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**Is it possible to shift our underlying mood so we can become consistently “happier”?**

Studies suggest that by the age of 2, we have developed a “fixed point” of happiness, based on the genes we inherit and our early life experiences.

It had been thought that our underlying mood was then set at that level for the remainder of our lives, but there are interventions that can shift our set point.

We can explore these more in sessions, but below are some tips:

**Tips on Happiness**

1. Keeping a Gratitude Diary

* Each day, record 3-5 things that have happened for which you are grateful.
* This helps change our perspective, as we become increasingly aware of the positive things happening around us, and can help us to learn to reflect on life in a more positive manner.

1. Reconnecting with nature

* Spending more time in nature eg walks by water, parks, countryside
* Time spent in the garden / gardening / outdoor activities
* Ensuring you get plenty of daylight, especially in winter
* Having pictures of nature in your home

1. Physical activity

* Exercise, undertaken in a planned way, so it becomes a regular activity and part of your ongoing routine
* Set goals and record achievements
* Try and exercise with at least one other person – group activities are generally more effective for mental health
* Consider joining a team

1. Play and creativity

* Revisit what you used to enjoy doing as a child; consider why you enjoyed them, and whether you would want to restart any of these activities
* Set aside regular time to be creative / express yourself eg through drawing, painting, crafts, DIY, new hobbies

1. Creating Flow

* Engage in mindful activities, and try to push / challenge yourself so you achieve *flow.*

1. Looking forward

* Always try to have events to look forward to, proactively arranging regular activities – holidays, day trips, meeting up with others

1. Reminisce

* Recalling happy memories, looking at old photos etc elicits positive feelings

1. Recognise and avoid things which will have a negative effect on your mood

* Eg Drugs / alcohol

1. Reconnect

* With aspects of your work you have most enjoyed / have been neglecting
* With people who make you feel good, who make you smile, and you look forward to spending time with

1. Set yourself challenges

* Develop achievable goals you can work towards

1. Being Altruistic

* Get involved in charity work / helping others eg neighbours
* This can help develop perspective, and shift our focus away from unhappy thoughts.
* It can also improve connections with your local community.