



“Most people are about as happy as they make up their minds to be.”
– Abraham Lincoln

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By isolating a single aspect of a broader situation and focusing on it, great progress can be made...

The Happiness Factor

by Rosanne Scriffignano, Ph.D.

During winter months, some people report feeling melancholy and less satisfied with their lives. The reasons for their malaise are as varied as the snow flakes in a winter storm. Happiness can be subjective. For example, on the day of winter solstice, some lament that it's the year's darkest day. Others rejoice that spring is just around the corner.

If you're looking for ways to bring more “joie de vivre” into your days, consider these tips for living a happier life.

Focus less on the past—Although we can learn valuable lessons from our past experiences, our present moments shouldn't be dominated with thoughts from our past. Instead, try to focus more on today's activities. For example, consider food choices you can make today instead of worrying about that dessert you ate last night.

Be good to yourself—Some people can be their own worst enemies. Instead of focusing on your negative attributes, celebrate your good ones. Recall your achievements and successes. If you need help, ask close friends and family for feedback on your good qualities. You may be surprised to learn how much people appreciate you.

Be grateful—It's easy to focus on what's wrong with our lives. However, everyone has reasons to be grateful. Each night, think about three things you are most grateful for just before you go to sleep. This simple act will prepare your mind and body for rest and renewal.

Share your gifts—Researchers have uncovered a link between helping others and quality of life. People who help others are happier and experience better overall health. A simple act, such as bringing soup to a sick neighbor or calling a person who lives alone, takes minimal time but reaps limitless benefits for you and other people in your life.

Abraham Lincoln suggested that “Most people are about as happy as they make up their minds to be.” If this is true, then a happier life is just a thought and a heartbeat away.

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