

Twenty Actions You Can Take to Increase Happiness and Satisfaction with Your Life

A few weeks ago I was asked to facilitate a workshop on Happiness vs. Meaning and Purpose. Below are what some researchers suggest you can do to increase happiness and satisfaction with your life.

1. Connect with people. Establish and maintain friendships and relationships—particularly positive people with whom you are in close proximity.
2. Don't be bothered by the successes of others.
3. Experience things as opposed to buying things.
4. Help others.
5. Exercise.
6. Engage in meditation and mindfulness (even ten minutes a day).
7. Sleep well at night so you're not tired.
8. Accept that negative things happen. Learn from them. If not, they could have a greater negative impact.
9. Apply your natural talents. Marry your passions to your natural abilities to create value in your life and the lives of others.
10. Contribute to something beyond yourself (family, friends, people, community, causes, your work, nature, God).
11. Engage in activities that reinforce that your existence matters and is significant and valued.
12. Watch and read less negative news.
13. Learn something new.
14. Be optimistic. Have a positive mindset. Optimistic people are more resilient.

15. Be grateful. Cultivate feelings of gratitude.
16. Don't dwell on unpleasant things
17. Have responsibility for something you care about.
18. Savor life's pleasures (large and small).
19. Don't lose your sense of wonder in the world and what you see, hear, smell, and touch.
20. Laugh a lot.

Happiness is an important emotion, but it is felt in the here and now. It ultimately fades away. The positive effects of pleasure are fleeting. In contrast the sense of meaningfulness is enduring. People who had meaning in their lives, in the form of a clearly defined purpose, rate their satisfaction with life higher, even when they were feeling bad, as compared to those who did not feel they had a clearly defined purpose.

Steven Darter is the author of: *Managing Yourself Managing Others: Learn How to Improve Effectiveness, Productivity, and Work Satisfaction*, which has three editions (2001, 2011, 2015); and *Lessons From Life: Four Keys to Living with More Meaning, Purpose, and Success* (2018) which has been ranked by one media company as the #1 "profound book about finding yourself." He has a distinguished career as a consultant, author, educator, and speaker. For more than forty years he has counseled people, ranging from CEOs of Fortune 500 corporations to troubled teenagers on work, career, and life issues.