

7 Easy Ways to Be Happy Right Now

"Bad things do happen; how I respond to them defines my character and the quality of my life. I can choose to sit in perpetual sadness, immobilized by the gravity of my loss, or I can choose to rise from the pain and treasure the most precious gift I have - life itself" - Walter Anderson

Are you experiencing genuine happiness in your everyday life?

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1 million people in Australia currently suffer from depression and 1 in 7 people will experience depression in their lifetime.

In life it's easy to end up 'down in the dumps'. We might be living with people we dislike or doing a job that we hate. Sometimes we lose direction and lose sight of our happiness. Life presents us with challenges and hurdles and we can get unhappy when we argue with our partner or our kids, when we are overworked, or stressed, when someone disappoints us or when life gets too much for us. We get unhappy when our expectations are not fulfilled of what we think life should be or could be.

One of the greatest discoveries I made when I was unhappy was knowing that I could easily change my emotion to being happy at any given moment. I used these simple shifts in attitude to bring more happiness and freedom in my life.

Happiness comes from within and you can get happy right now.

1. Being happy starts with you.

It's easy to look for how to get happy outside of ourselves. We may search for happiness in our relationships, our job, or by having the perfect body or more money. We may strive for finding our perfect partner or getting that dream job to get our happiness. When we search for happiness outside of ourselves, we are looking in the wrong places.

When we look to someone else or something else to make us happy, we give away our power and control. We don't have control of what other people can do for our happiness. If we have expectations of someone or something giving us our happiness it can result in disappointment and sadness. When we take responsibility for our happiness we don't use excuses or blame someone else when life doesn't go according to our plan. Being happy is a choice we make. How would your attitude to life change if you took 100% responsibility for your own happiness? What actions would you implement to get your happiness? Be the leading lady in your life and participate in creating your own happiness.

2. Decide to be happy.

Your level of happiness is completely up to you. You can choose to see everything as negative and decide that you can't be happy. Or you can choose to see everything as positive and decide that you can be happy, no matter what. What are you going to decide?

The first step is to remove the idea that there are obstacles in making the decision to be happy. You can decide when and how to choose happiness. Start by paying attention to the thoughts that can get in the way of your happiness and decide to change the negative thoughts. Remind yourself that 'happiness is a choice and I choose happiness right now'. Just say yes! The more times you choose happy and positive thoughts over negative thoughts, the easier it becomes. Repeating this behaviour is what will make it stick and create a change in the neural pathways of your brain.

3. Change your Focus

Whatever you think about and focus on will be magnified and energised. If you think unhappy or sad thoughts, they will get bigger and you can end up feeling even worse. When we focus on being happy and have happy thoughts, our mind searches for all the positives and makes us feel good. Focus on what you can change; like things in the present and your thoughts and your actions. Don't focus on things that have happened in the past or things that have yet to happen or thoughts and actions of other people. Focus on what you can control and influence. What could you focus on to make you happy? Who could you think about that makes you smile?

4. Take action

You can choose sadness and play the waiting, hoping, wishing game and feel helpless. Or you could choose to play the action game and feel powerful. Ask yourself some powerful questions, like "what am I tolerating?", "what do I need to give up?", "who do I need to forgive"? These questions will help to get your mind into action. Identify the source of your unhappiness, take action to fix the issues, forgive if you have to and let your sadness go. Remember that letting go means that you release the negative emotion inside of you. By releasing the negative emotions, you will enjoy more freedom.

Another way of adding extra happiness to your life is to do for others. Small acts of kindness can change other people's world as well as your own. Acts of kindness could be donating clothes to charity, giving someone a hug, offering a letter of appreciation, giving blood or helping an elderly person with their groceries. Mahatma Gandhi once said that "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." Just give a little extra kindness out to others and watch your happiness grow.

5. Give thanks

Happy people spend time appreciating and being grateful for what is in their lives, who they have in their life and what they have or are currently experiencing in their life. They don't focus on what they could have, should have or must have. They are giving thanks and being grateful for what they do have.

Studies have found that those who are habitually grateful are significantly happier than those who are not. A popular way of practising being grateful is to use a gratitude journal. A gratitude journal is a diary where you record daily what you are grateful for. Studies have shown that people who consistently keep a gratitude journal improve their overall happiness and can also help with symptoms of depression. A gratitude journal helps you to focus on all the positive things in your life.

We always have something to be grateful for. We can begin with being grateful for being alive, being able to breathe, smell, hear, see, taste and love. Think of all the wonderful things you have to be grateful for right now. It could be your health, your family, your friends, your job, your home, your pet, your heart, your spirit or even your book collection. Make it a daily ritual to count your blessings, give thanks and smile at the world for sending great things your way.

Surround yourself with happiness. Give yourself a great big smile and know that I am smiling right there with you !!