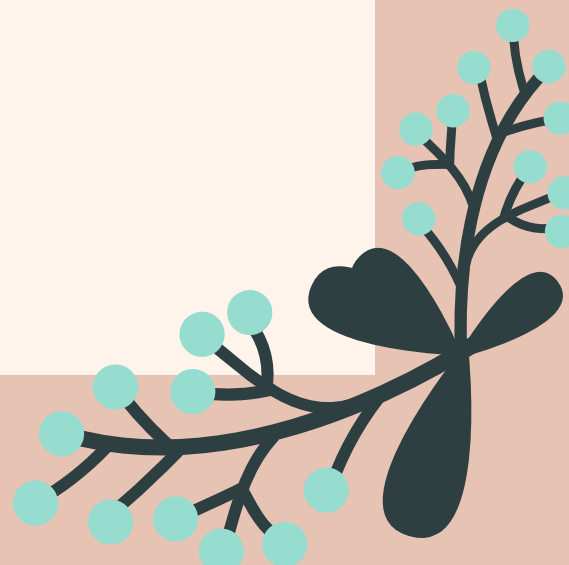




10 Habits of Highly Happy People

by Lorrie Mickelson



10 Habits of Highly Happy People

1. They Wake up with Gratitude & Intention

Happy People start their day thinking about the day ahead.. They feel gratitude for what is and are optimistic about what is coming up. They start their day with anticipation and optimism. Even if there is something coming up that is difficult that day, thinking about what they are looking forward to grounds their day and points them in the right direction.

Try it: As soon as you open your eyes, take a look around the room and notice what you are grateful for right in this present moment. Then, before your feet hit the floor, think of one thing you are looking forward to in the day ahead.

2. They are Mindful

Happy people practice mindfulness on a daily basis. This can be done through a formal meditation practice for 5 - 30 minutes or a mindful walk in the woods. In either case, it is an opportunity to clear the mind clutter. As we clear the clutter, we are more able to fully utilize all of our senses ... what we are seeing, hearing, touching, tasting and feeling. This ability to be more fully in the present moment, soaking it in and savoring it, keeps our mind from wandering, which often is the reason for our unease.

Try it: The next time you are eating a piece of fruit or dark chocolate, really look at it (the colour, shape, size), enjoy its aroma and texture (creamy or crunchy), the sound as you bite in to it, and the taste (sweet, sour, salty). Savor it!

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3. They Set Goals for the Day/Year

Happy people go into their day with a plan so that the day does not get away on them and they feel a sense of accomplishment by the end of it. Three to five goals a day is enough to focus on with at least one of the daily goals moving you forward on a yearly goal. The goals could relate to home, family, friends, work etc.

Try it: In a journal or on a calendar, write out 3 goals for the year. Then, write out 3-5 goals you would like to accomplish today, noting that at least one of your daily goals relates to one of your yearly goals.

4. They Move & Breathe

Happy people move more often. They are also conscious of their breathing. It seems silly to think that we have to think of breathing, but consciously taking deeper breaths is actually quite helpful in energizing and getting more oxygen to the brain and body. Moving the body can increase endorphins and the feel good chemical Serotonin, especially if we get outside in the sunshine. More movement can keep our joints moving freely, resulting in more ease with daily movements, less pain and more energy.

Try it: Inhale through your nose, feeling your belly gently expand outwards, then exhale through the nose or mouth, feeling the belly gently draw back in. Let your exhale linger a little. Try this 3 times, then do a few shoulder rolls and neck turns and continue on with your day.

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5. They consciously connect with others..

Happy people enjoy their time alone but also enjoy the company of others. We are social beings, so seeking out groups is natural. Whether it's a group of girlfriends you get together with each week or an exercise or church group you connect with, human beings benefit greatly from company. It serves to get us out of our heads and into the real world. If you can combine this with helping others such as a volunteer group, then even better. When you are with friends or a group, really engage in the conversation and savor your time afterward by thinking about it, looking at photos or journaling.

Try it: if you are currently not connecting with a group of people or a friend or two at least on a weekly basis, reach out and set up a date. If you are currently doing this, really be mindful during your time together and savor it afterwards.

What Happy People let go of.....

6. Social Comparision

Happy people compare themselves to others less often than do unhappy people. Whether it's through social media or by being aware of what we do not have in comparison to others, playing this comparison game can make us feel unhappy with our lives and circumstances. Happy people don't put themselves in these positions; but if they do, they often have a strategy to deal with it.

Try it: The next time you find yourself comparing your situation to someone else's, try the phrase "good for her" or "good for them" and "good for me" and notice how this makes you feel.

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7. Perfectionism

Happy people recognize when their perfectionism rears its head and have a strategy to deal with it. Perfectionist tendencies can zap our time and energy by having us mulling over small details for too long with very little in return. Being able to say, "That is good enough," especially with the small stuff, frees up extra time and energy to do more of what we love.

Try it: The next time you are making a decision about a product or service or completing a project, try saying, "This will serve the purpose" or "This is good enough"!

8. Unrealistic Expectations

Happy People are careful with their expectations of other's behaviours or actions. A cousin of Perfectionism, unrealistic expectations can be anything from what we are expecting from a situation or event to how our friends are behaving to how our children behave. First of all, it is important to remind ourselves that we cannot control the behavior and actions of others, but we can control our reaction to their behavior. Happy people are also careful with the expectations they set for themselves. Not to be confused with lowering the bar, but just being careful not to set the bar too high, especially in situations over which we have little control. This often sets us up for disappointment and unhappiness.

Try it: When you find yourself reacting to a particular situation, check your expectations.

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9. Regrets

Happy people have fewer regrets than unhappy people. They recognize past mistakes, learn from them and then move on. They have words, phrases or mantras that they use when needed such as, "Everything happens for a reason" and "There is a learning in every situation" and "We are exactly where we are suppose to be at this time". Regrets are very far from the present moment, and the more we stray from the present moment, the unhappier we are.

Try it: The next time you find yourself thinking about a past situation, have a word or phrase that brings you back to the present moment and notice how it makes you feel..

10. Saying Yes to Everyone & Everything

Happy people know that time is precious, so they're very mindful with their time. Everything from requests for volunteer time to events and projects is a well thought out response. They decide if they work weekends or weeknights or like to volunteer on an ongoing basis or at one-time-only events. They more often consider how the event or project fits into their overall goals and plans. They are not as affected by FOMO (the Fear of Missing Out), because they know that some other opportunity that is more connected to their goals will often arise. Although they say yes to lots of opportunities, it is with mindfulness, and they protect their sacred time.

Try it: When the next opportunity arises, ask yourself if it meets your goals. If not, thank them for the request but decline, staying open for the next opportunity.

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Great Reads.....

My inspiration for this piece came from the following books and blogs....

Books

The How of Happiness - A Scientific Approach to Getting the Life you want by Sonya Lyubomirsky

Solve for Happy - Engineer your Path to Joy by Mo Gawdat

The Blue Zones Solution - Eating and Living like the World's Healthiest People by Dan Buettner

Blogs

Letting Go to Move Forward
<http://purposefairy.com>

25 Science Backed Ways to Feel Happier
<http://greatist.com/grow/how-to-be-happy-long-term>