

6 Strategies for Cultivating Happiness

The sound of birds singing on a sunny morning. A soft, early morning breeze is floating through the curtains. The sunrise. A bee is happily moving from flower to flower. A dog is lazily lying in the sun and quietly observing you, as you sip your tea...

Ok, the weather isn't always perfect. But you can always find joy in the small things if you bring your focus there. Your first cup of coffee. The smell of a freshly laundered bed. The feeling of carpet under your feet. Embrace the here and now. It's the little things in life that make us happy. Drink them up. Cherish them. Indulge yourself in things that don't cost a penny – take a walk, read a book (join a library and always have a good book on the go), have a hot bath, do some exercise, light some candles. Remember that happiness is often a habit, one that needs to be practiced. Give the tips below a try!

Make your weekends special

Don't always reserve Saturdays and Sundays for catching up on housework or DIY. Find the time to indulge in some "me" time. And fill the days with family and friends. Stay at home and listen to the radio or read a book, lazily staying in your pyjamas, and doing nothing. Whatever you choose to do, make it unique. And look forward to it.

Do something nice during the week

You can't live for the weekends. That'll make the working week drag on and on. So, plan a little something here and there to keep you happy. Make Tuesday a movie night. Make Wednesdays the day you catch up with friends. Join a virtual cooking class or book club and make it a regular fixture.

Focus on "experiences" instead of things

It's easy to get sucked into consumerism (especially if you follow people with gorgeous clothes or homes on Instagram). We all buy stuff. But buying things doesn't make us happy. We might get that initial buzz. But it doesn't last. Accumulate less, live more – that's the sentiment I'd love you to ponder today.

De-clutter your home

If all that stuff you've been buying over the years is starting to clutter your home, perhaps it's time for a re-think. Because you know what they say, "tidy home, tidy mind" – and we're trying to encourage optimum wellbeing here. A good old spring clean not only transforms your life; it can also make you happier. What items can you discard or give away today to have a cleaner, clutter-free home?

Spend more time with positive people

If there's someone in your life who takes a little more than they give or somebody who always leaves you feeling deflated rather than energized, perhaps it's time to move away and spend more time with other friends. The person who makes you laugh and feel great about yourself.

Easier said than done when you have people you can't shake off, even if you wanted to. Be there for those who need you. Just don't feel guilty about laying down a few boundaries and limiting your time with them.

Smile

You tend to smile when you're happy. But it's actually a two-way street. We smile because we're happy, and smiling causes the brain to release dopamine, which makes us happier. Try starting each morning by smiling at yourself in the mirror. The next time you find yourself feeling low, crack a smile and see what happens.

