



10 Habits for Happiness

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What makes a person happy? Is it money, power, possessions? Maybe for a little while. But science has shown time and time again that adopting **healthy habits** is the 'secret' to true and long-lasting **happiness**.

We are creatures of habit. Everything we think, say and do is a result of deep-seated habits etched into our minds through years and years of repetitious behaviour. Those very same habits either help to move us forward or hold us back in our progress in life. In fact, the state and quality of our lives right now is a direct reflection of our daily habits. But we often find ourselves stuck, unsure of how to get started on the road to developing good habits.

The good news is that we, as humans have the capacity for self-empowerment. You actually have the ability to change your state of mind and in turn, your entire experience.

In other words, there are ALWAYS options. You're not stuck or helpless or at the mercy of external factors or your years of patterned behaviour... unless you choose to be! Happiness doesn't happen by chance—it happens by choice. It's a skill that anyone can develop with the right habits.

'Of this be sure: you do not find the happy life... you make it.'

Thomas S Manson

So yes, a happier life is within your reach - by changing your habits. Just a few small actions practiced daily can change your outlook and your future. So, if you want to get happier, here are 10 habits to start implementing, starting, yesterday!

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#1 Be with happy people as much as possible.

Have you ever noticed that when you're around negative people, you get dragged down? Well the opposite is also true – being around happy people is contagious and we become happier ourselves. So seek out friends and people within your networks to spend time with that inspire and uplift you and feel your own happiness and contentment grow.

Of course that's not to say you should ignore or abandon people in need, or remove yourself from situations when our loved ones are facing problems and need support. After all, none of us can be happy all the time. But the message here is to reconsider friendships that don't lift you up and connect with people who are excited by life and its opportunities!



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#2 Express Gratitude.

Gratitude is the surest pathway to health, happiness and success. It shifts our attention towards what we have rather than what we don't have. It's the natural abundance of simple pleasures and opportunities that we have and are blessed with that we often take for granted.

Appreciation feeds happiness. It highlights and gives value to what matters in our life. And the more you appreciate, the more you'll find things to be appreciative of.

It's incredible just how much research has shown that expressing gratitude makes us happy. People who make a habit of daily gratitude experience higher levels of happiness and well-being.

A regular gratitude session is an easy way to get started. This just involves sitting down and making a list of things you're grateful for. Leaving notes for your future self is another fun option.

Gratitude researcher Robert Emmons recommends a strategy, too. It might help to remember the bad. Interestingly, we have a tendency to be less grateful when times are good, because we start thinking we're invulnerable. We get used to life being a ball, and we come to expect it. To combat this, he suggests:

Try this little exercise. First, think about one of the unhappiest events you have experienced. How often do you find yourself thinking about this event today? Does the contrast with the present make you feel grateful and pleased? Do you realise your current life situation is not as bad as it could be? Try to realise and appreciate just how much better your life is now. The point is not to ignore or forget the past but to develop a fruitful frame of reference in the present from which to view experiences and events.

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Scientists say gratitude also bolsters our self-control, encourages us to exercise more and adopt other healthy habits, improves our relationships, and makes us more resilient in tough times.

365 Gratitude project – a great site to explore more about the power of gratitude in your life.



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#3 Move it... Move it....

Exercise. Every day. Walk. Run. Skip. Swim. Dance. Whatever.

I could go on and on about the incredible benefits of movement. But it all comes down to this – feeling better about ourselves, and happier about life.

Happy people move more. They incorporate movement into their daily lives – walking wherever and whenever they can, taking fitness classes, practicing yoga, cycling on the weekend – simple actions that they enjoy. Light strenuous activity oxygenates your blood and boosts the endorphins in your body.

Not only will you feel physically better when you start this habit, but you'll also feel more motivated, have more mental clarity and be more emotionally grounded. Exercise releases dopamine, oxytocin and serotonin into the system, providing a natural high.

It also works wonders for reducing stress, boosting confidence, controlling addiction and more. It's a miracle drug that isn't a drug.



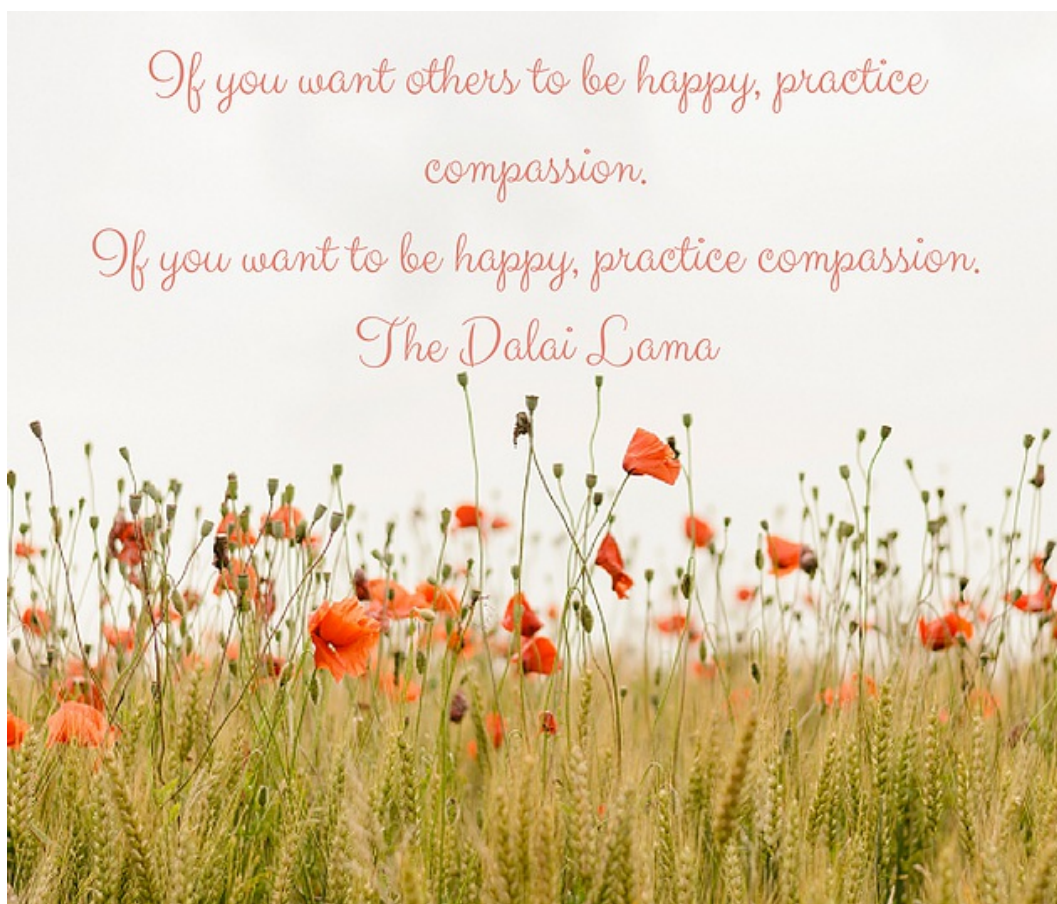
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#4 Practice Compassion.

Kindness breeds kindness, just as compassion breeds compassion. Think of it as the circle of life – giving to others so they might live happier and healthier, which in turns boost your own happiness levels.

When we practice kindness and compassion, our brain secretes feel-good hormones and neurotransmitters – giving us a natural high.

Many happy, fulfilled people devote their time to others. It could be volunteering for a charity, providing pro-bono work and skills sharing, donating to a cause, or simply being there for those around you.



Studies have shown that altruistic people experience less depression and are physically fitter and healthier than non-givers.

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#5 Write down your goals.

If you want to live a happy life, tie it to a goal not to people or things.

Do you write down your goals on a regular basis? Or do you simply think about them, without actually recording them anywhere?

The art and science of goal setting has been studied and found that writing down where you wish to be in your life, and journaling about it, will highly increase the likelihood of you creating the life you want. A happy life!

Really?? Why does writing down your goals and dreams have such a profound impact?

The explanation has to do with the way our brains work.

As you may know, your brain has a left and a right hemisphere.

The wide, flat bundle of neural fibres that connects the two hemispheres is called the corpus callosum. This is the conduit through which the electrical signals between the right brain, which is imaginative, and the left brain, which is literal, make contact.

These electrical signals then move into the fluid that surrounds the brain and travels up and down the spinal column. These signals then communicate with every fibre, cell and bone in our body... to the consciousness that operates within us to transform our thoughts into reality. It allows us to align our frequency to a life we would love living.

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This is significant, because if you just THINK about one of your goals or dreams, you're only using the right hemisphere of your brain, which is your imaginative centre.

But, if you think about something that you desire, and then write it down, you also tap into the power of your logic-based left hemisphere...

And you send your consciousness and every cell of your body a signal that says, "I want this, and I am serious!"

Just the act of writing down your dreams and goals sparks an entirely new dimension of consciousness, ideas and productivity to the powerhouse that is your subconscious mind.

This simple act also opens your subconscious to 'seeing' opportunities that simply can't be observed if you're tied up with THINKING about your goals.

Take steps towards your achieving your goals.

Stop for a minute and write down your three most important long-term goals in life. Are they translated into short-term goals and present actions for you?

Does your present look like the future you're dreaming of? If not, put more time and energy on what you want to see grow. Put pen to paper everyday for the next 7 days and see how you can nurture these goals into being.

Keep writing and take small steps every day to elevate you toward what you want. Tiny steps all add up.

Reference: <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/...>

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#6 Cultivate a daily morning ritual.



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*To live is the rarest
thing in the world.
Most people exist,
that is all.*

Oscar Wilde

Having a daily morning ritual can help you big time setting up your mood and energy for the day. In fact, great minds seem all to have this in common. It is a great opportunity to be mindful and present and to take care of your body and mind, kick starting the day balanced and on the right foot.

Mornings set the tone for the rest of the day. **A good morning routine** leaves you feeling centred, energized, and on top of the world.

Meditate, do yoga, write a list of everything you love and are grateful for, sit quietly with a cuppa, watch inspirational YouTube videos, or listen to your favourite song before leaving the house. Simply, set yourself up for a great day!

Takeaway: what is the best way to start your day?

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#7 Keep Smiling.



This may sound silly, but smiling is healthy and also improves your well-being. It increases longevity, makes you look more attractive, be more productive at work, and feel better.

Studies have confirmed that people who smile a genuine smile are happier in life. This is one of the best habits for allowing you to find emotional, mental and spiritual balance over time -- simply by enjoying a smile. Try it right now and note how you feel...

There are quite a few other studies about it – check out this [TED talk](#) on the hidden power of smiling.

The physiology of our bodies dictates the psychology of our minds. When we frown or slouch or do any number of other things that convey a sense of depression and unhappiness, our mind takes those cues and runs with them. However, once we shift our outward appearance to a more positive outlook by consciously adjusting ourselves, our inward feelings follow.

Takeaway: Keep smiling!

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#8 Get a good night sleep.

The proven health benefits of a consistent sleep routine go far beyond simply feeling rested. Getting enough quality sleep has been shown to improve your concentration, memory, mood and energy levels, as well as helping with weight control, immunity and even increasing your life span.

But it can be difficult to fit in enough sleep between work, family and the rest of life. The good news is that your body has natural systems in place to ensure you get a good night's sleep. Working with your own body's rhythms can be key to developing a good sleep routine and enjoying the benefits.

The two main phases of sleep are rapid-eye-movement (REM) sleep and non-rapid-eye-movement (NREM) sleep. Our REM and NREM cycles are largely regulated by our internal biological clock, also known as our circadian rhythm. This internal clock typically works on a 24-hour cycle. It oversees our sleeping and waking times as well as the biological functions that happen during sleep

This is where the importance of a regular sleep schedule comes in. Circadian rhythms function best when you have a routine. If you have an irregular sleep pattern, such as sleeping in on weekends, it throws out your natural circadian rhythms.

A Better Way to Sleep

When you establish a regular sleep pattern, it allows your circadian rhythm to operate at its peak. An important function of your circadian clock is to ensure hormones like cortisol and adrenaline are released about an hour before you need to wake up. This gently prepares your body for wakefulness and you'll naturally be ready when the alarm clock goes off. Some people who are well-established in a routine can even wake up consistently on time without an alarm clock.

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The healthiest option is to set a sleeping schedule and stick to it as best you can. This will ensure you get enough sleep and that it's good quality.

Takeaway: Find a Pattern that Works for You. Each of our biological clocks are unique. There is no universal schedule that fits everyone. Make a good night's sleep a daily priority.

#9 Let Go and Let Be.

Letting go isn't always easy, but it's the only way new and better things can come along. When we let go of something, we come to a peace of mind. The struggle is over and new ideas and perspectives can begin to open up.

Practice **letting go** of what doesn't serve you, such as complaining, comparing yourself to others, negativity, and mistakes from the past or worries about the future.



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Strategies to assist letting go:

1. Use meditation or yoga to bring you into the present moment (instead of dwelling on the past or worrying about the future).
2. Make a list of your accomplishments—even the small ones— and add to it daily. You'll have to let go of a little discontentment to make space for this self-satisfaction.
3. Visualize a box in your head labeled "Expectations." Whenever you start dwelling on how things should be or should have been, mentally shelve the thoughts in this box.
4. Engage in a physical activity. Exercise decreases stress hormones and increases endorphins, chemicals that improve your state of mind.
5. Focus all your energy on something you can actually control instead of dwelling on things you can't.

Reference: <https://tinybuddha.com/blog/40...>

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#10 Inspire yourself



'Whatever the mind can conceive and believe, it can achieve'
W Clement Stone

It's often difficult to stay motivated for any considerable amount of time. We get discouraged and distracted from our goals when things arise in life that send us on tangents and throw us off track. But one of the absolute best ways you can stay motivated in life is to keep inspiring yourself on a daily basis.

Read, watch inspirational videos and get inspired by stories of others who have achieved their dreams. Anthony Robbins calls this your "hour of power," but you can spend as much or as little time on this as you need. Inspiration is the pathway to achievement because what the mind can conceive and believe it can achieve!

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Claim Your Happiness Once and For All

Not being in charge of your happiness is frustrating. Relying on external events and circumstances to be in a certain way in order to feel good is a recipe for misery. Because, when life doesn't go as planned or things fall apart, so does our happiness.

Happiness isn't about having all the pieces in place. It isn't about having a problem-free life or reaching a certain goal or objective. Instead, it's about being able to enjoy where you are, no matter what.

Don't leave your happiness to chance. Choose to claim it. Live the life you deserve to live.

As the Dalai Lama says, "Everyday, think as you wake up, 'today I am fortunate to have woken up, I am alive, I have a precious human life, I am not going to waste it. I am going to use all my energies to develop myself, to expand my heart out to others, to achieve enlightenment for the benefit of all beings, I am going to have kind thoughts towards others, I am not going to get angry or think badly about others, I am going to benefit others as much as I can.'"