

The Pursuit of Happiness

Happiness is not only about the feelings of joy and contentment, but also a sense of fulfilment, satisfaction and meaning towards life in general. In addition to enhancing mental health, there are many other great benefits of happiness. Here are some examples:

- Associated with positive sense of self-worth and higher motivation to get things done
- Allow us to stay optimistic, to manage stress and challenges proactively, and to facilitate us to solve problems
- Strengthen immunity, reduce risk of diseases, promote health and longevity
- Make it easier to establish and maintain good interpersonal relationships
- Promote work performance

Why are some people always happy?
How can I be happy?



Who is in charge of our happiness?

According to some studies, although happiness may be related to some biological and environmental factors, it is also subject to our thinking and behaviours.

People who proactively seek happiness are more likely to feel happy. In terms of thinking, if we view things from a positive perspective, it will be easier for us to experience positive emotions. Similarly, in terms of behaviours, doing what we like can enhance happiness. As such, the key to happiness rests on our active adjustment of our thinking and behaviours.

Ways to pursue happiness

To stay healthy and happy, we can try the following three areas.

1 Keep calm

• Practise gratitude

To nurture positive emotions, we can appreciate and give thanks to people around us. We can also pay attention to things that we often take for granted in order to reflect and cherish the good things in life. By the end of the day, we can recall some good things that happened during the day. Some examples are having good weather, getting help from a colleague or meeting family and friends. If we develop a grateful attitude, we tend to see the bright side of things and thus our life satisfaction can be increased.



• Cultivate a positive mindset and handle challenges proactively

Our feelings are shaped by the way we see things. Viewing things from a positive perspective can cultivate positive emotions. This is particularly effective in face of adversity. Below are some examples:

- “Difficulties and adversities can be considered as learning opportunities to build up our problem-solving skills.”
- “Do not lose heart when encountering setbacks. Through persistent efforts, there will be gains in our personal growth and life.”

Staying positive not only reduces stress and relieves negative emotions, but also lightens our mood and let us stay carefree and hopeful. It thus raises our motivation and capability in generating strategies to overcome setbacks and hardships.

2 Stay wise

• Set and pursue goals to find meaning in life

By setting goals and devoting energy and time to something we are passionate about, we can strengthen our sense of control towards life and build up our confidence and sense of accomplishment, thereby increase happiness and meaning in life. We can act now and set some concrete and feasible targets right away. Some examples are contacting an old friend every week to strengthen our social connections or enrolling for vocational courses to build up knowledge and skills. By evaluating our progress and adjusting the goals regularly, we can recognise our improvement and/or achievement and affirm ourselves.

• Practise healthy lifestyle

Good habits not only promote health, but also strengthen our sense of control towards life, stabilise our mood and improve our ability to relieve stress and negative emotions. Below are some examples:

- Exercise regularly with appropriate length of time.
Choose physical activities that suit your interests and fitness
- Maintain a balanced diet to keep an optimal body weight
- Avoid drinking. Do no smoke, take drugs, excessively browse the internet or gamble, etc.

To reduce stress and soothe the body and mind, we can engage in relaxation activities (such as deep breathing or mindfulness exercises).

3 Be kind

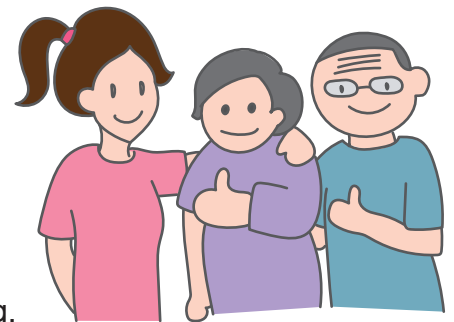
● Live in the moment to create and experience joy

Fully engaging in something we like often brings us pleasure and contentment. We can spend time in what we are interested and enjoy the fun, such as listening to music and reading. We can also develop healthy hobbies such as learning gardening or a new language to enrich our life and increase life satisfaction.

● Maintain good family and social relationships

Having positive interpersonal relationships is an important component for happiness. By maintaining stable and close relationships with our family and friends, we will easily have feelings of joy, warmth and a sense of belonging. Below are some ways to promote interpersonal relationships:

- Get together with family and close friends to chat, exercise or do any favourite activities to share the joyful moments
- Listen and respect what others think to build mutual acceptance
- Express compliments and appreciation to others to create a pleasant time together
- Show our love and care in words and deeds, such as greeting, giving hugs or cooking for others
- Avoid criticising or blaming



● Make kindness a habit

Offering help to those in need not only eases their situations, but also makes ourselves happy and content as well as promotes self-worth. We can care for others in daily life.

Here are some examples:

- Lend an arm to support or offer your seat to those in need
- Take the initiative to care for the elderly
- Hold the door open for others
- Donate money or resources
- Volunteer to care for the underprivileged



For more information, please visit the “Mental Health and Happiness” featured topic on the “Shall We Talk” website:
<https://shallwetalk.hk/en/news/mental-health-and-happiness/>



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