

Intentional Happiness: 7 Paths to Lasting Happiness

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ABSTRACT

What is Happiness? Aristotle answered this by saying "Happiness is the meaning and purpose of life, the whole aim and end of human existence". Happiness is a choice! It is also attractive, healthy, and being connected, but it takes effort. That being said, what inhibits our happiness, and how can mental health and nursing practitioners find happiness and fulfillment in their professions, when far too many suffer from profession burn-out, due to the high stress nature of their jobs. In my keynote, I will address practical tools that are applicable to both them and their patients. Several factors have a direct impact on our level of life satisfaction and fulfillment, including fear (of change, fear of success, and fear of failure), comparisons, selfishness, the burden of perfectionism, lack of forgiveness (and self-forgiveness), our inner critic, and toxic relationships. When these mental and emotional roadblocks are removed, our inner joy will be freed from constraints and returned to our awareness. The "7 Paths to Lasting Happiness" reviews several of these roadblocks and provides both principles and take action exercises for individuals to learn from, and through its application to ultimately achieve genuine happiness, including: first path- loving yourself a) personal brand b) perfectionism c) inner critic and d) comparisons; second path- gratitude a) attitude of gratitude and b) university of adversity; third path- forgiveness a) forgiveness equals freedom and b) self-forgiveness is the key; fourth path- follow your passion a) getting out of your comfort zone brings growth; fifth path- nourish your spirit a) faith vs. fear and b) meditation and purpose; sixth path- loving relationships a) love languages b) criticisms and toxic relationships c) authentic listening and d) trust; seventh path-service a) the antidote to selfishness. Thousands of individuals have taken this life satisfaction survey, and various graduate students throughout the world, (including Singapore, UK, and The Philippines and others) have used it as part of their graduate thesis. It is intended as a tool measuring current level of happiness. It could be used before and after treatment to show changes in level of happiness.

That's quite a statement and so true, but what actually makes us happy? In my experience working with people and organizations from all walks of life, there are some specific attributes and actions that happy people focus on consistently. Listed below are five of the most important principles:

Be grateful

First of all, most happy individuals have a relentless "attitude of gratitude" approach to life even when life is not perfect. Being grateful when life is good, is relatively easy, but actively choosing to be grateful in the midst of adversity is a big key to happiness.

As I say, we are all graduates from the "University of Adversity" called life, and remember, it's not an easy road for anyone.

Be forgiving

Second, happy people have the ability to forgive themselves and others relatively quickly. In many ways, forgiveness equals personal freedom from the baggage of hurts and resentments. Even more importantly, the consistency of self-forgiveness brings increased happiness.

Related: How to Forgive Yourself: 5 Steps to Self Forgiveness

Be passionate and know your purpose in life

Third, happy people know their purpose in life and as a result have passion, the fuel which supports their vision. They are lovers of learning throughout their lives.

Surround yourself with positivity

Fourth, happy people tend to surround themselves with other positive-minded individuals. They limit or eliminate toxic-relationships from their lives and bask in the positivity and love of their intentionally created relationships.

Love and accept yourself as you are

And finally, happy people choose to love and accept their imperfect selves by gifting that same patience, kindness, and understanding they likely already give to others.