

Happiness 101 – How we can influence our own happiness

Ways to feel happier!

• Be Thankful!

When we count our blessings our brain retains a pattern for scanning for the positive rather than focusing on the negative. Each night list 3 things you are thankful for in your life.

• Reflect on a positive experience

When we journal for 3 minutes or spend time writing about a positive experience we allow our brain to relive it. Try this 3 minute reflection for 21 days to make it a habit.

• Exercise

Exercise teaches your brain that your behaviour matters. Just 20 minutes a day can lift our mood and make us feel so much better.

• Meditation

Mindfulness meditation or deep breathing allows your brain to focus on one thing at a time helping you to de-stress and thus feel calmer.

Remember:

- Happiness is not a destination...
- Happiness is a state!
- Happiness comes from within – it is not measured by external factors!
- Happiness does not come down to success!
- Happiness comes down to how we view the world so look through a positive lens in order to feel more positive!

Why should we practice Happiness?

- Happiness is good for our health: Happy people are less likely to get sick, and they live longer.
- Happiness is good for our relationships: Happy people are more likely to get married and have fulfilling marriages, and they have more friends.
- Happy people make more money and are more productive at work.
- Happy people are more generous.
- Happy people cope better with stress and trauma.
- Happy people are more creative and are better able to see the big picture.

How happy are you?

Find out by taking some of these research-tested questionnaires online:

- The Subjective Happiness Scale, created by Sonja Lyubomirsky
- Three scales created by Ed Diener, a professor of psychology at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign: his Satisfaction with Life Scale, Scale of Positive and Negative Experience, and Flourishing Scale.
- The Positivity Self Test, created by Barbara Fredrickson, a professor of psychology at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.
- The Fordyce Emotions Questionnaire, created by Michael Fordyce, who was a professor of psychology at Edison State College.