

6 INTENTIONAL PRACTICES TO FOSTER HAPPINESS

1. Have a healthy mindset
2. Be kind and compassionate
3. Have social connections
4. Be cooperative and forgiving
5. Be mindful (attention & focus)
6. Be grateful!

HAPPINESS PRACTICES...

- Lead to positive emotions

JOY

DELIGHT

CURIOSITY

CONTENTMENT

- Need a variety – it is the spice of life!
- Support healthy relationships
- Help you cope
- Not all may resonate
- Take motivation, effort and commitment



HABITS

**HAPPINESS IS NOT A
STATION YOU ARRIVE
AT, BUT A MANNER
OF TRAVELING.**

- HENRY O. DORMAN

**HAVE A
HEALTHY
MINDSET**

MYTHS ABOUT A HEALTHY MINDSET

- We are who we are
- Training our minds is brainwashing
- Risk to being overly optimistic because it blinds us to reality

**PEOPLE ARE JUST
ABOUT AS HAPPY
AS THEY MAKE UP
THEIR
MINDS TO BE.**

- ABRAHAM LINCOLN

3 PRACTICES FOR A HEALTHY MINDSET



1. Cultivate optimism
2. Avoid overthinking/negative thoughts
3. Get in the flow

Optimism: the expectation that the future will socially desirable, good and pleasurable.



- Looking at the bright side
- Finding a silver lining in a cloud
- Noticing what is right rather than wrong

Audience Participation

Raise your hand if you consider yourself an OPTIMIST!



BENEFITS OF AN OPTIMISTIC MIND

- Increased subjective well-being and happiness
- Increased level of positive emotions, vitality and morale
- Increased persistence and motivation
- BETTER HEALTH!!!!

CULTIVATE OPTIMISM

Best possible self diary

Imagine your life in 1, 5 or 10 years and visualize as if things worked out just the way you want and write it down.

Act like a happy person

Smiling in the mirror/at others
Look for reasons to laugh



“The pessimist sees difficulty in every opportunity. The optimist sees opportunity in every difficulty.”

- Winston Churchill



Avoiding overthinking/negative thoughts



Audience Participation

What are some of the physical symptoms that someone might experience brought on by moods or feelings?

CHANGING OUR THOUGHTS

- Our thoughts influence our moods and feelings
- Our moods and feelings impact our HEALTH
- Pay attention to your thoughts

Reinterpret

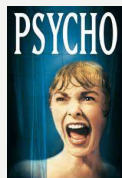
Reframe

The **HARDER** your fall,
the **HIGHER** you bounce!



NEGATIVE THOUGHTS ARE POWERFUL!

- The body doesn't know the difference between things we imagine and things we actually experience.





NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

1. STOP
2. BREATHE
3. REFLECT: Ask yourself, "what is really going on?"
4. CHOOSE: Ask yourself, "is there another way I can think about this situation?"

Where attention goes → energy flows

We can choose what to think about:


vs.



Audience Participation

Have you ever been so engaged in an activity that you lost all sense of time... hours passed and you were focused on nothing else... you felt calm, deeply satisfied and even meditative?

What were you doing?

Right balance of skill & challenge

F L O W



Intrinsically rewarding

INCREASING YOUR FLOW

- Be open to new experiences and continue to learn new things & skills
- Plan smart leisure time—Do something that brings you true joy!
- Keep your attention on the current task at hand
- Transform routine tasks
- Seek meaning in what you do—What is the big picture?

BE KIND & COMPASSIONATE

DEFINITIONS...

- Kindness: **the quality of being friendly, generous, and considerate.** Affection, gentleness, warmth, concern, and care are words that are associated with kindness.
- Compassion: **the feeling that arises when you are confronted with another's suffering and feel motivated to relieve that suffering.**
- Research has shown that when we feel compassion, our heart rate slows down, we secrete the "bonding hormone" oxytocin, and regions of the brain linked to **empathy, caregiving, and feelings of pleasure** light up, which often results in our wanting to approach and care for other people

BENEFITS

- Makes us feel good
- Can reduce risk of heart disease
- Makes people more resilient to stress
- Improve our mental health
- More optimistic and supportive
- Greater satisfaction and growth in relationships
- Less burnout, greater teamwork, and higher job satisfaction in workplaces
- Compassionate people are more socially adept, making them less vulnerable to loneliness

PRACTICING KINDNESS

- Look around you for opportunities to assist others—it does not have to be grand or complicated
- Pick a day a week and commit one new & special act of kindness **OR** do 3-5 small acts of kindness
- Most beneficial if done in one day
- Volunteering protects against ❤️ disease twice as much as aspirin
- Mix it up!



IF YOU WANT HAPPINESS FOR AN HOUR
TAKE A NAP
IF YOU WANT HAPPINESS FOR A DAY
GO FISHING
IF YOU WANT HAPPINESS FOR A YEAR
INHERIT A FORTUNE
IF YOU WANT HAPPINESS FOR A LIFETIME
HELP SOMEONE ELSE

Chinese Proverb ~ iliketoquote.com

HAVE SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

WHAT ARE SOCIAL CONNECTIONS?



- Defined by science as, the feeling that you belong to a group and generally feel close to other people.
- Scientific evidence strongly suggests that this is a core psychological need, essential to feeling satisfied with your life.
- Scientists believe we are essentially wired to connect with other people because natural selection favored humans with a stronger propensity to care for their offspring and organize into groups.
- Neuroscientist Matthew Lieberman—“This is what our brains were wired for: reaching out to and interacting with others,” in his book [Social: Why Our Brains Are Wired to Connect](#).

SOCIAL CAPITAL

Social connections are sometimes called “social capital” for good reason: They are a valuable resource in life, creating moments of positivity and fun, supporting us through good times and bad, and exposing us to new ideas and new people. If we cultivate healthy connections, the research promises a longer, happier, and more prosperous life.



NUTURE RELATIONSHIPS

- Capitalize on positive events: Show interest, enthusiasm, and positivity about someone's good news.
- Listen actively: Connect with someone by tuning in to what they're saying and showing empathy and understanding.
- Make time: Invest in your relationships by spending quality time (not quantity) with people you care about.



BE COOPERATIVE & FORGIVING

FORGIVENESS



Psychologists generally define forgiveness as **a conscious, deliberate decision to release feelings of resentment or vengeance toward a person or group who has harmed you, regardless of whether they actually deserve your forgiveness.**

FORGIVENESS IS NOT:

- Glossing over or denying the seriousness of an offense against you.
- Forgetting, nor does it mean condoning or excusing offenses.
- Reconciling with the person that hurt you or releasing them from legal accountability.

FORGIVENESS IS:

- Changing your attitude toward the original hurt so that it does not continue to wound you.

The Nine Steps to Forgiveness by Fred Luskin
from *Forgive for Good*

Ex. write a letter that you never send

BENEFITS OF FORGIVENESS

- Makes us happier
- Protects our mental health
- Improves our health
- Sustains relationships
- Boosts kindness and connectedness
- Decreases anger, aggression, and delinquency; increases empathy; and improves grades amongst adolescent female bullies and those bullied
- Good for workplaces—linked with more productive employees and few absences

WHY FORGIVE?

- It brings the forgiver *peace of mind* and frees him or her from *corrosive anger* and *deeply held negative feelings*.
- It *empowers* one to recognize the pain suffered without letting that pain define him/her, and *enables one to heal and move on with their life*.
- Happiness doesn't rely on absence of negative experiences, but how we react to them (HEALTHY MINDSET)
- Forgiveness can be very difficult—**Do it for you**, not for the offending party!

BE MINDFUL

Audience Participation

How much of the time are our minds wandering and off track?



MINDLESS

47% of the time!



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE MINDFUL?

- Paying attention, in the present moment, without striving for judgment.
- Observing your thoughts and feelings from a distance.
- Living in the moment and awakening to the present experience.
- **A skill that needs to be developed!**



MINDFULNESS MYTH BUSTING...

Not passive
Not religious
No incense required

BENEFITS OF MINDFULNESS

- Decreased pain and improved ability to cope with pain
- Decreased anxiety, depression & anger
- Improved ability to manage stress
- Increased ability to relax
- Greater energy & enthusiasm for life
- Improved self-esteem
- Improved coping skills
- Strengthened immune system
- Improved social relationships
- Increased well-being and happiness

USING YOUR SENSES

- Smell
- Touch
- Taste
- Hear
- See



MINDFULNESS PRACTICES

- Concentration and mindfulness meditation
- Mindful moving with Yoga, Tai Chi, Qi Gong, walking meditation
- Pranayama
- Relish ordinary experiences: choose a few minutes each day to savor an experience that you normally rush thru! (ex. Enjoying your hot cup of coffee, celebrating the completion of a task)
- Transport yourself to a past positive moment: close your eyes, breathe deeply, think about the memory and recall the positive feeling.
- Celebrate good news.
- Admire beauty or displays of talent.
- Take pleasure in the senses, in momentary pleasures.

The secret for health for both
mind and body is not to
mourn for the past,
worry about the future,
or anticipate troubles,
But to live in the present
moment wisely &
earnestly.

-Buddha

ACTIVITY – MINDFUL SEEING

- A window to look outside.
- Look at everything outside, avoiding labeling (bird, leaves, etc).
- Notice colors, patterns, textures, shapes.



WHAT HAPPENED?

- Initial reaction
- Was it easy or hard?
- How do you feel now?

BE GRATEFUL

GRATITUDE RESEARCH

More than 10 years of study shows that **GRATITUDE** is:

- The strongest trait linked to life satisfaction
- Linked to more positive emotions
 - Joy
 - Happiness
 - Love
 - Enthusiasm
 - Optimism

THE #S ON GRATITUDE

- 25% happier
- 23% ↓ cortisol (stress hormone)
- ½ hour more sleep
- 100% ↑ DHEA (state of calm)
- 33% more exercise each week
- 10% ↓ in systolic blood pressure
- 30% ↓ in fat intake

GRATITUDE MYTHS

- It leads to complacency
- It is a naïve form of positive thinking
- It makes us self-effacing
- It is not possible/appropriate in the midst of adversity or suffering
- You have to be religious

ACTIVITY - GRATITUDE GLASSES

Right now, what can you be grateful for?

Open **all** senses – NOT just your EYES

- Ears
- Touch
- Smell
- Taste

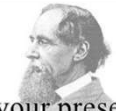




GRATEFUL BREATHING

- Notice
 - What are you grateful for?
- Pause
 - Anchor this memory
- Breathe
 - 10 slow, deep breaths with attention
- Practice

"10 Breaths Challenge" from
Rabbi Rami Shapiro's *Perennial Wisdom for the Spiritually Independent*



Reflect on your present blessings,
of which every man has many,
not on your past misfortunes,
of which all men have some.

Charles Dickens
1812 - 1870

HAPPINESS PRACTICES ARE POWERFUL!

- Many **PROVEN** psychological, physical and social benefits
- **HABIT** is important.
- Do a variety!



THE END!

THANK YOU FOR COMING & PARTICIPATING