button. Sizes seem to be a big deal.

I want to reply back and ask something like:

Do you ever think about how all of us on this planet are made of stardust and the mind-boggling improbability of how we all inhabit this miniscule space together for this millisecond in this galaxy?

Kind of puts things in perspective.

"It is very easy to become so absorbed in our own pursuits, our own circle, our own type of work, that we forget how small a part this is of the total human activity and how many things in the world are entirely unaffected by what we do," Russell writes.

That's a good reminder for us all.

Russell talks of "impersonal interests" that give us perspective. This can be reading, education, art going to the theatre or just having broader hobbies. Anything that allow us to "become interested in something outside the cause of anxiety."

"If you want more value to your days, start to open your heart to all the art — you may find yourself astounded," writes maureenlewis342 in a reflection about a love of art passed down through generations.

Kickstart an Art Heart

Not until I was an adult did I understand we went to the Cleveland Art Museum as often as we did in my childhood...

These moments of worldly appreciation show you there is more to life than what you see in your tiny personal sphere.

"Against the fanatical temper there is no better prophylactic than a larger conception of the life of a man and his place in the universe," Russell writes.

Russell then goes on a rant against higher education, which has in his opinion become too specialized on training and skill acquisition, rather than "enlargement of the mind and heart by impartial survey of the world."

If have to admit, as someone who works in higher education, I've heard both complaints — that either is too focused or not focused enough on the liberal arts. Apparently, this is not a new debate, but it's a healthy conversation to continue.

I sympathize with what Russell is saying. If you're only studying for an in-demand job that exists today, what happens when that job gets replaced by robots in 10 years? Or what happens in 20 years when work and life feels empty?

Philosophy, history, theology and reading the classics all help you take the long view. They may not provide happiness as you're studying them, but over time they can provide perspective.

To once again quote my Jesuit friend Joseph Simmons, SJ, the point of a liberal arts education, simply, is to make us more human. He writes about how he hated his philosophy class in college, only to discover its importance later on:

Fifteen years later, I see the wisdom in studying philosophy. A Jesuit, liberal arts education won't give us a list of practical skills and professional competencies that will be outmoded and surpassed. That's not the point of a Jesuit education.

Education comes from a Latin word that means to 'draw out,' as if the knowledge was already within us, and the teacher was the pump. I've come to think of my Marquette education as drawing me out — of my own preferences, forgone conclusions, easy answers, and plans for life.

Thank goodness I "had to take" philosophy, because it made me more human in a complex world.

A liberal arts education does not pin down right answers, but opens our minds to the right questions.

This is a common Russell theme. Stop thinking you have all the answers, get over yourself, and be open to the experience of life.

Balance

Soon after Russell published *The Conquest of Happiness*, American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr wrote a prayer for his sermon in Heath, Massachusetts.

The prayer started out this way:

God, give me grace to accept with serenity the things that cannot be changed,
Courage to change the things which should be changed,
and the Wisdom to distinguish the one from the other.

Living one day at a time,
Enjoying one moment at a time,
Accepting hardship as a pathway to peace,
Taking, as Jesus did, This sinful world as it is...

Years later, the 12-step recovery program from Alcoholics Anonymous popularized what became known as the Serenity Prayer.

God, grant me serenity to accept things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can,
And wisdom to know the difference.

This simple message has helped countless people recover from addiction. It's also what Russell advocates in this chapter for happiness: Balance.

Russell says you have to know when to put in effort, and when to back off. He called this balance "effort and resignation."

Everything in moderation isn't a new idea. It echoes world religions and ancient teachings.

Niebuhr laid out the Christian principles in his prayer. Buddha taught the Middle Way of moderation between the extremes of indulgence and self-mortification. In the ancient *Tao Te Ching*, Lao Tzu wrote that if you "sharpen a blade too much its edge will soon be lost."

Russell said the word conquest in his book title acknowledges that happiness requires effort. Being successful at work, finding a mate, earning an income and other necessities for happiness won't, in his words, drop into the mouth like a ripe fruit.

But too much effort will backfire. It's why DHH says we should bury the hustle:

The truth is you're going to die, and it'll be sooner rather than later, the more feverishly you devote your existence to the hustle and its grind. Life is tragically short that way.

What really gets my goat, though, is that it doesn't even work. You're not very likely to find that key insight or breakthrough idea north of the 14th hour. Creativity, progress, and impact does not yield easily or commonly to brute force.

The opposite of effort, for Russell, is resignation. In Western culture, this has a negative connotation. It suggests you're resigned to some unfortunate fate, and you can't help yourself out.

However, Russell says resignation isn't necessarily bad. It can save effort.

Take death, for example. You may be resigned to the fact that you're going to die. This may be a sense of despair. Or you can accept it, be at peace with it and get on with living your life.

By resigning yourself to the things you can't control, you're able to put forth effort in the things that do matter. Every time you get annoyed that you're stuck in traffic, your team loses or you don't like your dinner, sometimes it's better to just resign yourself to those facts rather than worrying, getting angry or fretting.

Lao Tzu called this wu wei, or literally non-doing. That doesn't mean being lazy. It means accordance with the harmony of nature, as the planets revolve effortlessly. It's action without effort.

Non-doing also means not striving when it would be foolish to put in effort. For example, it's pretty stupid to try to reverse the motion of the planets. Better to be resolved to the way of the solar system.

Jesus asked his disciples:

"Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?"

Russell adds:

"The energy that such people waste on trivial trouble would be sufficient, if more wisely directed, to make and unmake empires."

Have the balance — and the wisdom — to know the difference.

Radiance

You can usually tell when someone's happy. There's an inner radiance that comes out effortlessly, without trying to cover anything up or show off.

Happiness is radiance.

Russell calls his final chapter, simply, the happy man. He doesn't use the term radiance, but I think it's fitting for his ultimate theme.

When we turn inward, we close off. When we turn outward, we radiate.

The conclusion reminds me of a psychology professor who researches what makes life fulfilling. This is what he had to say about the secret of happiness:

A few years ago, when I first offered the Psychology of Happiness course at Marquette, people would ask me what this course was all about. The answer that came to me spontaneously was: "It is all about getting off of ourselves and getting into others."

Later on I noticed Peterson's three-word summary of the field: Other People Matter. More recently, Daniel Gilbert, a Harvard professor, after interviewing famous researchers in the field, came essentially to the same conclusions:

It is intimate positive relationships that matter the most.

In the end, what matters to Russell is how we relate to other people.

Don't be self-absorbed and think that happiness comes from virtue or selflessness or morals. Stop worrying about your own happiness, and start looking outside yourself.

When you do that, you'll radiate happy from the outside in, and the inside out.

The Four Causes of Happiness

The first cause of happiness is to see that's it's not enough for us to be happy without thinking about others. We should expand our concern for the happiness of all living beings. Wishing and working for others' happiness is called "love." Boundless love is the basic nature of all living beings. Without love everything becomes dry. Love makes everything rich, lush, and vital. It's like a protein that makes a more nutritious life. Love without clinging naturally shines on every living being like sunlight. We become a friend to everyone, and our mind becomes very calm and peaceful, clear and gentle. This is something we can experience for ourselves. With love, we see everyone as special, beautiful, and lovely—outside and inside. We might not see this because of our limited preferences and vision, but everyone has unique beauty. We depend on others for everything we have—their cooperation and support makes everything possible for us. We're here for all living beings and we have a responsibility to love everyone. So we should bring on the love, opening and radiating it in our hearts as much as we can.

The second cause of happiness is compassion, which is the outreaching expression of our love. Compassion is the wish and activity to help relieve the suffering of others. When someone we love is in trouble, we naturally feel compassion and want to help. Every living being experiences difficulties, suffering, and sorrow. No one is above that. Genuine compassion connects to others in their current situation. We stand with them and share their experience, their thoughts, and their pains. We can offer our help according to our capabilities, and each time feel joy, appreciation, and happiness for however much we're able to help, and sincerely wish to be able to help more in the future. If we have courage, commitment, and determination, gradually our capabilities will grow and our compassionate activities will increase. Rather than becoming bored and tired with others' difficulties—including our own—take them as opportunities to increase our courage, confidence, joy, and our love, compassion, and wisdom.

The third cause of happiness is rejoicing. Rejoicing in others' happiness is very special because it reaffirms and strengthens our own love and compassion. When we love someone and they experience some degree of happiness and peace, or they're relieved of suffering and difficulties, it's always a cause to rejoice. How wonderful it is! How special it is! May their joy, peace, and achievement last forever! Rather than feeling jealous or competitive with their success, let's celebrate their happiness and wish that it becomes even greater! This is boundless joy.

Along with boundless love, boundless compassion, and boundless joy, ***the fourth cause of happiness*** is boundless equanimity, or balance. With balance we become more flexible and strong so that we can grow and develop without allowing anything to become too rigid and extreme. We become imbalanced when we hold on to things too tightly. Deep down, our nature is open and fluid, dynamic, creative, and inclusive. With boundless equanimity, we bring balance to our activities and our minds, and we're more fully expressive of our goodness nature.

Where do these boundless qualities of love, compassion, joy, and equanimity come from? We all know that these don't come from outside. They come from our own hearts and minds. They're an infinite treasure that we already have—we just have to open and reveal them. This is the nature of the mind. When we're in touch with our love, it means we're in touch with the essence of our mind and hearts. Whatever we do, it's so important to be in touch with our hearts and minds. Essentially this means that we relax into the nature of our minds, and share our natural, beautiful qualities with others. This will bring lasting happiness for everyone.

TOP 10 REASONS FOR HAPPINESS

1As I was introspecting on what really made me happy, I discovered ten top causes/ reasons for happiness. My circle of friends endorsed this list, although the order/ priority does change depending on who we are and at what stage of life we are. Here is my top ten list for happiness....2

2Unconditional Love

Being unconditionally loved is perhaps the number cause for happiness. Children get this by default, from their parents. As adults, we struggle, both to love unconditionally and to be loved. Blessed is he/ she who is able to give or receive this love2

3Unconditional Service to others

Being of service to others, unconditionally, without expectation or entitlements, in an unselfish manner, gives one tremendous joy and incomparable happiness.

4Creativity

All of us are born with creative potential. As and when we create something—music, films, art, drama, writing, a poem, a concept, food—we are automatically filled with happiness

5ACHIEVEMENTS

As an offshoot of creativity, our achievements in life, in whatever sphere—education, work, society, sports, creative pursuits, children—give us tremendous happiness. A job well done is always worth feeling good about as achievements give us a feeling of purpose and validation and improve our self-worth/2

6CHILDREN

Our children are often a great source of happiness to us...for having a child is also creating something out of nothing. Raising them, nurturing them, taking care of them, teaching them, and seeing them blossom into fine individuals, is one of the highest feelings a person can get, feelings of pride, satisfaction and joy/12

7GOOD HEALTH

Health is wealth, as we have all been taught at school. Without good health, all other things we possess become dull and lose their sheen. Being sick, in pain, diseased, or bed ridden, even if you are a millionaire, is hardly going to give you happiness. You will want nothing more than to get well. Good health is a blessing

8DEEP FRIENDSHIPS

Having good strong friends, who are always ready to celebrate with us, or to support us in times of distress, is a very great source of comfort and peace. Friendship is a relationship where you can share anything and which often comes without responsibility that traditional relationships have.....true friendship is freedom/12

9FINDING YOUR CALLING OR PURPOSE IN LIFE

Each of us is born with a particular calling, a soul purpose, which is not obvious. If and when we manage to find our calling--
-whatever that may be---we are suddenly filled with energy, a feeling of lightness, and sheer joy. Find you calling, find your
happiness.0/12

10GOOD SLEEP

Then importance and pleasure of good sleep cannot be overemphasised. Sleep is an instinct, a need, much like hunger, thirst
or sex. And yet, while we can make effort and fulfill the other instincts, sleep cannot be achieved by effort. Sleep has to come
by itself and those who sleep soundly are really lucky11/12

11MONEY

While most of us instinctively feel that a lot of happiness depends on money, it is not true, and money, although definitely
needed for our survival and well being in this world, is often just that-- a medium of transaction. Although money can buy us
stuff, which can give temporary happiness, the worries associated with money often offset this happiness

12GOD, FAITH AND PRAYER

Someone asked me "What about God, Faiith, Prayer? Are they not causes for happiness? My reply was "God, faith and prayer
are the very backbone, the very flesh and blood of our existence. They are not only a cause for happiness, but the very
instruments through which you can find various forms of happiness

HOW TO BECOME HAPPY

4 NLP techniques to feel instantly happier

Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP) is a powerful approach to communication and personal development that empowers people to have greater control over their emotional state. NLP fundamental skills and tools give you the ability to be at your best more often by effectively managing your thoughts and feelings.

Created by Richard Bandler and John Grinder in 1972, NLP is designed to positively affect the connection between neurological processes (neuro), language (linguistic) and behavioural patterns learned through experiences (programming). In doing so, NLP can be used to alter these connect to help you achieve specific goals and enhance your personal development.

NLP techniques allow you to have real power over your mind, language and actions and help you transform your behaviour. These 4 NLP techniques will give you the ability to live a happier and more successful life:

1. Anchoring

Anchoring is the most well-known and widely used NLP technique. The purpose of anchoring is to associate a positive memory with a deliberate gesture. For example, a memory where you felt powerful can be empowering and a valuable resource. As through Anchoring you can use this memory and store it through your senses: either Visual, Auditory, Kinaesthetic, Olfactory and Gustatory. By making this association, your brain will be able to make the connection between this positive memory and a particular gesture. As such, you will be able to elicit a positive emotional response simply through your actions. In turn, you are able to activate this anchor any time you are feeling low or stressed and in doing so, you can return to a state of happiness.

2. Reframing

Next on the list of NLP techniques that can boost your happiness and overall success is reframing. This technique is all about perspective and it allows you to see the opportunities in hardship, opposed to dwelling on barriers or the negatives. For example, let's imagine your relationship has recently ended. Initially and on the surface, this will feel awful, however, let's try reframing it. You can do this by asking: what are the possible benefits of being single? One could be that you are now available to meet new people or are open to other potential relationships. Another is that you now have the freedom to do what you want to do on your own schedule. Furthermore, you can take notice of the valuable lessons you have learned from this relationship which will allow you to have increasingly fulfilling relationships in the future. All of these points are examples of how we can reframe a situation. In doing so we are able to reframe the meaning and experience of the hardship or situation. Reframing empowers you to change the focus from negative to positive.

3. Meta-modeling

Meta-modelling is a great technique that will help you discover the hidden truth of your reality, by identifying limiting language you are using in your daily life. You can use meta-model by paying attention to these 3 main language patterns that can hold you back from happiness:

- Generalisations: "My boss never listens to me."

- Mind Reading: “Karen didn’t say Hello to me today, she must be angry with me.”
- Deletions or choosing your language to confirm pre-existing beliefs: “People don’t find me attractive.”

Once you identify which category your language patterns belong to, then it is time to challenge them and the limiting beliefs that they contribute to. For example, if you hear yourself saying something like “people don’t find me attractive,” you can challenge this through the meta-model by questioning the statement. For example, you might ask yourself, “who are these people specifically?” and “how do you know that they think this?” The chances are that by questioning the language and limiting beliefs to be more specific you will prompt your brain to think more logically about the situation and, in turn, begin to understand that these are ingrained responses that can be altered. Meta-modelling can prompt you to challenge negative language and unhelpful beliefs, so you can live a happier and more successful life.

4. Rapport Building

The ability to easily build rapport with people around you is an impactful way to make a real difference both personally and professionally. NLP tools, such as mirroring is a simple, yet effective way to connect and communicate. This technique involves subtly mirroring another person’s body language, a tone of voice and language choices. However, the key is to do so with subtlety. If, for example, you are talking with someone who is using a casual tone of voice, is sitting down and has an open stance, mirroring this person’s language and behaviour will keep the tone they have set. Whereas if you chose to address them formally, with your arms crossed and refuse to sit, but instead stand, the tone of your conversation will dramatically shift and in turn, this person will feel uncomfortable. While it might seem obvious, mirroring is meaningful and easy to implement the technique that can enhance your communication and enable you to create a positive impression.

The art and psychology of NLP give you greater control over your ability to be at your best more often. It allows you to communicate more effectively and have greater control over your emotional state. In turn, you are able to feel, think and be happier every day. What are some techniques you use to feel happier? Tell us in the comments below.

Top 5 NLP Techniques That Will Transform Your Life

1. Dissociation

Have you ever been in a situation that gave you a bad feeling? Maybe you have experienced something that gets you down every time you experience it. Or perhaps you get nervous in certain work situations where you have to speak publicly. Maybe you get shy when you want to approach that “special someone” you’ve had your eye on. While these feelings of sadness, nervousness or shyness seem to be automatic or unstoppable, NLP techniques of dissociation can help immensely.

1. Identify the emotion (e.g. fear, rage, discomfort, dislike of a situation) that you want to get rid of
2. Imagine that you can float out of your body and look back at yourself, encountering the entire circumstance from an observer’s perspective
3. Notice that the feeling changes dramatically
4. For an extra boost, imagine that you can float out of your body looking at yourself, then, float out of this body again, so you’re looking at yourself, looking at yourself. This double dissociation should take the negative emotion off almost any minor situation

2. Content Reframing

Try this technique when you feel that a situation is negative or helpless. Reframing will take any negative situation and empower you by changing the meaning of the experience into something positive.

For example, let’s say that your relationship ends. That may seem awful on the surface, but let’s reframe it. What are the possible benefits of being single? For example, you’re now open to other potential relationships. You also have the freedom to

do what you want, when you want. And you've learned valuable lessons from this relationship that will allow you to have even better relationships in the future.

These are all examples of reframing a situation. By reframing the meaning of the breakup, you give yourself a different experience of it.

In expected situations, it's natural to panic or focus on fear, but this just leads to more problems. In contrast, shifting your focus in the way just described helps you to clear your head and make responsible, even-handed decisions.

3. Anchoring Yourself

Anchoring originates with Russian scientist Ivan Pavlov who experimented with dogs by ringing a bell repeatedly while the dogs were eating. After repeated rings of the bell, he found he could get the dogs to salivate by ringing the bell anytime, even if there was no food present.

This created a neurological association between the bell and the behavior of salivating called a conditioned response.

You can use these types of stimulus-response "anchors" yourself!

Anchoring yourself helps you to associate any desired positive emotional response with a particular phrase or sensation. When you choose a positive emotion or thought and deliberately connect it to a simple gesture, you can trigger this anchor any time you're feeling low, and your feelings will immediately change.

1. Identify what you want to feel (e.g. confidence, happiness, calmness, etc.)
2. Decide on where you would like to place this anchor on your body, such as pulling your earlobe, touching your knuckle or squeezing a fingernail. This physical touch will allow you to trigger the positive feeling at will. It doesn't matter where you choose, as long as it is a unique touch that you don't touch for anything else.
3. Think of a time in the past when you felt that state (e.g., confidence). Mentally go back to that time and float into your body, looking through your own eyes and reliving that memory. Adjust your body language to match the memory and the state. See what you saw, hear what you heard and feel the feeling as you remember that memory. You will begin to feel that state. This is similar to telling a friend a funny story from the past, and as you "get into" the story, you start to laugh again, because you "associate" to the story and "relive" it.
4. As you go back to the memory, touch/pull/squeeze the area on your body that you chose. You will feel the feeling swell while you relive the memory. Release the touch the moment the emotional state peaks and begins to wear off.
5. This will create a neurological stimulus-response that will trigger the state whenever you make that touch again. To feel that state (e.g., Confidence), just touch yourself the same way again.
6. To make the response even stronger, think of another memory where you felt that state, go back and relive it through your own eyes, and anchor the state on the same spot as before. Each time you add another memory, the anchor becomes more potent and will trigger a stronger response.
7. **Use this technique any time you need to change your mood.**

4. Getting Other People to Like You (Rapport)

This is an easy set of NLP techniques, but they have the power to help you get along with virtually anyone. There are lots of ways to build rapport with another person. One of the quickest and effective ways comes from NLP. This technique involves subtly mirroring another person's body language, tone of voice, and words.

People like people who are like themselves. By subtly mirroring the other person, the brain fires off "mirror neurons," pleasure sensors in the brain, which make people feel a sense of liking for anyone mirroring them.

The technique is simple: Stand or sit the way the other person is sitting. Tilt your head the same way. Smile when they smile. Mirror their facial expression. Cross your legs when they cross theirs. Mirror their voice, etc.

The key to creating an unconscious rapport is subtlety. If you are too overt, the other person may notice consciously, which would most likely break rapport. So keep your mirroring natural and calm.

5. Influence and Persuasion

While much of the work of NLP is dedicated to helping people eliminate negative emotions, limiting beliefs, bad habits, conflict and more, another part of NLP is dedicated to how to ethically influence and persuade others.

One of the mentors in the field was a man named, Milton H. Erickson. Erickson was a psychiatrist who also studied the subconscious mind through hypnotherapy (the real, scientific stuff... not the silly entertainment hypnosis you see in stage shows).

Erickson was so adept at hypnosis, he developed a way to speak to the subconscious minds of other people without needing hypnosis. He could literally hypnotize people anytime, anywhere in everyday conversations. This Ericksonian method of hypnosis became known as "Conversational Hypnosis."

This is a very powerful tool that can be used to not only influence and persuade others but also to help other people overcome fears, limiting beliefs, conflict and more without their conscious awareness. This is especially useful when getting across to people who might otherwise be resistant if they know (think teenage children who don't want to listen).

13 Ways To Start Training Your Subconscious Mind BE HAPPY

Through your autonomic nervous system, [your homeostatic impulse] maintains a balance among the hundreds of chemicals in your billions of cells so that your entire physical machine functions in complete harmony most of the time."

But what many people don't realize is that just as your brain is built to regulate your physical self, as does it try to regulate your mental self. Your mind is constantly filtering and bringing to your attention information and stimuli that affirms your preexisting beliefs (this is known in psychology as confirmation bias) as well as presenting you with repeated thoughts and impulses that mimic and mirror that which you've done in the past.

Your subconscious mind is the gatekeeper of your comfort zone.

It is also the realm in which you can either habituate yourself to expect, and routinely seek the actions that would build and reinforce, the greatest success, happiness, wholeness or healing of your life.

1. Be willing to see the unchangeable change.

The first step in creating massive change in your life is not actually believing that it's possible, it's being willing to see if it is possible.

You are not going to be able to jump from being a complete skeptic to a wholehearted believer. The step between those is just being open to seeing what could be possible. You could maybe try sending a few "scary emails," in which you proposition a client or partner for something that they do not have any reason to respond to. You might have a few dozen ignored messages, but eventually, someone will respond.

The point is that you're willing to see if its possible... that's what will change your life.

2. Give yourself permission to be successful.

Instead of regurgitating the same old narrative of believing you'll be happy once you're 10 pounds, one promotion and two life events down-the-line, work on changing your inner monologue to: "I allow my life to be good."

Give yourself permission to be happy and successful, and not feel guilty about it. If you have a subconscious association between success being amoral, or corrupt, of course you're not going to do what you need to do to live the life you want to live. Instead, give yourself permission to step into a whole, happy, healthy, grounded and meaningful existence.

3. Don't allow other people's fears to cast shadows of doubt.

The way people respond to news of your success will tell you how they are really doing in their lives.

If you announce your engagement, people who are in happy marriages will be elated for you. People who are in unhappy marriages will warn you that it is difficult and that you should enjoy your remaining time as "single" individuals.

The point is that other people's fears are projections of their own situations. They have nothing to do with what you are or aren't capable of.

4. Surround yourself with positive reinforcement.

Keep a bottle of champagne in the fridge. Change your morning alarm on your phone to read the message: "CONGRATULATIONS!!!" Make sure that the items that you see and touch most often bring you positivity and hopefulness. Keep an inspirational note on a post-it next to your computer. Unfollow people who make you feel bad about yourself and follow those who are constantly posting motivational messages and interesting ideas. Make your newsfeed a place that can catalyze your growth, instead of lessening your perception of your worth.

5. Speak your success as a present fact, not a future plan.

Though you shouldn't say things like "I drive a convertible," or "I am a CEO," if they are not in fact true, do start speaking about what it is you want out of life not in the context that you will one day pursue it, but that you are already living it.

Instead of saying: "I hope to do that one day," say, "I am strategizing how to do that now." Instead of thinking: "I will be happy when I am in a different place in my life," think, "I am completely capable of being happy right here and right now, nothing is holding me back."

6. Create a vision space.

Being able to imagine what it is you want out of your life is absolutely essential for creating it, because if you don't know where you're going, you won't know which way to turn first.

Once you have a crystal clear image in your mind for what it is you want and how it is you want to live, you are then capable of beginning to enact and create it. If you are still hazy or torn between what you want, you will be rendered incapable of taking real, meaningful action toward anything.

Whether you use a Pinterest board, blog, notebook or board, put together words and images that represent what you want and how you want to live.

7. Identify your resistance.

When our subconscious minds hold us back from pursuing something that we love, it is because we are holding a conflicting belief about it.

To identify your resistance, question yourself. Ask yourself why you feel better when you procrastinate, or why getting what you really want could actually put you in a place that makes you feel more vulnerable than ever. Find a way to meet those needs before you proceed.

8. Have a master plan for your life.

Forget five or even 10 year plans; so much changes over time it's nearly impossible to set goals that you'll be able to keep. Most likely, new or even better opportunities will surface, and though your life won't look like you thought it would, you're better off for that.

Instead, have a master plan. Identify your core values and motivations. Ask yourself what is the ultimate goal of what you want to accomplish while you are alive; imagine the kind of legacy you want to leave. Once you have your Big Picture values identified, you can make decisions for the long-term that align with your true self.

9. Start a gratitude journal.

The best way to start putting yourself in a headspace of "having" rather than "wanting" is to begin a gratitude practice. By expressing thanks for all that you do have, you shift your mindset from being hungry for change to feeling satisfied with where you are at. Nothing magnetizes abundance to you like gratitude. There's a saying that once you believe you have enough, you are open to receiving more and more and more. That is undoubtedly true.

10. Start asking for what you want, even if you know you'll be denied.

If someone asks you to do a consulting project, ask for the amount of money you truly want to earn for it. If your goal is to get a promotion in your organization, sit down with your higher up and make your intentions known. Reach out to brands you want to work with. Start asking for what you want, even if you have no reason to believe that anyone will actually give you any of those things. Eventually, they will.

11. Release your attachment to the "how."

Your job is to identify the what, and then to work in tandem with other people for the how.

If your goal is to work remotely and run your own business, instead of giving up if your first attempt fails, try reimagining how else you could achieve your ultimate vision in a new way that is more financially lucrative.

The point is that life will always surprise you with how things come to fruition. Instead of being obsessively attached to every little detail working out the way you think it should, be open to potential and possibility, even if it's something you never imagined before.

12. Surround yourself with allies.

Start spending time with people who are ambitious, supportive and creative.

If you're hanging out every weekend with people who are likewise as unhappy with their lives, you aren't going to receive an abundance of support if you try to break free and do your own thing. Remember that you will truly become who you spend the most time with, and choose who that is very carefully.

13. Fill your "dead air" time with affirmation and motivation.

When you're on your commute each morning, listen to a motivational speech or podcast. While you're doing the dishes or driving, tune into a talk show that relates to the type of business you're trying to do. Infuse your life with as much affirmation and motivation as possible. You may need to hear the lessons more than once, but they will seep into your brain over time, and eventually, you will find yourself acting on wisdom received from those who are where you want to be.

The Secret Mirror: How To Use The Subconscious Mind Mirror Technique

Do you ever feel held back by your past? Or, sabotaged by your own critical inner voice? Perhaps you want a partner but shy away from meaningful connections. Or, maybe you have huge dreams but never take the steps needed to create your own business. Wherever you feel self-destructive forces entering your life, you're not alone. And the good news is that there's plenty you can do to start breaking this toxic pattern. In fact, you can start today with the secret mirror technique!

Is Your Subconscious Mind Sabotaging Your Happiness & Success?

You might be wondering how exactly you know if your subconscious mind is sabotaging your happiness and success. Naturally, this type of problem can present in a great many different ways, so there's no one test for self-sabotage. However, if you learn more about what the subconscious mind can do then you can get a better sense of how it is likely holding you back.

If you're like most people, you probably think that you have conscious control of your actions and of how you pursue your dreams.

This is not so! The latest studies indicate that up to 99% of your cognitive activity is rooted in the subconscious. This means that if you only do personal growth and manifestation work that focuses on the conscious mind, you have very little influence over how you feel and what you attract.

You need to be tuning your subconscious into the Law of Attraction.

In other words, it's great to affirm your worth and value, but if you're not speaking to the deeper, less flexible part of yourself then you won't see the kinds of changes you want.

This is one of the major reasons why people sometimes end up disappointed with their Law of Attraction progress.

Even if you think of yourself as a reflective, self-aware individual, it's highly probable that your subconscious mind hosts a wide range of destructive, negative and undermining beliefs. Some of them may come from difficult family experiences, others from your social climate or from tough times at school.

The point is that even if your rational, adult mind rejects these negative beliefs if you don't find a way to access your subconscious mind then it is stuck with all that old baggage. This is where exercises like The Secret Mirror come in, helping you to tap into that huge percentage of your brain that controls your happiness and success.

Now that you have a better sense of how and why some parts of your brain can sabotage you without your knowledge, it's time to learn how to stop this from happening. If you feel some resistance to this idea, don't worry too much. It's natural to fear change, and your subconscious mind is probably trying to protect itself.

However, rest assured that achievement, well-being, and satisfaction are waiting for you if you commit to overcoming your limiting beliefs. You will open the door to the kind of success you've always yearned for, and the techniques you develop will last a lifetime.

Essentially, what exercises like The Secret Mirror help you to do is bypass the conscious mind and directly connect to the subconscious. For example, you do this when you do mindfulness work (e.g. yoga and meditation work). This is why expert yoga practitioners can sometimes even influence their own blood pressure levels, control their heartbeat and increase or decrease body temperature at will. What this shows is that when the power of the brain is fully harnessed, we can influence the physical world in ways we never thought possible.

How To Use The Secret Mirror Technique For Success

1. Go to a quiet, calm place where you can stand directly in front of a full-length mirror.
2. Look straight into your own eyes.
3. Reflect on your positive worth and value, and let feelings of self-love and self-compassion rise inside you.
4. As you continue to look at yourself, say the words “I understand, love and accept myself on the deepest level.”
5. Repeat this exercise on a daily basis, with weekly reviews to consider how it is influencing your life.

The Ancient Yogic Secret to Happiness



Yoga Philosophy, Our Brains, and the Pursuit of Happiness.

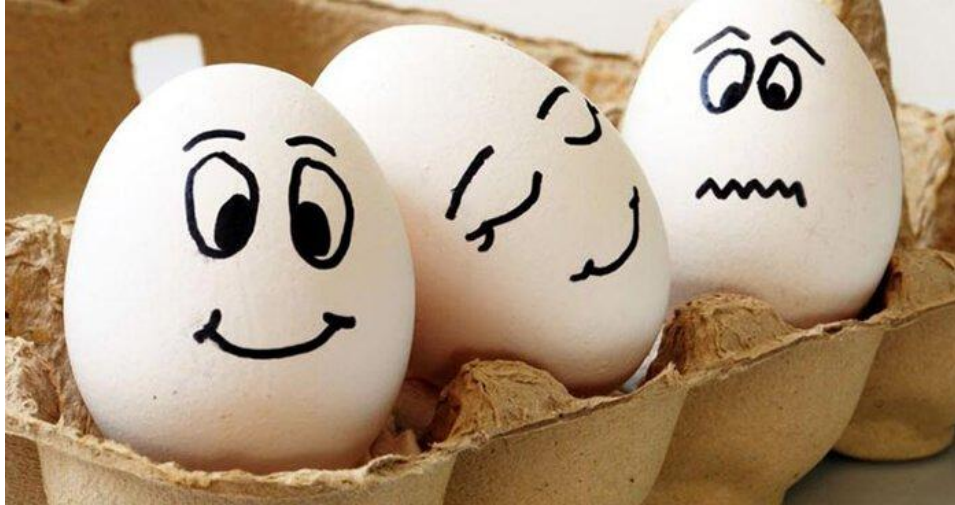
Millenia ago, as ancient Vedic tribes roamed across India, paying their respects to Indra, Agni, Ushas and Asvins – the agents of Nature, delivering thunder and lightning, storm and fire, sunrise and sunset – scholars pondered the riddle of life and death and the peculiarity of pleasure and pain. They realised that happiness could never be permanently guaranteed in the general humdrum of civilized life. People become happy if they can escape a situation, or a set of circumstances, that make them unhappy, but there is no guarantee of never being in an unpleasant situation again. Happiness when reached, is temporary and fleeting. In order to detach from the miseries of everyday existence and reach a state of permanent ‘happiness,’ it may be necessary to rise above the daily drama of life. The scholars noted that the pursuit of knowledge seemed to be the only reliable path to ‘happiness’.

These ideas eventually formed part of Sāṅkhya, a school of Hindu philosophy that arose sometime during the 1st millennium BC.

Suffering the torment of (threefold) misery prompts the desire to know how it can be prevented. Visible remedies are unable to guarantee definite and everlasting relief. – Sāṅkhya Kārikā I

The Three Gunas of Yogic Psychology.

Through the careful observation of human psychology, perception and behaviour, the Hindu scholars decided that our ‘experience’ of life is largely the result of how it is expressed by the three ‘gunas’ of our material existence. Although difficult to translate from their Sanskrit meaning, gunas are the three ‘qualities’ of the material of our existence, ‘Prakriti’.



Three Gunas: Sattva –

balanced/pure, tamas – lethargic/slow, rajas – active/intense.

According to Sāṅkhya*, what we assume to be reality is, in fact, little more than an illusory representation of reality, through the behaviour of these three gunas and through effects on sensations, attention, perception, intellect and the ego. When we are miserable, it may be on account of all of these being unbalanced, and not necessarily because reality really is miserable. The actual reality of life lies somewhere in the abyss of imperceptibility; evading our powers of direct perception. We come closest to it when we train ourselves to bring everything into balance.

The three gunas are sattva or intelligence/steadiness, rajas or passion/action and tamas or darkness/destruction/chaos.

Sāṅkhya implies that it is when the sattva state is strong, and in overall control of the two other states, that our awareness of reality is likely to lie as close as possible to true reality. Ignorance lies behind suffering and sadness. Recognizing that the material medium of existence (Prakriti) is a separate entity from the reality that is invisible (Purusha), through empowering the sattva state, frees us from unhappiness.

Three Departments of Our Brains.

We know today that our brains have, among others, three large ‘departments’ that enable us to navigate through life. These centre around the prefrontal cortex, the amygdala, and the reward pathways. The reward pathways help lead us toward an action, prefrontal cortical circuits enable focus, calmness and engagement within a task, and when our emotional circuits are activated in the amygdala, they can trigger negativity, fear and anger, and can distract our attention from the task. These three departments interact with each other and need to be in harmony in order for our minds to work well.

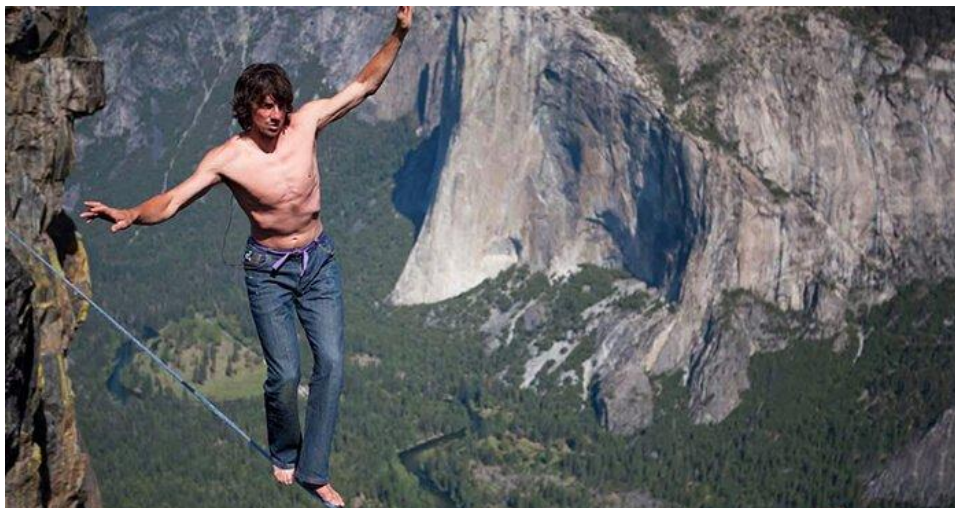


If all parts of our brain are harmonious, we experience more peace.

An imbalance can distort our experience of the world around us. We know that in stress, there may be an increase in activity within amygdala circuitry, triggering anxiety, fear and negative thoughts, distorting reality with a negative bias. In some cases of depression, there may be reduced activity within the reward pathways, numbing our enthusiasm and desire to do things and to live. We know that chess players, musicians, yogis, tightrope walkers, meditators and others who have perfect self-control have well-trained prefrontal cortices and are often in a state of tranquillity and 'happiness'. The world can take on a completely different hue if we are in a state of intense emotional turmoil compared to when we are in pursuit of instant gratification or in a state of perfect focus and 'flow'.

The Link Between Our Brains and The Gunas.

Although what we know about the brain today was unknown in the 1st millennium BC, it is interesting that by some stretch of the imagination, the three gunas almost reflect the three departments within the brain. Sattva, the prefrontal cortex, responsible for focus, self-control, higher thought and logic. Rajas, the reward pathways responsible for motivation and action. And tamas, the emotional pathways (amygdala), responsible for negative emotions and chaos. Rajas and tamas may also refer to components of the emotional and reward pathways, respectively.



People who regularly practise extreme focus experience more peace and happiness.

The ancient Hindu scholars devising the Sāṅkhya system did not just describe how an imbalance gives rise to flawed knowledge. They also invented a method for training oneself to restore balance, in order to prevent flawed knowledge. This method was yoga.

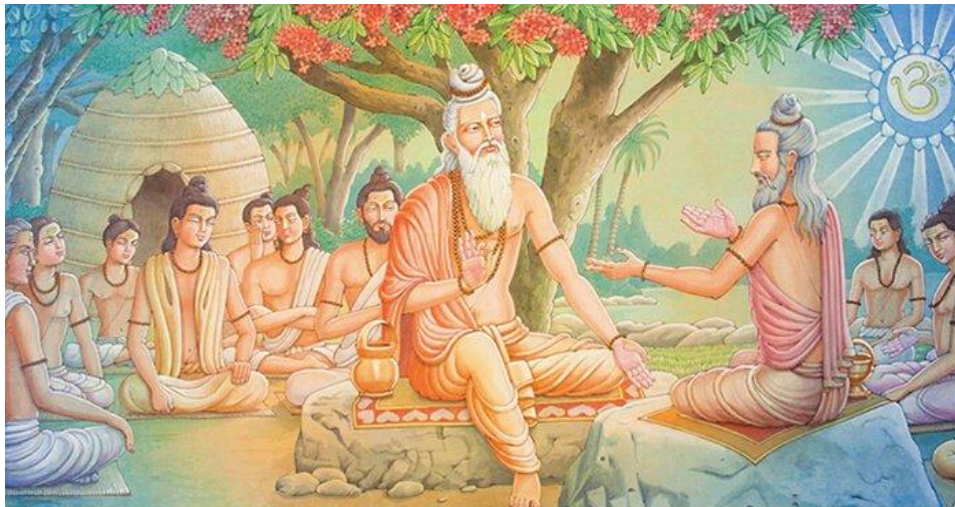
Yoga and Sāṅkhya.

Original Yoga philosophy – before Patanjali's Sutras – is thought to have been the dance partner to Sāṅkhya. Where Sāṅkhya was the theory, Yoga was the practice. Yoga philosophy was almost like an instruction manual for how to train the mind in order to keep the three gunas in balance and encourage the sattva state.

We know that focused attention meditation, and regulation of the breath, both central components of hatha yoga practice, improve imbalances in the autonomic nervous system; the system that instigates our stress response. There is brain scan evidence of focused attention meditation changing activity within the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex. The process of self-control, another key part of hatha yoga practice in stillness, relies on activity in the prefrontal cortex, and the modulation and suppression of emotional distractions and instant gratification, triggered by the emotional and reward brain pathways.

The Sāṅkhya system of philosophy was based on logic, and its rational approach insisted that knowledge is acquired from only three valid channels: perception, inference and testimony from a reliable source. In a way, some of the approaches to logic and reasoning in the Sāṅkhya system, would not appear vastly out of place in modern day scientific methodology, and Sāṅkhya principles formed the basis of much of the 'science of the day', such as Ayurveda. According to Sāṅkhya, freedom from misery, i.e., happiness, arises from acquiring knowledge and from strictly adhering to proven, rather than unproven, beliefs.

The gunas are only one thread in the complex tapestry of Sāṅkhya philosophy, which is filled with explorations of logic, proof, perception, ego, intellect, inference, existence and truth.



Sāṅkhya philosophy focused more on knowledge than 'higher being'

Sāṅkhya and Yoga were two of the six systems of ancient Hindu philosophy that accepted the Vedas as a reliable source of knowledge (known as 'Āstikā'). They were separate from the 'Nāstika' systems of Indian philosophy, such as Buddhism and Jainism. Sāṅkhya is thought to have been the dominant school of thought in Hinduism towards the end of the 1st millennium BC.

Unusually, perhaps because of its emphasis on knowledge rather than on the idea of a 'higher being', Sāṅkhya is regarded by some scholars as an atheist philosophy. Its ideas appeared in the Śvetāśvatara Upanishad and within the Mahabharata. When

Patanjali later recorded the Yoga Sutras, there was an incorporation of the idea of a 'higher being', perhaps reflecting the belief systems that dominated India during his time.

The Pursuit of Happiness.

As we enter the year 2017 in our industrialized age, it is humbling to know that millennia ago, before technology, globalization and industrialization, our need for everlasting happiness was just as potent as it is today. The pursuit of happiness makes us human and binds all of humanity together; regardless of the passage of time and of divisions and differences we have brought upon ourselves. Over 2000 years ago, yoga was invented as a tool for acquiring knowledge as a means to become happier. As yoga continues to grow and evolve today, it may be worth remembering that yoga is no less powerful a tool for happiness today, as it was millennia ago.



Still today, yoga – in all its forms – is a powerful tool for achieving happiness.

Secret of Happiness

Many research studies consistently suggest that positive relationships with people we care about is the highest predictor of happiness, something my anecdotal evidence backs up.

Of course, this is an oversimplification and happiness is an individual concept, but we get confused by messages from the media. We are told that beauty, money, cars, private jets and trainers will make us happy. It's really important not to let someone else dictate what will make you happy, you need to identify your own happiness makers and then incorporate more of them in your life.

Unfortunately, we often don't do this very simple process of identification and implementation because it comes at a cost. Something is holding us back; we want the reward without the pain. The second most common response from my happiness question is, "doing something for themselves", a hobby, such as playing the guitar, watching live sport, or horse riding but justifying the time or expense is a challenge. We know exercising more and sleeping better will increase our happiness but for some reason we continue to get to bed late and keep inventing brilliant excuses not to go for a run.

However, we mustn't fall into the trap of a checklist, if I just get a bigger house, just lose a stone, or get the right job, I would be happy. There are tons of motivational quotes out there to remind us that it's all about the journey.

Psychologists, Brickman and Campbell proposed the concept of the Hedonic Treadmill in 1971. Their theory suggests that we have a default happiness setting and external influences can only change that setting temporarily. When someone wins the lottery, they feel very happy indeed – for a while! Then they revert back to their default setting. The same effect is shown when something negative happens, they feel sad for a while and then get back to their “normal”.

However, this underestimates the complex beasts that we are and is sadly negatively deterministic. Like the old adage ‘once a smoker, always a smoker’, I dislike that kind of fatalistic approach. More recent studies have shown that lasting change can happen. We can move our baseline and we may even have more than one baseline.

Sonja Lyubomirsky in her book, “The How of Happiness,” says that 50% is predetermined by your genes, 40% is your thoughts, actions and attitudes and 10% is external circumstances. A more positive theory and, therefore, what we need to change to have the biggest impact on our happiness levels is our interpretation of life, our attitude to trying new things, our resilience to negative external influences and the view we have of ourselves. Not easy stuff and not a quick process, but achievable none the less.

Making an effort to spend more time with those you love and nurturing them is one thing we can all do with perhaps little cost, it could be the first step to improving your overall mood. If you would like to go a step further and receive help to banish excuses, gain motivation, sleep better or get a more positive interpretation of life please get in touch via my contact page.

What is the Secret to Happiness, Freedom & Acceptance of Yourself

Satisfaction and age are connected, however not in the manner in which you may think. Generally, our way of life is youth-driven, so we accept that the youthful and excellent additionally happen to be the most joyful. Youngsters who have time on their side may seem cheerful, however the idea that they are more joyful isn’t really valid. Satisfaction really may increment with age.

It might be incomprehensible for some youngsters to think about their grandparents as being more joyful than they seem to be, however research demonstrates that Americans really get more joyful as they age notwithstanding their wellbeing conditions and different issues that emerge. Before we celebrate, however, how about we investigate the proof on maturing and satisfaction.

Patterns in Happiness

Let’s be honest: Research identified with satisfaction is loaded up with decisions and subjectivity since bliss is emotional. How might you make certain an examination member who says, “I’m entirely glad” really is cheerful? Perhaps they’re content with less? Possibly their joy depends on material belongings? Possibly every age has various desires for satisfaction? Scientists expected to discover a path around these sorts of issues.

Fortunately, sociologists have reliably led in excess of 50,000 meetings since 1972 for the General Social Survey, a sociological study directed by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago. The study, which is available to the general population, gives an abundance of bits of knowledge into our general public and measures satisfaction after some time. By looking at people of changed age bunches after some time around the same time, analysts had the option to get around a portion of these restrictions, and what they found is that bliss increases with age.

Maturing America: A Happy Place

“How cheerful are you?” That is the central issue specialists ask a seemingly endless amount of time after year. In addition to the fact that researchers found that more established individuals will in general be more joyful, yet that satisfaction isn’t

something more seasoned members have had for their entire lives. At the end of the day, as individuals get more seasoned, state beginning at age 50, joy comes to them.

As the media keep on notice us about the risks of a maturing America, remember this: A maturing America might be the most joyful America we have ever observed. Maybe this is a result of the astuteness that accompanies age or in light of the fact that more seasoned individuals modify their desires throughout everyday life. Whatever the reason, there is strong proof that more established Americans are really more joyful than more youthful ones.

The most effective method to Maximize Your Happiness

Improve your very own joy by overlooking the societal standard that young = bliss. Enable yourself to feel cheerful as you age. Try not to become involved with stressing over the little stuff. Take great consideration of your wellbeing and, in particular, let yourself go. Try not to imagine that you need to behave. Here are some more tips to keep you dynamic, cheerful and having a ton of fun as you age:

1. Exercise for more vitality
2. Be social for sound maturing
3. Live long, have a great time
4. Make diversions for cerebrum wellness

Reprogram your Mind and Recreate Yourself for Deeper Happiness through Hypnosis and More

If you took a poll and asked people if they've found deep happiness in life, you would find that most people haven't.

It's my personal understanding that one of the main reasons why most people don't experience deep happiness in life is because they don't have a clear vision of what they truly want, or when they do, they don't believe that they can have it.

Knowing what we truly want and believing that we can have it is the secret to deeper happiness in life.

The challenge with uncovering what we truly want is that it's often buried underneath all of the things we've been conditioned to believe we need or that will supposedly bring us happiness when in fact they can't and won't.

In addition to this inherited conditioning – both societal and familial – that keeps us chasing after things that are unlikely to bring us deep happiness, we also experience the built-in limitations of the belief systems we've unconsciously integrated while growing up when it comes to trusting that we can manifest what we want most.

So, how do we now transcend this conditioning so that we may experience deeper happiness?

By going beyond the conditioning.

The conditioning happens in our mind. That's where all of the belief systems we operate from have been unconsciously programmed, mostly based on our interaction and sensory reading of our environment.

Most of this programming begins in the womb and continues until about age 10. It is then reinforced throughout our adult life by the 'programmed' choices that we make based on our original conditioning.

If belief systems can be programmed, they can also be released and the mind can be reprogrammed (de-conditioned) to function more optimally.

Outdated and limiting programs and belief systems that get passed down generation after generation, and which lead to anxiety, stress, worry and self-doubt, limited abundance, conflicts in relationships, non optimal health, and a general lack of joy and happiness are definitely worth letting go of and permanently transcending.

So how do you reprogram your mind for deeper happiness?

By going into your subconscious mind and reprogramming it with new empowering beliefs – ones that are in alignment with the life experiences that you value and want most – while erasing the ones that have created limitations in your capacity to manifest what you truly want.

There are different approaches to this reprogramming, all of which entail accessing the subconscious and unconscious parts of our mind where the programs and beliefs exist.

Such approaches include meditation, hypnosis, past life regression, the family constellations model, the Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) modality, marmaas, mantra, prayer, and other healing modalities that, when applied optimally, can give you access to your own subconscious mind, where you can then release limiting programs and belief systems and replace them with more empowering ones.

The choice that you make in regards to the modality you use to reprogram your mind is a very personal process that involves testing and assessing for yourself what you most resonate with and what you find most helpful. The best metrics to use in order to help you make this choice is your level of inner peace, joy, and happiness.

In addition to reprogramming your mind and clearing old belief systems that have been operating there on auto-pilot, it's useful to access the deepest parts of your mind where you can also gain access to what will bring you deep happiness.

This discovery also involves using any one of the processes described above and lovingly and patiently asking yourself the question, 'what do I truly want?' over and over again until you get an answer.

Whether this answer comes as a vision in the space of your third eye, a deep gut feeling of what is to come next, an inner knowing, words, feelings, or sensations that make you feel alive and vibrant, you will know when you have the answer because you will be filled with this sense of deep inner peace and happiness like never before.

If you'd like to learn more about how to access your subconscious mind and reprogram your mind for deeper happiness, try our self-hypnosis meditation and anchor a new, simple, and more desirable program into your mind every night for the next 7 days.

4 SECRET TO HAPPINESS

1. Someone to love. Everyone needs someone to love. If you don't think you have someone to love, go find someone. The world is full of people that feel unloved so it shouldn't take you too long to find a volunteer. We all need someone to cherish and care for.

* Fortunately, the people and animals we genuinely love tend to love us back.

2. Something to do. There are plenty of wealthy people that are miserable because they don't spend their time doing something that they love. Life is about doing and experiencing things. If you spend all day doing stuff you love to do, it's pretty difficult to be unhappy.

* Find ways to spend your time in activities that are meaningful to you. Make a list and start incorporating those things into your life on a daily basis. If you can find work that you're passionate about, so much the better for you!

3. Something to look forward to. If the only thing you have to look forward to is more of the same, boring routine, it's difficult to be happy. Everyone should have something to look forward to in the near future.

* Think about something you'd really like to do or see. Maybe it could be something as simple as a yoga class. If you love going to yoga on Thursday nights, it can make your Mondays a little easier when you know that yoga is looming in your future.

4. Using downtime joyfully. Perhaps your biggest challenge is dealing with downtime. When you're bored, lonely, anxious, or sad and don't have something to do, it's easy to resort to less than ideal behaviors. These behaviors not only accomplish nothing positive, but they can also make your life more challenging.

* This would include things like watching TV, surfing the internet, eating when you aren't hungry, shopping for stuff you don't really want or need, drinking, drugs, serial dating, and more. These behaviors do nothing to solve the underlying issue and can create more difficulties.

* Coping with negative feelings effectively makes life much easier. Read something worthwhile, go for a jog, meet up with a friend and do something fun, make a new friend, or work on a hobby. Substitute your negative habits with new, more beneficial habits that bring you closer to the good life you imagine for you and your family.

* Learn to take a moment and pause before you go on autopilot. If you're going for the fridge and you're not hungry, simply STOP. Ask yourself why you're doing this and what other action you could take.

If you think you're unhappy because you don't have enough money or toys, you're probably mistaken.

Having meaningful relationships, something to do, something to look forward to, and not shooting yourself in the foot are the keys. Find ways to incorporate these ideas into your life and you'll be much happier!

31 Hypnosis Techniques for Happiness (The Most Comprehensive List)

Hypnotic Inductions

The first step of hypnosis, a hypnotic induction is the process that a hypnotist uses to put the client into a state where they are more open to suggestion (known as trance). There are many types of inductions.

1. Relaxation technique

Why do therapists ask to "make yourself comfortable" and provide a cushy leather couch to lay down on? It's more than a common courtesy. Relaxation is a common method used by therapists and a beginner hypnosis technique. If the client is relaxed, they may fall into trance and the mind is open to suggestion. They are more likely to talk to you and be open to indirect suggestions. Here are some common methods of relaxation:

- Make yourself comfortable
- Lay down
- Count down in your head
- Controlled breathing
- Relax & tense muscles

□ Speak in a soft tone

2. Handshake technique



Milton Erickson – the father of hypnotherapy – is famous for using the handshake technique as a way to induce hypnotic trance. Handshakes are the most common form of greetings in our society. The handshake technique shocks the subconscious by disrupting this common social norm. Instead of shaking the hand normally, the hypnotist would interrupt the pattern that our mind has established by grabbing the wrist or pulling the subject forward and off balance. With the pattern interrupted, the subconscious mind is suddenly open to suggestion.

3. Eye Cues

There are two spheres of the brain – the right manages the more “creative” and conscious side and the left the “practical” and subconscious. In any conversation we look for feedback from the listener to see how they react to our statements. Watch the subject’s eyes. Are they looking to the right, accessing the conscious or the left to the subconscious? Are they fixated on one object in the room? If they are accessing the subconscious, you can make a suggestion that they are not consciously aware of.

Advanced Tip: Insertive Eye Contact

Reading the eye movements of a listener is a common use case. But did you know that as the speaker, you can also perform a hypnotic induction on the the listener with your eye movements? This new technique was developed and tested by Stephen Brooks.

Watch this video on insertive eye contact to learn how.

4. Visualization



Visualization can be used both to induce trance and to make suggestions. For example, ask your subject to recall a room they are very familiar with. Imagine every detail in that room: the floor, the shape of the windows, the painting on the wall, the smell, the light. Then, move onto a room they are less familiar with. As they struggle to recall the exact details they open the mind to suggestion.

Advanced Tip: Use visualization to recall positive memories and associate them with a rewarding behavior, or to change one's perception of a negative image.

- Positive images and experiences (wedding, kid, birthday, graduation)
- Discard bad images (maybe throw them in the trash)

5. Arm "Levitation" Technique

With this classic Ericksonian technique, the client begins by closing their eyes. They are asked to notice the difference in feeling between their arms. The hypnotherapist makes suggestions as to the sensations in each arm. For example they might say the arm feels heavy or light, hot or cold. The client enters a trance and may physically lift their arm or they make simply believe in their mind that they have lifted the arm. Either way, the induction was successful.

Advanced Tip: How To Hypnotize A Client With Arm Levitation

6. Sudden Shock/Falling backwards

Proceed with caution! Similar to the handshake technique, a subject finding themselves shocked can enter into a trance. I would never advocate causing any physical pain to a subject, but Erickson once demonstrated this by stepping on a woman's foot and following it with a suggestion. A milder version would be the "trust falls" that you may have heard of or participated in at a team building event. The sensation of falling backwards shocks the system and opens the mind to suggestion, however, one must be certain they will not drop the subject.

7. Eye Fixation



Have you ever found yourself “zoning out” and staring at an interesting item in the room while someone is talking? Did you completely miss what they’ve said? You may have been in a trance.

Any object of focus can be used to induce trance. The most famous examples are the “power pendulum” or a “swinging pocket watch” – although these two objects are now associated with hokey stage hypnosis. You’re more likely to fail and encounter resistance using these objects, due to their reputation.

Nonetheless, there are two secrets behind eye fixation. First, the object keeps the conscious mind occupied, opening the subconscious to suggestion. Secondly, your eyes get physically tired when they fixate or move back and forth.

Example: Try looking up at ceiling for a few minutes (without bending your neck). The eyes naturally tire and begin to close.

8. Bodyscan

A popular method for self-hypnosis. Starting at the top of the body with your eyes closed, scan down slowly from the head to the feet. Notice every sensation – your breath expanding the ribcage, chair on your back, the pain in your elbow, each finger extended, the feet on the ground. Repeat the process from bottom to top. Continue scanning up and down until you enter trance.

Advanced Tip: The body scan can be stacked with other hypnosis induction techniques such as countdown breathing and relaxation to increase effectiveness.

9. Countdown Breathing

You may have heard of controlled breathing for meditation, but it can also an easy form of self-hypnosis. Here’s how it works:

- Close your eyes and sit upright in a chair, arms on your lap.
- Breathe deep through the nose and out through the mouth.
- Using slow controlled breaths, countdown from 100.
- Each exhale counts as one interval.
- At the end you may be in a trance. If not continue the exercise counting down from a higher number.

Hypnotic Suggestions

A suggestion is the desired behavior to be performed by the client. Post-hypnotic suggestions are delivered after a hypnotized person enters trance – a state in which they are more open to influence. There are two schools of thought for suggestions.

10. Indirect Suggestion



Photo by Amanda

Erickson was a champion of indirect suggestion. It is a favorite of certified hypnotherapists because this method puts the control in the subject's hands rather than those of authoritarian – respecting the patient's boundaries and clinical ethics. Further it has proven more effective for subjects that are resistant or skeptical of trance. Rather than "order" a subject to relax (direct suggestion), one could say:

"You might wish to close your eyes, when you are comfortable."

[Learn more about Ericksonian Hypnosis](#)

11. Direct Suggestion

In conversational hypnosis, a direct suggestion is an explicit command to perform a certain action. Though powerful, it is sometimes viewed as unethical because as the authority (a doctor or hypnotist) you hold power over the client. The client does not control the decision to change behavior with this method. The Stanford Prison Experiment was an infamous example of using authority, obedience, and direct suggestions to manipulate subjects.

Here are some classic direct suggestions:

- "You will go to sleep"
- "You will stop smoking"
- "You will lose weight"

12. Voice Tone

The tone of your voice is particularly useful when making suggestions. This can double up with other techniques (like relaxation).

"You might wish to become relaxed"

In the above example, the word “relaxed” is spoken softly and elongated. On the contrary, you can make a direct suggestion loudly.

“You will STOP smoking!”

Another perfect pair for voice tone is the confusion technique. The therapist could vary the tone of voice from whispering to shouting, speak with a different accent, or use a lisp, to confuse the subject.

13. Hypnotic trigger



There are many forms of hypnotic triggers. A trigger reminds the subconscious of a desired action or feeling which was suggested under hypnosis. Here are a few examples:

- Opening eyes
- Sound of a bell
- Snap of fingers
- Clap of hands
- Standing up or sitting down
- Opening a door

Here is how a hypnotic trigger could apply to agoraphobia:

“When you open a door, you might see your loving family on the other side.”

Reading Body Language

14. Nonverbal Communication



Hypnotists are experts at nonverbal communication – from reading a client’s body language to conveying your own non-verbal suggestions. While a client could be saying one thing consciously, the subconscious mind could tell a completely different story. Here are a few examples of how the subconscious might affect body language:

- Facial expressions
- Body posture
- Voice tone
- Pacing
- Eye movements
- Arms crossed
- Head nods
- Covering face

Advanced Tip: How To Become An Expert In Non-Verbal Communication (with case example)

15. Cold reading

You might have seen psychics, mediums, stage hypnotists, or mentalists perform a “cold reading” on TV for entertainment purposes. Though it’s generally too direct to use with a client, you might use cold reading at a party or a networking event. Here’s how cold reading works. For example, if the subject is not smiling, the hypnotist might ask:

H: “Are you sad?” – Start by asking a general or vague question from observation.

S: “Yes” – If they reply no, reset and ask another vague question.

H: “Has someone left you?” – Drill down and ask a more specific question. This could be a relationship or a pet or a family member.

S: “Yes! How did you know my cat fluffy died?”

16. Warm reading

With a warm reading, you make a statement that could apply to anyone:

“You feel happy when you are surrounded by friends.”

17. Hot reading

The most difficult type, because you need to have some prior knowledge about the person. Let’s say their family member contacted you and told you that the person was involved in a traumatic event. When you meet them, you might focus on using the “regression to a cause” technique because you have prior knowledge about the past event.

Triggers & Advanced Hypnotherapy Techniques

18. The Swish Pattern

Submodalities can be used in “the swish pattern” – a neuro-linguistic programming technique used to associate or dissociate the client with certain behaviors. The five senses are considered modalities (taste, smell, sight, touch, hearing). A submodality is a subset of these senses. Here are some examples of submodalities:



- ☐ Bright or dim?
- ☐ Large or small?
- ☐ Color or black and white?
- ☐ Loud or soft sounds?

The Swish Pattern begins with a visualization. Once the client is in a trance the hypnotist identifies one or two submodalities (brightness, size, etc). The undesirable action is large, focused, and bright in the foreground, while the desired action is visualized as small and dim in the background. In the time it takes you to say “Swish” (the method’s namesake) the desired image rapidly becomes bright and large in the client’s mind.

19. Misdirection

We see misdirection used in the real world, sometimes on a daily basis – from politics to entertainment. The prefix “mis” means wrong and “direction” is attached to it, meaning the audience is being lead in the wrong direction. There are two types of misdirection – one is literal and the other is of the mind.

A familiar demonstration of the first would be a magician distracting people by waving a wand in his left hand and then performing a sleight of hand with his right. While the audience is misdirected, the magician sneaks a card up his sleeve giving the illusion that it has “disappeared”.



Misdirection can also be a visualization:

“As you become anxious, imagine you are relaxing on a beach”

Here, a subject dealing with anxiety is misdirected to the visualization of themselves on a beach. The hypnotist has directed them from an unpleasant image towards a pleasant one.

20. Reframing

Usually done as a metaphor, reframing allows you to change the perception of an experience in the client's mind. For example, imagine you have a client that wants to lose weight. They stay inside and play video games all day. You could ask them to describe the process to “level up” their character in the video game – what they do, how long it takes, how strong the character is at the beginning. And then, “reframe” the process of losing weight in their mind by comparing it to the video game.

“Losing weight is like leveling up your character in a video game. You start slow and train every day. You don't see much difference at the beginning, but over time your 'character' becomes stronger and stronger.”

21. Regression to cause

First the client enters a deep trance where they can experience events as if they were actually there (also known as somnambulism). The therapist uses visualization to create an “affect bridge” where the client experiences an event for the first time again. Once the cause is identified the hypnotherapist can make suggestions and reframe the situation.

22. Future Pacing



The opposite of regression, when a subject is asked to visualize themselves taking the proper actions and behaviors in the future. Rather than look back into the past for an underlying negative event, you look forward to an event with positive emotions.

“Imagine you are done with your speech and the crowd is cheering. You feel accomplished and relieved.”

23. Anchoring

When we record a memory, all of the senses and emotions are associated. These are “anchors” in your memory. Perhaps the client has anchored the behavior of cigarette smoking with a break, meal, sex, chatting with friends and other pleasurable feelings. The hypnotist can suggest new anchors for more positive behavior.

24. Betty Erickson’s 3-2-1 Technique

Betty Erickson was Milton Erickson’s wife. She developed her own method for self-hypnosis known as the 3-2-1 technique. The procedure starts with your eyes open. You take note of 3 things in the room that you can see, hear, and feel. For example: you might see a painting on the wall, a table, and a clock. You might hear birds outside the window, the hum of a refrigerator, and the clock ticking. You might feel the pressure of the chair on your back, your feet on the floor, and the warmth of the sunlight through the window. The process repeats focusing on 2 items from each sensation, and then 1 item (hence the name 3-2-1). Then, you close your eyes and start over by visualizing 3 objects from each sense in your head. Again you count down. Once you’ve reached the last item, you will be in a trance.

25. Incrementalism



Making a tiny change is the stepping stone to a much large one. For example, if a client is trying to lose weight, daily cardio may be too big of a leap. Instead,

you could suggest they start with a small increment: take the stairs for one floor and then hop in the elevator as they typically would. The next week, two flights of stairs. Eventually, they will have worked up to the larger goal and overall better behavior.

Another example: Go to the gym once a week for 5 minutes. The commitment is so small it's impossible to fail. You will likely end up staying for more than 5 minutes, incrementing the duration and amount of days over the course of a month.

26. Parts Therapy



In theory, all behavior is positive in some way. The subconscious may justify one negative behavior with a positive one. An agoraphobic may not leave the house because the subconscious aims to protect the body from the dangers of the outside world. A smoker may harm their body physically in order to seek pleasurable conversation with other smokers outside.

The mind is made up of multiple parts. With parts therapy, the hypnotherapist communicates with the behavior part to better understand why an action is being taken. Then they would communicate with the creative part of the mind to come up with another solution. In the example of the smoker, perhaps there is another way they can satisfy the need for social interaction – a book club, a bowling group. The therapist then uses future pacing to reinforce the positive behavior.

27. Metaphor

Metaphors are therapeutic and memorable. Erickson loved to use metaphors in his books and teachings. Here are some classic metaphors:

- Your body is a car. Give it the right fuel and it will perform well. If you neglect the maintenance and fill it with poor fuel, and it will break down.
- Your mind is like a river that is ebbing and flowing. You can stand on the bank of the river and watch it go by or you can try to swim against the current.
- You are a mountain – strong, impenetrable, and tall.

28. Hypnotic Bind



The hypnotic bind is a favorite amongst parents and presents the “illusion” of choice with an either/or question. Here’s one example:

“Would you like to brush your teeth or take a bath?”

Advanced Tip: Use the double bind to present two options for the same desirable behavior:

“Would you like to go to bed in 10 minutes or 20 minutes?”

Either way, the child is performing the desired action of going to bed.

29. Hypnotic logic

Under trance, a client interprets statements very literally. If you ask the client “Can you sit up” they will respond “Yes”. We call this hypnotic logic.

You can use hypnotic logic along with suggestions like so:

“You can lose weight because you are successful”

Although being successful doesn’t necessarily mean you’re able to lose weight, the statement is taken literally.

30. Affirmations & Positive Thinking

An affirmation confirms a positive thought. For a client with body dysmorphia, you may have them repeat back under trance “I am beautiful” several times.

31. Reconnections

Memories fade over time. While that might be good for someone with a negative experience, positive experiences can also fade.

Abilities, just like memories, can be forgotten as well. An agoraphobic may forget that there was once a time they had the ability to go outdoors.

As a hypnotherapist you can help bring these positive memories and abilities back using rehearsal and visualization with the client.

SECRETS TO BEING UNHAPPY

10 things that are scientifically proven to make you unhappy

Using Facebook

If you're addicted to checking status updates on Facebook every two seconds, it may be time for a breather. A study by University of Michigan psychologist Ethan Kross last year found a direct correlation between time spent on the social media site and feelings of dissatisfaction, loneliness and isolation.

His team sent text messages to eighty-two residents in the Michigan town of Ann Arbor five times per day over a two week period, asking about their feelings at any given point and their use of Facebook. They discovered that the more people used Facebook in the time between the texts, the less happy they felt.

"On the surface, Facebook provides an invaluable resource for fulfilling the basic human need for social connection," said Kross. "But rather than enhance well-being, we found that Facebook use predicts the opposite result - it undermines it."

Other studies have backed up these findings, blaming the "compare and despair" envy effect of social media sites and their potential to spark jealousy and suspicion in relationships.

And it's not just social media, but the internet in general that could be the risk; a 2010 study in the US found "a small detrimental effect of internet use on psychological well-being."

Lisa Kelly, a Toronto-based psychotherapist, says she has observed the way in which social networking is linked to depression and anxiety.

"People have lost the ability to be honest with each other about their feelings, insecurities or needs," she says. "They often do not know how to authentically connect with themselves and with others."

Too much money

Obviously, money is important to lifestyle and well-being - especially when it comes to eliminating financial stress. But studies that show that beyond a certain threshold of income, where people are comfortable and don't need to worry about paying the bills, money doesn't have much connection to happiness.

In fact, some research has shown that very wealthy people actually suffer from higher rates of depression. A World Health Organization survey from 2010 interviewed 89,037 people in 18 countries and found that depression was more likely to hit those living in high-income countries than poorer ones (France was highest with 21% occurrence of depression, next to 6.5 percent in China, the lowest country).

It's unclear why richer countries experience higher rates of depression. The study's authors suggest a greater inequality of wealth in those countries, but other research has indicated that a desire for wealth and material possessions is linked to a

need to mask inner discontent. And a continual striving for greater wealth and more possessions leads to unhappiness, because we cannot satisfy or change the reasons behind that desire.

"No matter how much we try to complete or bolster our ego, our inner discontent and incompleteness always re-emerges, generating new desires," reads a paper by psychology lecturer Steve Taylor. "No matter how much we get, it's never enough. As Buddhism teaches, desires are inexhaustible. The satisfaction of one desire just creates new desires, like a cell multiplying."

Instead, we need to aim to make enough to live a comfortable life and then focus on social connections, says scientist Tyler Cowen.

"A threshold earner is someone who seeks to earn a certain amount of money and no more ... in order to experience other gains in the form of leisure -- whether spending time with friends and family, walking in the woods, and so on."

Lack of control at work

A study by a Danish university last year found no link between workplace depression and heavy workload. Instead, said researchers at the Department of Clinical Medicine at Aarhus University, work *environment* and the feeling of being treated unfairly by management can most dramatically alter an employee's mood.

The researchers handed out questionnaires to 4,500 public employees at Danish schools, hospitals, nurseries, offices and more. They found perceived unfair treatment led to a higher rate of the stress hormone cortisol, which in turn can make work assignments appear insurmountable. But the depression in itself is caused by management behaviour and work environment, rather than workload.

"When the employees' sense of justice plays such a central role in minimising the risk of depression, this is probably the area that the preventive work should focus on," says psychologist Matias Brødsgaard Grynderup, PhD, leading the study.

"I recommend a management style in which there is a clearly expressed wish to treat employees properly – combined with a transparent organisational structure."

Dr. Greg Couser, M.D., the medical director of the employee assistance program at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, has also observed that employees with more control enjoy a greater work life – regardless of how demanding their jobs are.

"In general, you can have a demanding job and if you are able to have control over factors such as the work pace it can be more manageable," he says. "But if you are at the bottom of an assembly line and things are coming at you at a rapid pace you don't control, eventually you can't keep up."

Too much choice

Choice is a buzzword of the modern age, whether that's five types of organic honey in your local supermarket or a string of pilate classes to select from at the gym down the road. But a 2010 research paper from Stanford University's Department of Psychology discovered that too much choice makes us miserable.

Scientists at the university looked into the cultural ideas surrounding choice. They found that freedom and choice are less important or mean something different among non-Western cultures and working-class Westerners than they do for the university-educated people. They also found that the latter group became paralysed by too much variety and wracked with uncertainty and regret about whether they had made the right decision.

"We cannot assume that choice, as understood by educated, affluent Westerners, is a universal aspiration, and that the provision of choice will necessarily foster freedom and well-being," Professor Hazel Rose Markus writes in *Does Choice Mean Freedom and Well Being?*

"Even in contexts where choice can foster freedom, empowerment, and independence, it is not an unalloyed good. Choice can also produce a numbing uncertainty, depression, and selfishness."

A famous jam study conducted by Colombia University in 1995 also concluded that choice can be debilitating. In the survey, people were made to select from a larger or smaller selection of jams in a gourmet Californian supermarket. A larger proportion of people (60%) went for the larger selection, but only 3% from that group went onto actually buy a jam. In the smaller selection group, 30% of people went onto choose and buy a jam; suggesting too much choice can be bewildering.

Similar studies conducted over the years with everything from chocolate to speed dating have reached similar conclusions.

Poor sibling relationships

Anyone who's grown up with brothers or sisters will know that fights are inevitable and usually harmless in the long-run. But a 2007 study in the *American Journal of Psychiatry* found that men who had very poor relationships with their siblings during childhood are at significantly greater risk for depression in adulthood, compared to those who get along better with their brothers and sisters.

The researchers emphasised that their findings do not mean that a poor childhood relationship with a sibling *causes* depression, but they concluded that the two factors are strongly associated, and sibling relationships are more of an influence on adulthood depression than how a child is brought up by their parents.

"Sibling relationships have been underemphasised in learning about child development," says Dr. Robert J. Waldinger, the lead author of the study.

It's not clear why the link exists but researchers believe that good sibling relationships in childhood could help children socialise and relate to their peers - and the opposite could be true if they do not have good sibling relationships.

In 2012, psychologists at the University of Missouri concluded that teenage siblings who argue over two topics in particular - personal domain conflicts and fairness issues - are more at risk of suffering depressive symptoms, low self-esteem and anxiety.

"We believe that there are particular types of conflict that are setting kids up for problems," says Nicole Campione-Barr, assistant professor of psychological sciences at the University of Missouri.

A wandering mind

We all like to daydream now and again, but a 2010 study from Harvard researchers Matthew Killingsworth and Daniel Gilbert identified mind-wandering as a major cause of unhappiness.

The researchers collected data from 2,250 volunteers, who used a specially developed iPhone app that contacted them randomly to ask how happy they were feeling, what they were doing, whether they were thinking about what they were doing, and, if not, whether they were thinking about something pleasant instead.

They discovered that our minds are wandering about 46.9 percent of the time in any given activity and that people's feelings of happiness had much more to do with where their mind was than what they were doing. Only 4.6% of a person's happiness could be attributed to what they were doing, but 10.8% of it was caused by what they were thinking about at the time, and people consistently reported being happiest when their minds were on what they were doing.

To investigate whether unhappiness caused mind wandering or vice versa, the Harvard psychologists compared each person's moods and thoughts as the day went on. They found that if someone's mind wandered at 10 in the morning, then quarter of an hour later that person was likely to be less happy than at 10, perhaps because of daydreaming. But if people were in a bad mood at 10, they weren't more likely to be worrying or daydreaming at 10:15.

"We see evidence for mind-wandering causing unhappiness, but no evidence for unhappiness causing mind-wandering," the report found.

The findings are backed up by age-old philosophy that living in the here and now leads to greater happiness.

"Many philosophical and religious traditions teach that happiness is to be found by living in the moment. These traditions suggest that a wandering mind is an unhappy mind," Killingsworth and his team note.

The end of your favourite TV show

The prospect of no more *Breaking Bad* is a bit gutting, one might think, but it's hardly a cause for serious unhappiness.

However, Emily Moyer-Guse, PhD, assistant professor of communication at Ohio State University, has found that people form "parasocial" relationships with their favourite TV shows and "experience distress" when they end or are taken off air.

Moyer-Guse surveyed 403 college students ages 18 to 33 during the 2007-2008 Hollywood writers' strike, when many shows were taken off air. The students answered questions about their viewing habits, reasons for watching, how important the shows were, and how close they felt to their favourite characters.

Those who watched TV to relax, to enjoy the companionship of the characters, or to escape pressures were more distressed, she found, than those who said they watched TV just to pass time. Those who watched for companionship were most likely to be distressed.

Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock, PhD, professor of English at Central Michigan University, who reviewed the study, says some people invest a lot of their time in TV shows and when they disappear, "it's like you have lost someone important to you. It does leave a hole there for a while. It's a form of mourning."

This chimes with reports of the *Avatar* effect in 2010, when there was said to be an outbreak of depression among some viewers of the film because the utopian planet created in it was not real. After the *Harry Potter* franchise ended in 2011, a number of fans reported feeling similar levels of unhappiness and desertion.

Eating junk food

Countless studies have linked poor diet with depression, including a 2012 paper published in the *Public Health Nutrition* journal. Researchers at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria and the University of Granada studied the eating habits of 8,964 participants who had never been diagnosed with depression over a six-month period.

The results revealed that those who regularly consumed commercial fast food (hamburgers, hotdogs, doughnuts and pizza) are 51% more likely to develop depression, compared to those who eat little or none.

A dose-response relationship was also observed, meaning "the more fast food you consume, the greater the risk of depression," explains Almudena Sánchez-Villegas, lead author of the study.

"Although more studies are necessary, the intake of this type of food should be controlled because of its implications on both health (obesity, cardiovascular diseases) and mental well-being."

Critics pointed to a link between depression triggering junk food consumption, as well as vice versa, but it does seem there is an intrinsic link between junk food and depression - even down to the logos used on popular brands of junk food.

In 2013, a study published in the *Social Psychological and Personality Science* identified a link between the occurrence of fast food logos in participants' neighborhoods and a decreased capacity among those participants to savour and enjoy pleasant experiences. It concluded that fast food symbolism reinforces our chronic impatience and precludes people from finding happiness on their own, as we have a harder time "stopping to smell the roses".

Over-analyzing your decisions

Worrying about whether you have made the right decision can be a maddening, no-win process so little wonder that researchers have linked questioning decisions with stress and unhappiness. In 2011, Dr. Joyce Ehrlinger and her team at Florida State University identified two types of decision makers: "maximizers" - individuals who obsess over decisions (big or small) and then fret about their choices later and "satisfiers"; those who tend to make a decision and then live with it.

"Maximizers get nervous when they see an 'All Sales Are Final' sign because it forces them to commit," Ehrlinger, whose study was published in the journal *Personality and Individual Differences*, says.

"Maximizers show less commitment to their choices than satisfiers in a way that leaves them less satisfied with their choices. Maximizers miss out on the psychological benefits of commitment."

As it affects every decision from shopping goods to choice of a life partner, this lack of commitment and contentment can be a huge cause of stress and uncertainty over a long-term period.

"Identifying the 'right' choice can be a never-ending task (for a maximizer)," Ehrlinger and her co-authors write.

"Feelings about which option is best can always change in the face of new information. Maximizers might be unable to fully embrace a choice because they cannot be absolutely certain they chose the best possible option."

Living at high altitude

Life in a mountain village might seem idyllic but it's also been linked to a higher rate of suicide. A 2011 study by medics at the University Hospital Case Medical Center in Cleveland, Ohio, found a correlation between suicide rates and higher elevation residency in places such as Nevada, Utah, Colorado and Montana in the US.

"Once you get to somewhere between 2,000 and 3,000 feet, you start seeing the suicide rates increase," explained study author Dr. Barry E. Brenner. "The correlation is very, very, very high, and it happens in every single region of the US."

"And yet as you go up in altitude the overall death rate, or all-cause mortality, actually decreases," he added. "So, the fact that suicide rates are increasing at the same time is a really significant and really striking finding."

Brenner and his team studied two decades' worth of mortality data (1979-1998) obtained from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. They related the higher suicide rates to obesity levels and sleep apnea that may be more common in higher altitudes, as well as hypoxia -- inadequate oxygen supply to the body's cells and tissues at high altitudes - that may trigger mood disturbances, especially among emotionally unstable patients.

Another survey by the university of Utah found similar results in the US and two other mountainous countries, Italy and South Korea.

"South Korea has a very high suicide rate, first or second highest in the world, and South Korea has a tremendous range in altitude from sea level up to several thousand metres," says psychiatrist Perry F. Renshaw, leading the study. "We found the same thing there. The higher the altitude, the higher the suicide rate."

12 Reasons You're Not As Happy As You Should Be

1. Hanging Around Negative People

Complainers and negative people are bad news because they wallow in their problems and fail to focus on solutions. They want people to join their pity party so that they can feel better about themselves. People often feel pressure to listen to complainers because they don't want to be seen as callous or rude, but there's a fine line between lending a sympathetic ear and getting sucked into their negative emotional spirals. You can avoid getting drawn in only by setting limits and distancing yourself when necessary. Think of it this way: If a person were smoking, would you sit there all afternoon inhaling the second-hand smoke? You'd distance yourself, and you should do the same with negative people. A great way to set limits is to ask them how they intend to fix their problems. The complainer will then either quiet down or redirect the conversation in a productive direction.

You should strive to surround yourself with people who inspire you, people who make you want to be better, and you probably do. But what about the people who drag you down? Why do you allow them to be a part of your life? Anyone who makes you feel worthless, anxious, or uninspired is wasting your time and, quite possibly, making you more like them. Life is too short to associate with people like this. Cut them loose and watch your emotional intelligence soar.

2. Comparing Your Own Life To The Lives People Portray On Social Media

The Happiness Research Institute conducted the Facebook Experiment to find out how our social media habits affect our happiness. Half of the study's participants kept using Facebook as they normally would, while the other half stayed off Facebook for a week. The results were striking. At the end of the week, the participants who stayed off Facebook reported a significantly higher degree of satisfaction with their lives and lower levels of sadness and loneliness. The researchers also concluded that people on Facebook were 55% more likely to feel stress as a result.

The thing to remember about Facebook and social media in general is that they rarely represent reality. Social media provides an airbrushed, color-enhanced look at the lives people want to portray. I'm not suggesting that you give up social media; just take it sparingly and with a grain of salt.

3. Immunity To Awe

Amazing things happen around you every day if you only know where to look. Technology has exposed us to so much and made the world so much smaller. Yet, there's a downside that isn't spoken of much: exposure raises the bar on what it takes to be awestricken. And that's a shame, because few things are as uplifting as experiencing true awe. True awe is humbling. It reminds us that we're not the center of the universe. Awe is also inspiring and full of wonder, underscoring the richness of life and our ability to both contribute to it and be captivated by it. It's hard to be happy when you just shrug your shoulders every time you see something new.

4. Isolating Yourself

Isolating yourself from social contact is a pretty common response to feeling unhappy, but there's a large body of research that says it's the worst thing you can do. This is a huge mistake, as socializing, even when you don't enjoy it, is great for your mood. We all have those days when we just want to pull the covers over our heads and refuse to talk to anybody, but the moment this becomes a tendency, it destroys your mood. Recognize that when unhappiness is making you antisocial, you need to force yourself to get out there and mingle. You'll notice the difference right away.

5. Blaming

We need to feel in control of our lives in order to be happy, which is why blaming is so incompatible with happiness. When you blame other people or circumstances for the bad things that happen to you, you've decided that you have no control over your life, which is terrible for your mood.

6. Controlling

It's hard to be happy without feeling in control of your life, but you can take this too far in the other direction by making yourself unhappy through trying to control too much. This is especially true with people. The only person you can control in your life is you. When you feel that nagging desire to dictate other people's behavior, this will inevitably blow up in your face and make you unhappy. Even if you can control someone in the short term, it usually requires pressure in the form of force or fear, and treating people this way won't leave you feeling good about yourself.

7. Complaining

Complaining is troubling, as well as the attitude that precedes it. Complaining is a self-reinforcing behavior. By constantly talking—and therefore thinking—about how bad things are, you reaffirm your negative beliefs. While talking about what bothers you can help you feel better, there's a fine line between complaining being therapeutic and it fueling unhappiness. Beyond making you unhappy, complaining drives other people away.

8. Impressing

People will like your clothes, your car, and your fancy job, but that doesn't mean they like you. Trying to impress other people is a source of unhappiness, because it doesn't get to the source of what makes you happy—finding people who like you and accept you for who you are. All the things you acquire in the quest to impress people won't make you happy either. There's an ocean of research that shows that material things don't make you happy. When you make a habit of chasing things, you are likely to become unhappy because, beyond the disappointment you experience once you get them, you discover that you've gained them at the expense of the real things that can make you happy, such as friends, family, and taking good care of yourself.

9. Negativity

Life won't always go the way you want it to, but when it comes down to it, you have the same 24 hours in the day as everyone else. Happy people make their time count. Instead of complaining about how things could have been or should have been, they reflect on everything they have to be grateful for. Then they find the best solution available to the problem, tackle it, and move on. Nothing fuels unhappiness quite like pessimism. The problem with a pessimistic attitude, apart from the damage it does to your mood, is that it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy: if you expect bad things, you're more likely to get bad things. Pessimistic thoughts are hard to shake off until you recognize how illogical they are. Force yourself to look at the facts, and you'll see that things are not nearly as bad as they seem.

10. Neglecting To Set Goals

Having goals gives you hope and the ability to look forward to a better future, and working towards those goals makes you feel good about yourself and your abilities. It's important to set goals that are challenging, specific (and measurable), and driven by your personal values. Without goals, instead of learning and improving yourself, you just plod along wondering why things never change.

11. Giving In To Fear

Fear is nothing more than a lingering emotion that's fueled by your imagination. *Danger* is real. It's the uncomfortable rush of adrenaline you get when you almost step in front of a bus. Fear is a choice. Happy people know this better than anyone does, so they flip fear on its head. They are addicted to the euphoric feeling they get from conquering their fears.

When all is said and done, you will lament the chances you didn't take far more than you will your failures. Don't be afraid to take risks. I often hear people say, "What's the worst thing that can happen to you? Will it kill you?" Yet, death isn't the worst thing that can happen to you. The worst thing that can happen to you is allowing yourself to die inside while you're still alive.

12. Leaving The Present

Like fear, the past and the future are products of your mind. No amount of guilt can change the past, and no amount of anxiety can change the future. Happy people know this, so they focus on living in the present moment. It's impossible to reach your full potential if you're constantly somewhere else, unable to fully embrace the reality (good or bad) of the very moment. To live in the moment, you must do two things:

- 1) Accept your past. If you don't make peace with your past, it will never leave you and it will create your future. Happy people know that the only good reason to look at the past is to see how far you've come.
- 2) Accept the uncertainty of the future, and don't place unnecessary expectations upon yourself. Worry has no place in the here and now. As Mark Twain once said,

"Worrying is like paying a debt you don't owe."

10 Things Keeping You Unhappy and How To Avoid Them-Saswot

1. Not having exact goals.

I think most people have some sort of goal or goals they want to achieve. I know I did. But when I started to get more specific and actually laid out what I want to achieve on paper, things started to change.

Having a bit of specificity helped me to less all over the place, so to speak, and gave me something to focus on.

Take the general ideas you may have about what you want to achieve, and actually break them down into specifics. Start mapping out a plan of how to get there.

They may not all seem very possible right now. But it'll be a lot easier to make them real if you know exactly what they are.

It's tough to stay positive when you have no idea where you're headed.

2. No passion.

For a period the phrase "going through the motions" could have been used to perfectly describe my day-to-day. There was no real end goal in sight, and nothing I was working on that I was very passionate about.

This ties in to the section above of having exact goals. If you don't have an exact goal in mind, it's impossible to become passionate in a direction.

Passion isn't a switch you can necessarily turn on or off. It comes about by working hard at something, becoming more dedicated, working harder, and so on.

If you don't have anything you're passionate about, go out and get some new experiences. Try things out. Passionate won't come about through sitting quietly. It comes with experience and work in a specific direction.

3. Lack of gratitude.

You should always be improving. That's a given.

It's also good to want more. More love, more friends, more money, more good things, etc. There's nothing wrong with that. Wanting more and wanting to improve is a good way to keep pushing yourself forward.

But most people don't take enough time to also appreciate what they do have. This can be damaging for their happiness.

A great quote from Bryan Callen is:

"Happiness is *wanting* what you have."

When was the last time you took some time to appreciate the friends who've been with you through thick and thin, the family members who raised you? When was the last time you looked out at the world with wonder?

Appreciated the warm glow of the sun on the back of your neck while dew sparkled on freshly cut grass?

There are so many incredible things in this world. And every one of us has something to be grateful for.

Keeping this in mind will help you through the rough patches and make the good parts more enjoyable.

4. Too much free time.

While there's nothing wrong with taking a break, it should only be that. A break.

Having a lot of free time will not make you happier. Working harder in a direction you're passionate about will.

It may seem like an endless vacation would be the best thing ever. After three months of mine I was straight up losing my mind.

What fixed it was packing my schedule so tight I could barely breathe.

When you have a ton of things to do, a tight schedule and tough deadlines, you appreciate the breaks more.

5. Too much passive entertainment.

“Too much TV will kill you.”

Okay, maybe it won't kill you. But it will keep you from *living*. Which is basically the same thing as being killed in my book.

If you're feeling unhappy, get outside, stare at some trees, touch some grass, appreciate the wonders of the world around you. Or go for a run. Or write something. Or build a castle out of Legos. But for god's sake, don't try to watch something to make you feel better.

This is what I've found out about TV (including movies, TV shows, etc.):

It's a lot like Tylenol.

When you have a headache you eat one and the headache goes away. (You feel a little sad, you watch a comedy and you feel better.)

Then later you feel like you might be getting a headache, so you take another one. (You're a little bored, so you watch some TV to kill time and keep you from doing nothing.)

Before you know it you're taking some Tylenol before going to sleep at night in case you get a headache in the morning. (Watching TV every night before you go to sleep to take a load off, get out of your head, etc.)

There's nothing inherently wrong with Tylenol. When you have a pounding headache and you can't move without seeing stars, it might be helpful to take something so you can work.

The problem comes in when you get into phase 2, where you take it before anything really happens.

It's the same way with TV. There's nothing inherently wrong with it until it becomes the norm.

Whether you like it or not, TV and movies are an escape from real life. Just like Tylenol is an escape from pain.

I'm not here to judge or tell you that you shouldn't ever watch things.

But, if you're unhappy, and you do watch a lot of TV or movies, try cutting them out for a while. See what happens. If nothing changes, you lose nothing. You can still catch up on everything by binge watching on Netflix.

Instead of using an escape, confront life directly. Do the things you need to do.

Why watch someone else if you could be making the life of your dreams?

6. Not sleeping enough.

There's a line between sleeping too much and sleeping too little. You want to be on that line.

If you sleep too much you'll feel groggy and tired.

If you sleep too little you'll feel tired and may end up going crazy.

I'm not kidding. For a few weeks recently I couldn't sleep, and I started talking faster, having strange conversations and feeling slightly crazy.

I wasn't sleeping much at night. I wasn't able to fall asleep for hours on end and when I did end up falling asleep, the rest I got was terrible (according to the app I had tracking it).

This made it really hard to stay motivated and positive. Partly because I was so tired it was hard to concentrate and partly because I felt like I was going crazy.

But don't worry, I solved it by solving the item below.

7. Not exercising.

It's been said many times that regular exercise boosts your mood. It does. It's true.

It also helps you feel healthier, breathe easier, and generally feel like you're going to live longer.

I had been exercising daily for several months, but then I injured my knees and my shoulder. This made it really difficult to continue exercising and after many failed attempts and increasingly worse pain in the injured areas of my body, I decided to take a break until I was all better.

But the weeks I didn't exercise coincide directly with the weeks where I wasn't sleeping. And the day I started up again was the day I got a perfect night's sleep again.

I haven't had an issue sleeping since.

If you've been feeling down, go out and get some oxygen in your lungs, get your heart pumping. Don't stop until you're keeled over, gasping for breath and dripping with sweat. It'll suck in that moment, but you'll feel much better in a couple of hours.

8. Not eating well.

Your body is an important thing to take care of.

Junk food is essentially poison for your body.

Ever seen a person happy while being poisoned? Me neither.

Eating junk food is the same thing as poisoning yourself, it's just a much slower process than swallowing cyanide.

Eating ice cream once a week won't kill you.

But not giving your body the nutrients it needs over an extended period of time will have negative effects. And your mood will suffer right along with your bowels.

9. Focusing on things instead of experiences.

I love things. I love Apple products, nice cars and expensive clothes. Nothing wrong with that.

But, when these become the focus instead of a by-product, you run into trouble.

Do things for the experience, not the by-product. Money is a by-product of a job well done.

Instead of focusing on the money, focus on the actual product. The money will come.

The other aspect of this is what you spend money on. Things (physical things) are great. But experiences are rewarding.

Spend more money on new experiences and you'll have a better time than if you only focus on objects.

10. Unstable or toxic relationships.

If you never know where you stand with someone, that's a problem. And it's going to affect your happiness.

If you surround yourself with people who are negative, always worrying, unmotivated, etc., chances are, you'll feel the same way.

Fix or get rid of these types of relationships (whether it's family, friends or co-workers).

Spend more time with positive, like-minded people. People you believe in and who believe in you.

It's been said so many times it sounds like a sad cliché but it's vital to keep in mind:

You're the average of the 5 people you spend the most time with.

Sometimes it helps to be reminded of this, and to evaluate who you're spending time with.

I spring-clean my house and I also spring-clean my relationships.

Why Am I so Unhappy? 50 Little Things That Secretly Make You Unhappy

1. You worry.

"I am an old man and have known a great many troubles, but most of them have never happened." – Mark Twain

Worry creates inner turmoil. It's like a rocking chair moving feverishly, but going nowhere. Worrying doesn't create action, it freezes you so you are unable to think clearly and make changes to ensure the negative outcome never happens.

Your energy would be better utilized in changing things that you can control, and letting the rest go. Bobby McFerrin sang it simply enough, "Don't worry! Be Happy!" The lack of worry can certainly create happiness!

2. You hold onto the perceived idea of control.

"As your faith is strengthened you will find that there is no longer the need to have a sense of control, that things will flow as they will, and that you will flow with them, to your great delight and benefit." – Emmanuel Teney

At times, people seem to believe that they stepped straight out of a superhero comic book. They believe that they can control everything very well and things will just turn out exactly what they planned. What a burden to carry!

You would certainly need superman's strength to pick up that weight. However, the reality is that we don't have the ability to control anything else other than ourselves. Once you make peace with this, you find the pressure is off and you can start to enjoy the scenery of the journey, instead of plotting the impossibility.

3. You hold grudges.

"Anger is an acid that can do more harm to the vessel in which it is stored than to anything on which it is poured." – Mark Twain

Holding a grudge has about the same logic as drinking poison and waiting for the other person to die. You are harming yourself by carrying all of that negative energy.

Let the bitterness go... for your own benefit. The person who criticized you is probably having a great time without giving you a second thought, while you waste your life sending them death rays with your mind.

4. You believe everyone should play by your rules.

"If you expect the world to be fair with you because you are fair, you're fooling yourself. That's like expecting the lion not to eat you because you didn't eat him."

News flash: the world doesn't live by your rule book.

The sooner you accept this, the happier you will be.

No one else got your memo about the way things should be done, how they should treat you, or how to live their lives by your standards and beliefs.

People often get angry because someone violates their deeply-held ideals. Yet, trying to do an impossible task – getting everyone to live by your idea of perfection – is bound to create a lot of frustration.

Simply take people as they are and appreciate the colorful spectrum of ideas and viewpoints, instead of feeling exasperated by them.

5. You compare yourself to others.

"Saying someone is ugly doesn't make you any prettier."

Most people play the internal comparison game. Usually, they scrutinize only one small area of that person's life and see where the match up.

For example, I may compare myself to Ironman Champion and Olympian Matt Fitzgerald and determine he's a better triathlete than me. (We aren't even in the same stratosphere by the way.)

However, this is only one small area of life. Who knows? Maybe I can ride horses or sing better than him? Looking at only a small fraction of a whole person and ranking that part against yourself is a pointless activity.

You are so much more than this one piece of your life that you have under the microscope at the moment. This habit will only create discontent in your life.

If you simply can't stop measuring things, take an inward comparison dive instead. Are you a better person than you were yesterday?

6. You chose to be happy only when all of your dreams come true.

"Happiness is not determined by what's happening around you, but rather what's happening inside you. Most people depend on others to gain happiness, but the truth is, it always comes from within."

Who is the happier person, the one who decides, "I will be happy when I make 100 million dollars," or the one who believes, "I will be happy with a great supper and time with my family?"

Having lofty goals are great. But when you tie your happiness to future successes that may or may not happen, you never find joy in the life you live today.

Find things that thrill you today, and let tomorrow surprise you.

7. You are a glass-half-empty person.

"You become what you focus on and like the people you spend time with."

If you're a pessimistic person, you will notice all of the bad in your life. Your perception becomes your reality.

Instead, choose to focus on the best in people, the brighter moments, and the beauty and blessings surrounding you.

The more you focus on the sunshine, the less the shadows will invade your perspective.

8. You are lonely.

The most terrible poverty is loneliness, and the feeling of being unloved." — Mother Teresa

We are naturally social creatures and nurturing relationships makes up a large part of life. If you find yourself alone and depressed on a Saturday night, make an effort to change it.

Finding friendships will certainly improve your enthusiasm for what each day brings. How do you find good friends? Seek out social settings with people who share similar interests and beliefs to build a common foundation and launch a great relationship.

Smile, reach out, and be genuinely interested in others. You will be surprised how far this will get you in building life-long connections.

9. You seek materialism over everything else in life.

"Many people are so poor because the only thing they have is money."

While money certainly is a great gain in this life, it doesn't bring happiness.

Think about how you would feel if tomorrow was your last day to breathe. Would you really want to make more money, or would your focus turn to connecting with people or having certain experiences?

If you live by your values, you will find more fulfillment than materialism could ever bring.

10. You don't make time for the right things.

"When you stop chasing the wrong things you give the right things a chance to catch you."

We all lose our focus at times. However, keeping your activities aligned with your values is helpful in keeping a positive perspective.

One good exercise is to list your values and rank them by their importance to you. Then, see how many of your daily activities actually align with your values. Is there a disconnect? If so, what can you do to change it?

But still, the best thing to do is to understand how to prioritize your life and do what matters to you most. Here's how:

11. You hang out with unhappy people.

"When you have to start compromising yourself and your morals for the people around you, it's probably time to change the people around you."

You are the sum of the five people you spend the most time around. If your friends are constant sources of negativity in your life, it may be time to find more positive people.

12. You haven't discovered your purpose.

"Trying to be someone else is a waste of the person you are."

So many people have subscribed to the lie that their life purpose is to make it to the weekend. No wonder there are so many miserable clock punchers in the world!

Instead of existing, find a way to start living! Lifehack's CEO has some unique advice to help you start living:

Find your passion and purpose and pursue them, despite the fact that it may turn the mundane inside out and terrify you.

Discovering your part in the story is one of the best pieces in life's adventure!

13. You are more of an actor than an author.

"To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest achievement." – Ralph Waldo Emerson

You do the world a huge disservice when you try to be someone you're not. Be authentic.

Playing a part you weren't meant to play to meet outside expectations is just asking for heartache.

Even when you try to push down the pit in your stomach, a part of you will always know you are emotionally compromising yourself and your happiness to read lines that you didn't write, and worse, don't believe in.

14. You're stuck in your past.

"You can't start the next chapter of your life if you keep re-reading your last one."

Many people become the product of their pasts. They are the causalities of regret, sorrow, what ifs, and hindsight vision.

While we can all learn from our past, staying there is not practical to living in the present. The past can't be changed or relived. To constantly dwell on it does not create an emotionally healthy outlook.

15. You keep thinking about your future and can't enjoy today.

"What you do today determines who you will be tomorrow."

Some people focus so much on the stars that they miss the entire journey's sights, experiences, and lessons learned in getting there.

Find as much joy in the adventure as in obtaining the end goal. If you don't, you will be frustrated until your future vision is reality.

Since this may or may not happen, why limit yourself when you can find just as much happiness in the quest as in the destination?

16. You're unhealthy.

"The way you think, the way you behave, the way you eat, can influence your life by 30 to 50 years." – Deepak Chopra

How you value fitness, healthy eating, stress reduction, and sleeping all impact how much happiness you feel. Emotions are linked to many physical properties in your body.

The mind – body connection is very real, and often just adding exercise, sunshine, extra shut-eye, or a healthier diet can improve your mood immediately.

17. You're a perfectionist.

"In order to go on living one must try to escape the death involved in perfectionism." – Hannah Arendt

There are three main types of perfectionism:

Self perfectionism – where you expect perfection from yourself; social perfectionism – where you believe others expect you to be perfect; and other perfectionism – where you expect others to be perfect.

All three examples can be happiness busters.

Being perfect is an unrealistic goal for you to place on yourself or others. Constantly falling short of the unattainable will continuously keep you blue.

18. You're afraid of failure.

"Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts." – Winston Churchill

Some people are so afraid of making a mistake that they never try. Just imagine how that would have worked out when you were learning to walk! You'd probably still be crawling.

Unfortunately, we sometimes lose our bravery as adults and fear trying anything because it may not work.

If you embrace this mindset, you will never live up to your potential. This can create a huge dissatisfaction in your life.

19. You're insecure.

"The task we must set for ourselves is not to feel secure, but to be able to tolerate insecurity." Erich Fromm

Growth happens outside of our comfort zones. If you are too insecure to move out from the familiar, you will never know the joy of conquering your fears and finding your wings.

After all, a bird has to eventually jump to discover he can fly. You can't stay in the nest forever and be happy watching others soar.

20. You're in debt.

"A man in debt is so far a slave." – Ralph Waldo Emerson

Too much debt can cause stress, broken relationships, and financial hardships. Working out a plan to get out from under pain of payments can often bring peace of mind.

21. You seek validation.

"Learn to love yourself first, instead of loving the idea of other people loving you."

If you keep looking for others to determine your own worth, you will always be disappointed.

No person except you should have the power to determine your happiness or value.

22. You neglect personal relationships.

"Don't choose the one who is beautiful to the world; choose the one who makes your world beautiful."

Most deathbed confessions don't laminate spending more time chained to the office or making money.

Most people regret the relationships that were neglected in pursuit of things that suddenly lost their importance.

Remember, don't neglect your friends and family. Their love is more valuable than anything else in the end.

23. You procrastinate.

"Know the true value of time; snatch, seize, and enjoy every moment of it. No idleness, no laziness, no procrastination: never put off til tomorrow what you can do today." – Lord Chesterfield

Procrastination is an endless spiral into frustration. The more you do it, the heavier your load. It's like trying to run a marathon while picking up rocks along the way. Eventually the stress gets too heavy.

You should finish projects and drop those rocks so you stay light and able to maneuver through your day without dragging 20 other projects you have put off behind you.

Here's a complete guide to help you beat procrastination:

24. You're not learning.

"Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning stays young. The greatest thing in life is to keep your mind young." – Henry Ford

Learning new things brings joy in the discovery of growth. If you've stopped learning, embrace a new hobby or discover a new interest. You will find that the excitement of learning brings you extra spring.

25. You have unrealized dreams.

"All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them." – Walt Disney

The ghosts of dead dreams can haunt us. Fortunately, you can always breathe new life into your vision by finding the courage to follow new and exciting possibilities.

It's never too late to do the things you desire. At the end of the day, you'll only regret things you didn't do. Here's how to do it:

26. You're bored.

"The life of the creative man is lead, directed and controlled by boredom. Avoiding boredom is one of our most important purposes." – Susan Sontag

Many people go through life unchallenged, and this can lead to boredom. After all, technological conveniences, safety regulations, and the ease of modern living can often take the adventure out of life.

Some people get stuck in a rut, and become dull without the rough stuff to sharpen things up a bit.

There are many ways to still find the wild in your life. You just have to make it a goal to do things that scare you enough and wake you up to the amazing life adventures available to you.

27. You're too busy.

"Don't say you don't have enough time. You have exactly the same number of hours per day that were given to Helen Keller, Pasteur, Michaelangelo, Mother Teresa, Leonardo da Vinci, Thomas Jefferson, Albert Einstein, etc..."

If you are spending your time being busy instead of being focused on the things that make you feel alive, you will find happiness an elusive pursuit.

Instead of just being busy, learn to refocus your time so that you are effective, while not wasting time on things that won't contribute to the best life.

After all, you can find many things that take up your time, but don't take you anywhere.

28. You don't sleep enough.

"I love sleep. My life has the tendency to fall apart when I'm awake, you know?" – Ernest Hemingway

People who suffer from insomnia have a 10-fold chance of developing depression compared with those who sleep well.^[1] Sleep issues have also been linked to many other health issues.

So, if you aren't sleeping well, it's time to remedy this issue.

29. You don't spend enough time alone.

"Solitude is the place of purification." – Martin Buber

Sometimes, we don't take the time to separate ourselves from the noise of life to just rejuvenate our minds and focus inward.

It's okay to take time to be alone in a way that relaxes you; whether that's having a coffee on a park bench under a tree or taking a week-long backpacking trip through the Alaskan mountains.

However you spend your solitary moments, don't forget to take time to step away from all the craziness of life and refocus. Your mental mojo will thank you!

30. You don't take the time to set goals.

"Setting goals is the first step in turning the invisible into the visible." – Tony Robbins

An aimless life is the source of disappointment and frustration in life.

Instead of just letting things happen to you and trying to keep up, create your own future by setting goals and following through on them. One of the greatest joys in life is seeing a goal come to fruition.

31. You're dependent.

"The greatest gifts you can give your children are the roots of responsibility and the wings of independence." Denis Waitley

While it may be easier to depend on others, becoming independent is one of the hallmarks of adulthood. Those that cling to others with no plan to break free often struggle with self-esteem.

It's hard to find your wings when weighed down by other people's agendas.

32. You don't think you deserve happiness.

"We all of us deserve happiness or none of us does." – Mary Gordon

Some people have the warped idea that they don't deserve happiness. They may have guilt about their past and feel they should be punished, or just don't feel that they are worthy of such an emotion.

Happiness is something everyone should experience. If you don't feel you are worthy of it, it is time for a re-adjustment of perspective. Give yourself permission to find your happy place.

33. You're always just one step away.

"Greed is a bottomless pit which exhausts the person in an endless effort to satisfy the need without ever reaching satisfaction." – Erich Fromm

If you are someone who is always one step away from being satisfied, this may be hurting your chances for happiness.

If everything is just out of reach, you will never experience the fun you can have in every moment given to you.

If there is always something you need to fill up your life, when will this end? Most people who think this way don't realize that they will never be able to satisfy the greed monster inside. They truly believe their own self lie that if they just have this one last thing, happiness will find them.

Those who learn to embrace the joy of the moment, instead of putting it off to a distant future that will never happen, will find that they love life so much more than those always trying to fill the bottomless pit.

34. You ignore opportunities.

“Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work.” – Thomas Jefferson

Sometimes, when opportunity comes to knock on the door, people just decide to keep the TV droning on and not to answer the door. Or, the opportunity looks too much like work, or pushes them out of their comfort zone that they choose to pass on it.

However, if this becomes a habit, you will find yourself frustrated when you see times where you passed when you should have held on with every fingernail fiber.

It's hard to be happy when you can't hold onto the good things that come your way. Take the risk, and jump; you may be surprised how much it changes your life for the better.

35. You're complacent.

“Don't let your special character and values, the secret that you know and no one else does, the truth – don't let that get swallowed up by the great chewing complacency.” – Aesop

It's very easy to become complacent. Yet, you can leave this monster any time you want to start swimming toward a better future instead of floating wherever the waters take you.

There is a joy found in the struggle that you will never experience in a passive existence.

36. You hate your job.

“Whatever your life's work is, do it well. A man should do his job so well that the living, the dead, and the unborn could do it no better.” – Martin Luther King Jr.

You spend most of your life working. So, if you are in a job that you hate, it's really hard to keep a happy outlook.

The best way to change your life is to begin working toward your passion, not just a paycheck.

Aren't sure what your passion is yet to motivate you? Take a look at this advice:

37. You chase the wrong things.

“When you stop chasing the wrong things you give the right things a chance to catch you.”

Sometimes we get confused about what really is important for us.

Do a deep dive inside to discover what you value most. Then, don't waste your life chasing the things that don't really matter.

38. You have no spiritual life.

“In the mental calmness of a spiritual life, I have found that the answers to the whys in our lives are able to come to you.” – Clarence Clemons

Many studies have shown a correlation between spirituality and increased happiness.^[2] Being part of a group of like-minded people who focus on helping others and unconditionally loving people certainly would help you find fulfillment in life.

Also, many people find prayer and meditation to be very calming and beneficial to their emotional well being. All of these factors, as well as many others, contribute to an overall better mental outlook of people plugged in to the spiritual realm.

39. You have no real friends.

“Making a hundred friends is not a miracle. The miracle is to make a single friend who will stand by your side even when hundreds are against you.”

While your world may be full of acquaintances, if you don't have a few close friends that will stick by you no matter how rough the storm is, you will find yourself in a sad state.

Life is about connecting with people, and if you aren't sure how strong yours are, it may be time to find some friends who will always be there.

You will feel more confident in your future by knowing that you will always have support.

40. You're afraid of yourself.

"I'm sure not afraid of success and I've learned not to be afraid of failure. The only thing I'm afraid of now is of being someone I don't like much." – Anna Quindlen

As strange as it sounds, many people are afraid of being themselves and don't trust their own instincts. While no one is perfect, if you can't trust yourself, who else can you trust?

Learning to put faith in your own decisions and life course will create a much more satisfying journey than constantly doubting yourself.

41. You care too much about what others think.

"Too many people buy things they don't need, with money they don't have, to impress people they don't know."

Once people finally accept the reality that you can't please everyone, life gets so much easier.

In fact, having a goal to try to please everyone will simply drive you crazy. There is no reason to exist with other people's motives and thoughts whispering in your ear.

Break free of the people-pleasing cycle and learn to live your own life.

42. You don't relax.

"To have faith is to trust yourself to the water. When you swim you don't grab hold of the water, because if you do you will sink and drown. Instead you relax, and float." – Alan Watts

All work and no play will drive all happiness far away. We all need some down time. If you aren't getting enough, you are probably fighting back some frustration and stress that don't have to hold you down.

Learn to place a higher priority on learning to de-stress. Your mental and physical health will improve dramatically if you learn to take time to rest and rejuvenate.

43. You don't take risks.

"Only those who will risk going too far can possibly find out how far one can go." T.S. Elliot

Many people don't push their life to the limits. If you're feeling a bit unchallenged and unchanged, maybe it's time to revisit some risks and push yourself a bit farther.

You may find yourself exploring uncharted territory while your friends kick back into the easy-chair arms of the familiar. The excitement of getting over your previous limits creates an enticing existence.

44. You're impatient.

"Never cut a tree down in the wintertime. Never make a negative decision in the low time. Never make your most important decisions when you are in your worst moods. Wait. Be patient. The storm will pass. The spring will come." Robert Schuller

I've always struggled with patience. It's so hard to wait, but sometimes that's all you can do.

When you learn to approach times where circumstances force you to slow down, try to keep a positive outlook on the situation.

After all, the time will pass either way; you can choose to be calm and take your time to make the best decision, or you can make a hasty turn that takes you down a much worse road.

45. You don't learn from your mistakes.

"You cannot change what you refuse to confront."

Have you ever noticed how some people never seem to learn? Even though they always come to horrible outcomes, they continue with the same pattern of self-destruction.

While it's easy to see this happen to others, it's much harder to recognize it in ourselves. If something goes wrong, as tempting as it may be just to block the memory, it's far better to think through how the negative result occurred and how you can avoid replicating it in the future.

Our mistakes do serve a purpose, no matter how painful it is, we need to learn from them.

46. You don't have a dog.

"A dog is the only thing on earth that loves you more than you love yourself." – Josh Billings

Pet therapy is so effective, it is utilized by hospitals, nursing homes, and disaster relief agencies such as FEMA. Studies show that petting animals releases oxytocin, a feel-good hormone, in both the dog and human.^[3]

It just stands to reason that having your own live-in pet therapist with a wagging tail and puppy-dog eyes will make you smile and brighten your day.

47. You equate comfort with happiness.

"Western culture has things a little backwards right now. We think that if we had every comfort available to us, we'd be happy. We equate comfort with happiness. And now we're so comfortable we're miserable. There's no struggle in our lives. No sense of adventure. We get in a car, we get in an elevator, it all comes easy. What I've found is that I'm never more alive than when I'm pushing and I'm in pain, and I'm struggling for high achievement, and in that struggle I think there's a magic." – Dean Karnazes

Just because you're comfortable in your life and job, doesn't mean you're necessarily happy.

Learn to distinguish between the two feelings. You may discover that even though you have a cushy life, you are dealing with depression.

If so, find what makes you happy, and pursue it even at the cost of your comfort.

48. You don't love yourself.

"If you are happy, you can give happiness. If you don't love yourself and if you are unhappy with yourself, you can't give anything else but that." Gisele Bündchen

It is impossible to find happiness if you don't love yourself enough to pursue it. While it may be hard to get out of the boxing ring, it's time to stop beating yourself up and learn to love the person in the mirror.

49. You play the victim card.

"It's hard to be happy when the world is conspiring against you. People who take on the role of a victim, are never happy. This is because they don't have any control. They believe that their unhappiness has been caused by an external factor and it can only be taken away by the external factor. They live in the miserable land of 'if only.'"

If you live your life as a victim, you also believe the lie that you have no power to change it. That's not a way to embrace a meaningful existence.

Instead, change your faulty belief systems and empower yourself to take responsibility for your actions and the corresponding reactions you encounter.

Never give your power away to someone else.

50. You don't allow yourself to be happy.

"You know why it's hard to be happy? It's because we refuse to let go of the things that make us sad."

So, what are you holding onto that's making you sad? It's a fair question to ask yourself.

Sometimes, we consciously choose unhappiness because we can't let go. Or, we unknowingly chose it because we haven't taken a good, hard look at our lives and discovered what we need to cut out.

The choice to be happy ultimately lies in your hands. Happiness doesn't have to be elusive. Sometimes, all you have to do is to open the door to the thrilling possibilities before you.