

Francesca Reigler. "We either make ourselves miserable, or happy and strong. The amount of work is the same." Cultivating a positive attitude and optimism will increase your resilience, enabling you to recover faster from disappointments, see problems as temporary and see the humorous side of life. You may even find that defeat will spur you on rather than set you back.

"Live in an attitude of gratitude," says motivational guru Tony Robbins, "and you will never be poor." Having a good attitude will mean that you will act on your values, have high self-esteem and won't compromise your self respect.

## FLOW

You know how it is when you are totally absorbed in something, and you hardly notice the hours just flying by? Do you feel an energised focus, losing yourself in the immersion of what you are doing? Psychologist Mihály Csíkszentmihályi came up with the concept of 'Flow', and proposes that "It is the full involvement of flow, rather than happiness, that makes for excellence in life". Pleasures such as a rested body, warm sunshine or a serene relationship depend on external circumstances, he explains, but "the happiness that follows flow is of our own making". If we are lucky, flow occurs during the course of carrying out our jobs, and gives us a sense of purpose, challenge and meaning. Make sure you devote some time to activities that cause you to experience 'flow', and that make your heart sing.

## HEALTH

Remember the mind-body connection – that our bodies influence our mind. Regular exercise, adequate sleep and healthy eating habits will lead to both physical and mental health. But recent developments in the medical world have come up with some interesting revelations.

"It's not just that if you're physically well you're likely to be happy," says Dr Derek Cox, Director of Public Health at Dumfries and Galloway NHS, "but actually the other way round." Having tried for years to prevent ill health by anti-smoking and healthy lifestyle campaigns, Dr Cox noticed that there was little change and people were dying at roughly the same rates. This prompted his investigation into the health benefits of happiness.

"We know that stress has bad effects on biology," says Andrew Steptoe, British Heart Foundation Professor of Psychology at University College London. "What we think is happening is that happiness has the opposite effect and has a protective effect on these same biological pathways."

So it seems that good feelings each day are just as important as that apple a day when it comes to keeping the doctor away!

Having taken all these points on board, it's important to recognise that when we accept emotions such as fear, sadness or anxiety as natural, we are more likely to overcome them. "You can't have a light," says singer Alro Guthrie, "without a darkness to stick it in." Rejecting our emotions, positive or negative, leads to frustration and unhappiness. And as the American novelist Edith Wharton said, "If only we'd stop trying to be happy, we could have a pretty good time!" W

# Happiness is...

Lack of ambition is a great guarantor of happiness, as it means you're satisfied with less. Generally, the more ambitious people are, the more dissatisfied (and therefore less happy) they are!

**Nic Compton, Editor, Boat News**

We can all be happy – we just need to choose to be. Most things we obsess about that make us unhappy are ultimately irrelevant or unchangeable. Acceptance of what is, is the first step to happiness.

**Alfred Tadros, Investment Manager**

Most folks are about as happy as they make up their minds to be.

**Abraham Lincoln, 16th President of the US (1809-1865)**

Happiness is fresh tomatoes. Honey and milk. Radox bath soak.

**James Woodley, Editor in chief and Creative Director, The Local Mag**

Happiness is feeling the true seasons, bright sunshine, proper snow, the colours of autumn, the first days of spring. It's also all about love, innit! Love is all around when you stop looking for it.

**Sarah Whittaker, Interior Designer**

Happiness is elusive and transient, don't grasp at it or cling to it but let it flow through you. Celebrate it when you have it, don't mourn it when it goes. It will come again!

**Meriel Whale, Drama Teacher and Trainee Counsellor**

When you relinquish the desire to control your future, you can have more happiness.

**Nicole Kidman, Actress**

The myth of happiness is that if something nice happens, then you are happy... the secret is to 'be' happy and something nice will happen around you... it's why we are called human 'beings', because we can be anything we choose.

**Frank Jay, Polishing Diamonds**

The full use of your powers along lines of excellence.

**John F. Kennedy (1917-1963)**

What is called happiness in its narrowest sense comes from the satisfaction – most often instantaneous – of pent-up needs which have reached great intensity, and by its very nature can only be a transitory experience.

**Sigmund Freud**

I love being happy. I'm always telling people 'I feel so happy right now'. I think when things are fighting to make you upset then you just have to fight right back by finding happiness in everything you can.

**Katie Glass, Journalist**

Happiness is... biochemical. Studies have shown that happiness does not change when circumstances change. There may be an initial euphoria when you have a

significant positive event, but there is no life altering shift in happiness. The sooner people realise this, the sooner they'll realise that money and fame do not buy happiness. To give happiness a boost, appreciate your blessings, follow your bliss and don't compare yourself to others. End of sermon.

**Charlotte Fisher, Clinical Project Manager, NYC**

The basic fact is that all sentient beings, particularly human beings, want happiness and do not want pain and suffering.

**Dalai Lama**

Personally, I think we all carry all our happiness and everything we need within us – we just have difficulties finding it.

**Melanie Klein, Photographer**

Happiness is good health and a bad memory.

**Ingrid Bergman, Actress**

Happiness is now. Happiness is being present, not in the past, nor in the future. Happiness is not to worry.

**Nazrin Farook, Textile Designer**

Happiness is doing anything in the sunshine with the smell of the sea on your skin and all your senses singing. It's that immense feeling of awe when you randomly encounter the beautiful: time stops, movement freezes and an incredible rush of freedom surges through you. Beauty, freedom and love in abundance make you happy – ask any Greek philosopher.

**Colette Meacher, Writer**

Living every moment with passion.

**Mr. Big**

I have been very happy, very rich, very beautiful, much adulated, very famous and very unhappy.

**Brigitte Bardot, Actress**

Happiness is the acknowledgement of all that is and the pure beauty of it.

**Graham Peacock, by day a music industry professional, by night a mild-mannered healer**

I won't be happy until I'm as famous as God. Madonna, Singer and Actress



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