



Career Transition

**5 STEPS TO
INCREASE YOUR
HAPPINESS**

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The names of the people featured in the individual stories have been changed to protect their identities.

We all want to be happy. We all want meaning in our life. But why is it so important?

Happiness is not just about being joyous. It brings with it a wide range of other benefits. In our professional lives, these benefits include higher income, greater productivity and higher quality of work.

On a personal level, being happy leads to more satisfying and longer marriages, more friends, more energy and better physical health. Happiness actually bolsters our immune system, lowers our stress levels and often leads to a longer life.

Moreover, happiness can lead to greater creativity and self-confidence.

So, if being happy is so important, what do we need to do to bring more happiness into our lives? In the following pages you will find five exercises that have been scientifically proven to enhance happiness levels.

If you commit to the exercises, you will find yourself getting more out of life.

Enjoy!

Exercise 1

Life is always full of ups and downs. Set aside time on a regular basis to recall moments of gratitude.

Over the course of one week, take at least one photo each day of something that you really appreciate or that makes your life meaningful. It could be a special moment shared with a loved one, a wonderful sunset, or a great meal you cooked. At the end of the week, upload the photos to your computer, or use an app (such as iAlbum) to save them in one place.

Take time to admire each photo, and think about what it means to you. Why was each moment so special? Include this in the description of each photo, and relive each moment again in your mind.

Make this daily appreciation a habit. If you don't want to take photos, at the end of each day, make sure that you reflect on what went well and what you are grateful for.

Keep the photos close to hand. Life is always full of ups and downs. On days when things don't quite go your way, take the time to revisit the photos, and appreciate these special moments. The photos will remind you of what matters most and will give you strength and purpose when dealing with life's roller coaster.

Exercise 2

We know that positive thinking about ourselves is important. Our thoughts, our actions, and our contacts have a large impact on our positive approach to life.

- Look at who your close acquaintances are. Are your friends and family positive people who thrive in the face of adversity, or do they have a tendency to get down when problems come their way? Make sure that you surround yourself with resilient people – people who bounce back when confronted with life’s challenges. Spend time with them, and know that their resilience will rub off on you.
- Each day make sure that you put aside at least thirty minutes for your own well-being. Take the opportunity to quieten your mind, and reflect on the positives in your life. This can be done, for example, by taking the dog for a walk, gardening, painting, or even meditating. When we calm our minds and notice the good things, the feelings of appreciation and gratitude will enhance our happiness and our resilience.
- Start paying attention to your inner voice, Often, our inner thoughts make us doubt ourselves, and then they have a negative impact on our self-confidence. We need to keep these negative thoughts under control and ensure that our inner voice supports our goals and aspirations. If you often hear yourself being self-critical, such as saying “I am so stupid. Everything I do is wrong”, take a minute to reflect on your successes. Think about your happiest life events. Why were they so happy? What did you do to make them so good? What did you do well? Spend time appreciating what you can do, and what you have achieved. Even small wins count.

Exercise 3

Have you ever noticed how great it makes you feel when you help someone? Not only do we do something good for the person we are helping, but we ourselves feel happier as well. Kindness and generosity have a significant impact on our own well-being and happiness. And the good news is that random acts of kindness can play a large role in this.

- Be generous to a complete stranger. Try buying a coffee for the person in the queue behind you or saying a few kind words to the cashier.
- Be kind to yourself. When we do something wrong, we are often much harsher on ourselves than we are on our friends or family. Next time you feel that you have failed at something, take a step back, and reflect on what you would say if a friend were in the same situation. Show yourself the same kindness.
- How have you helped people in the past? Look back over your life, and remember times when you helped others. Perhaps it was visiting a sick relative, giving a guiding hand to a younger person, or helping someone cross the road. Notice how these memories make you feel today. From now on, consciously find opportunities to be kind or make a loved one happy.

Studies have shown that helping others for two hours per week has a positive impact on our own well-being. So, what can you do to make a difference to others? It does not matter if the acts of kindness are big or small. You can help many people with small acts of kindness too!

Exercise 4

Understanding our values and living our life by them increases our levels of happiness. Do you know what is important to you? The exercise below will help you.

Think of three people you admire. These people can come from any background or era. They could be someone you know personally, someone from history, or someone from stage or screen...even a character in a movie you like or a book you have read,

Name of person 1:

Name of person 2:

Name of person 3:

When you think of each person, what do you admire the most? Why?

What I admire about (person 1) and why:

What I admire about (person 2) and why:

What I admire about (person 3) and why:

What common characteristics are there between the three people you have chosen?

In what ways are you similar or different to these people?

The qualities of the people we admire often mirror our own values. By doing this exercise, you will have spent some time thinking about values and what they mean to you.

In order to be happy, we need to act in line with our values. Take some time thinking about how the values you have identified resonate with you. Are there other things important to you in life? If so, note them down here:

Are you living your life in line with your values? If not, think about what you can change and how you can do this. What are you prepared to commit to?

Exercise 5

“So many people spend their health gaining wealth, and then have to spend their wealth to regain their health.” – A. J. Reb Materi

Look after your physical health. We know that there is a close connection between mind and body. This is not just about getting fit, but also increasing your happiness levels. Ensure that you lead a positive lifestyle to include exercise, nutrition, daylight and sleep.

- If possible, engage in at least 30 minutes of physical activity on a daily basis. Exercise increases the brain’s dopamine production, making you feel happier and more balanced.
- If you spend most of your day at the computer, take micro-moments out to relax. For example, get up each hour for a walk around the room. Or, if someone calls you, don’t answer immediately. Let the phone ring three times, breathing in and out deeply before picking it up.
- The more we are in contact with nature, the better we feel. Visit a park at least once a week, do the gardening or go for a walk in the countryside. If you can’t get away, use a humidifier with cypress oil. Coniferous essential oils mitigate stress by lowering levels of cortisol when inhaled.
- We know that nutrition affects our mental health, with certain diets associated with increased depression, anxiety, and insomnia. Start paying more attention to what you eat. If you need help, consult your doctor or a nutritionist to see what type of diet is best for you.
- Sleep is needed to “reset” the brain and body. Prioritize quality sleep by sticking to a sleep schedule. Go to bed and get up each day at a regular bedtime. Avoid sleeping in – even on weekends. Limit screen time: don’t look at any kind of screen for the first hour you’re awake and the last hour before you go to sleep.

If you want to be happy, you need to understand the importance of your whole self. Look to lead a more positive lifestyle.

Happiness is not about always focusing on the end goal but on enjoying the journey with all its ups and downs, instead.

Interested in learning more? **Contact us** today to find out how our 6-part course can guide you to a life of meaning and fulfilment.