

A full-page background image of a beach at sunset. The sky is a mix of orange, pink, and purple, with a bright sun low on the horizon. The ocean has gentle waves, and the sand is wet and reflective. In the foreground, the word 'HAPPY' is written in the sand using seaweed. A white rectangular box is centered in the upper half of the image, containing the text 'LIVE HAPPY' and a wavy line.

LIVE HAPPY



HAPPY

LIVE HAPPY

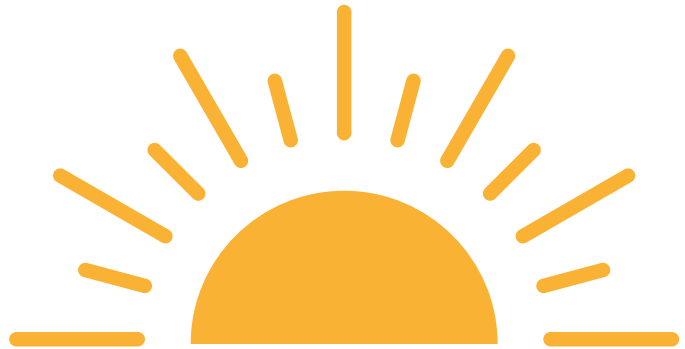
Happiness is letting go of what you think your life is supposed to look like and celebrating it for everything that it is. – Mandy Hale

This program will cover:

- What is Happiness?
- The Science of Happiness
- Benefits of Happiness
- How to Cultivate Happiness

What is Happiness?

Happiness has been defined in many ways:



"Happiness is the joy that we feel when we're striving after our potential." – Ancient Greeks

"To be happy, you have to be willing to be compliant with not knowing." – Shirley MacLaine

"My happiness grows in direct proportion to my acceptance, and in inverse proportion to my expectations." – Michael J. Fox

"Only when we fill our own need and feel satiated from within can we truly be fulfilled and happy." – Dr. Shefali Tsabary

"Happiness is when what you think, what you say and what you do are all in harmony". – Gandhi

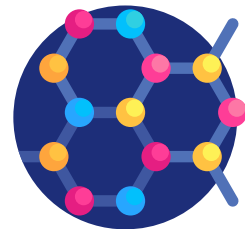
Regardless of where you are on the happiness spectrum, each person has their own way of defining happiness. It is important to understand that a happy person still experiences negative emotions and ups and downs in life. A good life is one that is emotionally rich! How would you know what happiness is if you never felt sadness? It is your reaction to the tough times in your life, not the tough times themselves, that determine your happiness.

How do you define happiness? _____

The Science of Happiness

You can choose to be happy. Happiness can be influenced by environmental factors such as relationships or living situations. However, at the root of your emotions are hormones. Hormones are chemicals in your body that act as messengers. The messages they send to your organs determine how your organs function and how you feel. The "feel-good" hormones are a group of four hormones that make you feel happy. They are also neurotransmitters, meaning they send and deliver messages between nerve cells in your brain.

- **Dopamine:** Dopamine is produced by neurons at the base of the brain. Dopamine helps us feel pleasure and reinforces behaviors. For example, this is part of the reason it is difficult to stop eating after only one cookie. Dopamine also plays a role in learning, attention, mood, heart rate, kidney function, sleep, and pain processing.
- **Serotonin:** Serotonin is produced in the center of the brainstem. It's primary function is to act as a mood booster, but it also affects memory, fear, the stress response, digestion, sleep, breathing, and body temperature. Low levels of serotonin are linked to depression. Serotonin levels can be increased through exercise and exposure to the sun or bright light.
- **Endorphins:** Endorphins are the brain's natural pain relievers. They are released by the hypothalamus in response to pain or stress. Endorphins can be released through exercise (this is where the "runner's high" comes from), acupuncture, meditation, sex, playing music, laughing, and exposure to UV light.
- **Oxytocin:** Oxytocin is sometimes referred to as the "love hormone", primarily because of its role in facilitating childbirth. However, oxytocin is also produced in the hypothalamus and released by the pituitary gland during sex and when we fall in love. Low levels of oxytocin have also been linked to depression, including post-partum depression. Music, physical touch, and exercise all increase oxytocin levels.



Benefits of Happiness

Health Benefits:

- Happiness protects your heart.
- Happiness strengthens your immune system; happy people are less likely to get sick.
- Happiness combats stress.
- Happy people have fewer aches and pains.
- Happiness combats disease and disability.

- Happiness increases longevity.
- Happy people are more likely to engage in health behaviors like sleeping, eating nutritious foods, exercising, etc.

Other Benefits:

- Happiness is good for our relationships; happy people are more likely to get married, have fulfilling marriages, and have more friends.
- Happy people make more money and are more productive at work.
- Happy people are 31% more productive, have 37% higher sales, and are three times more creative than their counterparts.
- Happy people are more generous.
- Happy people cope better with stress and trauma.
- Happy people are better able to see the big picture.

What will motivate you to practice happiness? _____

"The greatest discovery of any generation is that a human being can alter his life by altering his attitude." – William James, American Philosopher

How to Cultivate Happiness

Happy people don't have the best of everything. They make the best of everything.
 – Neil Pasricha

Unfortunately, happiness is not going to appear out of thin air. Happiness is something that must be cultivated and worked for. What makes you happy may not make another person happy, but there are many things you can do to increase happiness in your life, both long and short-term. Remember that real happiness doesn't happen in a moment or overnight. Don't become discouraged. Your persistent efforts to find happiness will be worth the joyful, fulfilling life you will build in the process.

7 Tips to Be Happy Right Now

Neil Pasricha, the director of The Institute for Global Happiness, has pointed out that society teaches that in our search for success, we work hard *and then* we achieve happiness.

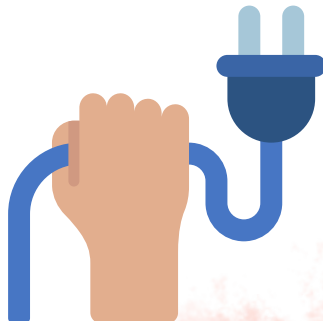


He presented an idea that suggests that by being happy *first*, we feel great, look great, engage in healthy behaviors, connect with other people, and end up doing great work *because* we feel great. And great work leads to big success.



Pasricha suggests seven ways that you can train your brain to be happy right now:

- **Three Walks.** Exercise helps individuals feel more enthusiasm and excitement. It releases some of the "feel-good hormones". Three brisk 30-minute walks a week have been shown to help individuals recover from clinical depression. Exercise helps you feel happy because it releases some of the "feel-good hormones".
- **The 20-Minute Replay.** After you have had a happy experience, write about it for twenty minutes. You relive the experience both as you write about it and as you re-read it later on. Your brain takes you back to the experience and helps you feel those emotions again. Writing about positive experiences helps us remember the things we like about the people in our lives and the experiences we have had.
- **Random Acts of Kindness.** Finding five simple ways each week to be kind to others can dramatically improve your happiness because not only do you feel better about yourself, but other people appreciate you, and that can increase your happiness as well.
- **A Complete Unplug.** Many of the happiest and most productive people have learned the importance of being present and fully engaged in whatever it is they are doing. However, they have also become skilled at disengaging and taking time for renewal. Taking complete downtime at the end of the day, including from social media and other forms of media that we often consider "a break" can help you recharge for the next day.



- **Hit Flow.** Finding your flow can also be described as "being in the zone" or "getting into a groove". The author of flow theory, Mihali Csikszentmihalyi, described flow as "being completely involved in an activity for its own sake. The ego falls away. Time flies. Every action, movement, and thought follows inevitably from the previous one...your whole being is involved, and you're using your skills to the utmost". In other words, you are totally present and absorbed in the moment, and you are being challenged and demonstrating skill at the same time.
- **2 Minute Meditations.** Studies on meditation have shown that meditation causes the parts of the brain associated with stress to shrink during meditation while helping the parts of the brain associated with compassion and self-awareness to grow. Meditation is a tool you can use to be more present and mindful. Taking two minutes to pause, breathe, and refocus can improve your productivity and happiness.



- **Five Gratitudes.** "If you can be happy with simple things, then it will be simple to be happy" (Neil Pasricha). Take a moment before bed each night to write down five things you are grateful for. People who regularly practice gratitude are happier and also experience improved physical health.

Long-Term Happiness

One of the largest studies on happiness, the Harvard Study of Adult Development, began in 1938. Over 700 men have been tracked since their teens and are interviewed every other year to collect data on their physical and emotional wellness. The study has since expanded to include many of their wives and children. The study aims to identify the factors that contribute to happiness, health, and longevity. Based on the results of the study, there are two characteristics that have been linked to increased happiness for the majority of participants.

- **Know when to let go.** As people get older, they tend to focus more on the things that really matter and worry less about the things that don't. In other words, adults are better at letting go of failures from their past than their younger counterparts. Consider what activities make you happy and how you could incorporate them into your schedule more frequently. It might also be beneficial to consider what activities made you happy earlier in your life, why you stopped doing them, and if you might benefit from participating in them again.

- **Stay connected.** Strong relationships are one of the most powerful indicators of happiness and health. Strong and happy relationships are better indicators of happiness than social class, IQ, and genetics. People with healthy relationships also experience better health throughout their lives. Seek opportunities to make connections with the people around you, volunteer, learn to listen, be genuine, and spend quality time with your friends and family members.

What do you currently do to cultivate happiness? _____

Is there anything else you would like to try or will do in the future to cultivate happiness?

Happiness depends upon ourselves. – Aristotle

Goals:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Happy

Resources:

- Harvard Gazette
- health.harvard.edu
- globalhappiness.org
- greatergood.berkeley.edu
- heart.org
- MayoClinic