

## Health and Wellness:

### Positive Emotions

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The impact of positive emotions cannot be overemphasized because they are linked to improved health, longer life, and enriched well-being. Conversely, chronic anger, hostility and worry escalate the chances of acquiring heart disease because blood pressure elevates and blood vessels stiffen.

Although no one said that it would be easy to regularly retain a healthy positive emotional state, here are three tips to harness your happiness, inner strength and positive mindfulness:



- 1) Express gratitude. There are many more reasons to be happy than sad by not taking anything for granted (e.g., be grateful for the health that you do have, the roof over your head, the people who care about you, those with whom you share happy times and so much more). Remember that while things may be far from perfect, they still could be much worse.

Carve out just a few minutes every day to think about five small or large things that you are grateful about. Be as specific as possible regarding what each thing means to you. It might help to write down those things and take a look back periodically for reflective moments.

- 2) Leverage your strengths. Only about one-third of us have a clear understanding of our strengths. This can be partially explained because whatever comes naturally or easily is taken for granted and not even considered a strength. One easy way to identify your strengths is to keep track of what areas you are receiving compliments.

Here is a short list of strengths that are closely linked to happiness: curiosity, gratitude, hope, love and vitality. Even if you only associate with one of those traits, or even if you don't possess any of them, keep in mind that these strengths are worth endeavoring, developing and implementing to achieve overall well-being.

- 3) Savor the "good". Most people are understandably eagerly awaiting and even expecting to enjoy pleasurable moments at events such as anniversaries, birthdays, vacations and weddings. All those things are, of course, wonderful opportunities to (hopefully) experience very happy times. Because we are not primed to seek out pleasures in everyday occurrences, what oftentimes happens is experiences which could be joyful slip by unobserved. Being conscience of life's small and large treasures and appreciating as much as possible by being in the moment and enjoying the experience as it develops builds contentment.

To some extent, we are all guilty of at least trying to do too many things simultaneously. Just keep in mind that multitasking is the enemy of enjoying. At every opportunity you are able, take time to smell the flowers, hear the sounds of nature around you, truly see the beauty everywhere, feel a delightful breeze against your skin and taste a new and wonderful flavor. Then, you will be pretty much guaranteed to enjoy life more fully.

### **Additional Resources**

Here are a few links to get you started:

- (1) [http://changingminds.org/explanations/emotions/positive\\_emotions.htm](http://changingminds.org/explanations/emotions/positive_emotions.htm)
- (2) <http://deliveringhappiness.com/10-positive-emotions/>

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