

12 Scientifically Proven Steps to Happiness

Here are the 12 scientifically proven steps to happiness discussed by Sonja Lyubomirsky in her book, "The How of Happiness". Sonja is a Professor of Psychology at the University of California, Riverside and her work has received a great deal of attention from TV stations, radio stations, magazines and newspapers all over the world.

1. Express Gratitude

The life you are now living, express your gratitude for it, the mistakes you made in the past and all the lessons you've learned, express your gratitude for them. Look for the good in your life and appreciate it.

The single greatest thing you can do to change your life today would be to start being grateful for what you have right now. And the more grateful you are, the more you get. -Oprah

2. Cultivate Optimism

Expect the best from life and you will receive the very best. Life doesn't care whether you are a pessimist or an optimist, whether you focus on the good or the bad, whether you expect the worse or the best from life. Life will treat you exactly the way you expect to be treated and if that's the case then you should definitely start cultivating your optimism.

The optimist sees the rose and not its thorns; the pessimist stares at the thorns, oblivious to the rose. -Kahlil Gibran

3. Avoid Over-thinking and Social Comparison

Our lives and where we are right now are the result of all the thoughts we had since birth up until now. If you don't like something, see if you can change it but if you can't change it, don't stress about it and just let it go. Change your attitude towards life and life will change its attitude towards you. Look for ways to be better than you used to be and not better than anyone else. Spend your time and energy improving yourself and your life and you will no longer feel the need to compete and compare yourself with others.

Stop thinking, and end your problems. What difference between yes and no? What difference between success and failure? Must you value what others value, avoid what others avoid? How ridiculous! -Lao Tzu

4. Practice Acts of Kindness

Be kind to others and to yourself and you will be happy.

If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion. -Dalai Lama

5. Nurture Social Relationships

Go out and meet new people, socialize, get interested in what others are doing and they will automatically get interested in what you are also doing.

6. Develop Strategies for Coping

Work on developing strategies for coping by observing your thoughts and playing with your mind. Be the lab scientist and not the rat.

There are times in everyone's life when something constructive is born out of adversity... when things seem so bad that you've got to grab your fate by the shoulders and shake it. -Anon

7. Learn to Forgive

Learn to forgive yourself and those people who might have hurt you in the past. The moment you forgive, you free yourself from pain and you allow happiness to enter your life once again.

Forgiveness means that you fill yourself with love and you radiate that love outward and refuse to hang onto the venom or hatred that was engendered by the behaviors that caused the wounds." -Wayne Dyer

8. Increase Flow Experiences

Work with your unique gifts and talents, work with your passions, manage your weaknesses but cultivate your strengths and by doing so you will increase the flow experiences and become more happy.

Everyone has unique gifts and talents. What you love is what you're gifted at. To be completely happy, to live a completely fulfilled life, you have to do what you love. -Barbara Sher

9. Savor Life's Joy

Look at the Sun, look at the trees, look at the beauty of nature, beauty of life and savor it all.

Enjoy the little things, for one day you may look back and realize they were the big things. -Robert Brault

10. Commit to Your Goals

If you want to be happy, you have to have goals. Know what is it that you want from life, ask for it and trust that in the end you will receive it. Make sure you set all kinds of goals, personal goals, career goals, adventure goals, contribution goals and by doing so you will have a sense of direction, security and trust into your life.

If you want to live a happy life, tie it to a goal, not to people or things. -Albert Einstein

11. Practice Religion/Spirituality

Religion/spirituality makes people feel safe and secure, it gives them strength when in danger and faith when in doubt. There is an invisible force that created us all and this force is watching over us. By knowing this you become a lot happier and at peace due to the fact that you feel you are not alone.

The further the spiritual evolution of mankind advances, the more certain it seems to me that the path to genuine religiosity does not lie through the fear of life, and the fear of death, and blind faith, but through striving after rational knowledge. -Einstein

12. Take Care of Your Body

Your body is your temple and the way you feel internally will reflect externally. Exercise whenever possible, make sure you drink plenty of water- water is life, and eat as healthy as possible.

Good for the body is the work of the body, good for the soul the work of the soul, and good for either the work of the other. -Henry David Thoreau

Take care of your body. It's the only place you have to live. -Jim Rohn