

Put Joy First

The happiest people are those who feel charged about what they do, where they live and the people around them. What is essential in taking charge of loving your career or the day to day living with happiness is making time for things you adore. It is not only nurturing but it adds meaning to life because it reminds us why it's fun to be on this planet.

Happiness move #1: Put your passions on paper.

Write down everything you love or feel passionate about until time is up. (4 min.)

Such as: entertaining with friends, wine tasting, golf, travel, time with children/grandchildren

Now, find time in the next 24 hrs. to enjoy one thing from the list.

Defining your core values is important. If there are core values that help you handle day to day interactions with people, and make you less vulnerable to being displeased then incorporate this value into each day. For example, if my core values involved loyalty, trustworthiness, health, humor, then I need to find ways to practice these values to fulfill joy.

Happiness move #2: Writing down ways to practice your core values.

If I value loyalty, then I need to call a long time friend and say hello. If I know that being healthy is important to me then on my calendar I need to pencil in nutritious meals, exercise time. Here is a short list of qualities that you might want to decide are part of your core values which are from Dan Baker, Ph.D., author of *What Happy People Know*:

Adventure	Empathy	Kindness
Art	Faithfulness	Love
Boldness	Fitness	Loyalty
Cheerfulness	Health	Pleasure
Cleanliness	Honesty	Simplicity
Charity	Humility	Thrifty
Courage	Humor	Trustworthiness
Dependability	Intelligence	Wealth

Create an appreciation journal. It is difficult to get caught up in depression, fear or anxiousness when you are caught up in positives.

Here is how this Happiness #3 works: Write down one positive aspect of your life every day. A positive can be finishing the painting of your garage, a home improvement project as well as your spouse served you coffee this morning.

To help with this diary you can write in your daily calendar these questions per day to get you going with the training of your brain to notice what's going well in your life rather than what's going poorly.

Monday: What did I enjoy most about my day?

Tuesday: How did someone enrich my life today?

Wednesday: What gave me peace of mind today? How?

Thursday: How did I help someone today?

Friday: How did I invest in my future today?

Saturday: When were you at your best this week? What were you doing? What time of day was it?

Sunday: What am I looking forward to in the week ahead? Why?

Using these daily brain changing notes you can discover and enjoy the smaller joys in life that sometimes get passed over as “just another day”. If we slow down and savor them, they should start multiplying and we will become more conscience of the daily joys of appreciation. Appreciation is the highest form of joy according to Susan Perry, Ph.D, author of *Loving in Flow*.

To keep our joy rolling beyond the last episode of your favorite program, we need activities that require effort, skill and concentration says author of *Good Business*, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Ph.D.

Happiness move #4: raise the quality of downtime.

Take a few minutes and jot down alternative ways of engaging in skills that will give deeper satisfaction or help you learn something new.

Examples of this exercise would be:

Instead of watching tv, I will do the crossword puzzle in today’s paper.

Instead of sitting on the couch and reading, I will take a bike ride.

Instead of eating a bowl of ice cream, I will learn how to make a new desert recipe out of one of my many cookbooks.

Instead of watching a movie, I will read the book the movie was based on.

Instead of playing solitaire on my computer, I will ask friends over to play cards.

Instead of going shopping for new clothes, I will clean out my closets and organize them.

Replace at least one of these monotonous habits per week with a more challenging, satisfying activity. You will not only feel more relaxed but smarter too.

According to a study from Ann Arbor Michigan people who brood about a failure are more likely for little disappointments which keep them in a state of depression or moodiness. So instead of replaying the flops or aggravations and blaming yourself, change your self talk about yourself into positive statements that are constructive. The practice of this is Happiness #5:

Instead of self talk that goes this direction, “Gee, I should have asked them if they were qualified for this price range. What an idiot I am.”

Change your self talk to: “next time before I take anyone in my car I am going to use my good sense, and find out who qualified them, when they were qualified, what price range they are qualified for”.

You are in charge of your Joy. Your friends, associates, spouse are what bring you joy. Take charge of your joy, daily. You have the attitude and the direction above to make it happen.

