

TOP TEN WAYS TO LIVE HAPPIER NOW[®]

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Happiness is a choice you make each day in nearly everything you do. When your energy and attitude start to sag, give yourself a lift through exercises based on positive psychology research. Adopt these habits to create more zest, joy, and meaning in your life. Consider partnering with a coach! Write me at gayle@essencecoaching.com

1. **Say thank you and really mean it.** Show your honest gratitude to others as often as you can. Express it in person or in letters for a tremendous boost for you and for them. Be clear about what kind or wonderful thing they did and how it impacted you.
2. **Do something you really enjoy daily.** Pleasure can actually good for you! Positive emotions optimize health, subjective well-being, and psychological resilience. So have some fun on your own and with others!
3. **Do something you are really good at.** This may seem like a no-brainer, but make sure your daily schedule allows you to really get into flow doing things that come naturally to you. Allow yourself to get lost in the task.
4. **Do a secret good deed.** Experience the thrill of knowing that you can make the world a better place for others. Connecting to something outside of our own small selves instills a sense of meaning that serves as a keel as we sail through life. It doesn't need to be a secret, so do a daily good deed openly too.
5. **Pick one of your strengths and use it in new ways.** Where have you yet to apply your creativity, curiosity, humor, zest, or other valuable trait? These are your life tools—see how many ways you can leverage them. [To identify your top strengths, take the VIA test at www.authentic happiness.org.]
6. **Choose to take a “long cut” when feasible.** Instead of the shortest, fastest way, savor the journey. Cook a tasty dish from scratch, visit instead of emailing, take the scenic route from the office, or just stop multi-tasking. Happiness is more often about the journey than the destination. Be curious along the way!
7. **Keep a gratitude journal.** Make it a daily practice to jot down the things that go right, i.e., those daily experiences of joy, love, beauty, etc. Savor the experience anew as you elaborate, expressing gratitude for each one.
8. **Go for the optimistic explanation.** When something goes awry, ditch the pessimism that blames it on you or that frames the problem as pervasive and permanent. Attribute it to something transient and you'll feel more hopeful and energized—which leads to greater success and well being.
9. **Let someone else shine.** Be a strengths and success spotter! By appreciating and facilitating others' gifts and talents, our own lives take on greater meaning. We touch our own creative, generative power while we deepen our social ties in healthy, growth-producing ways that lead to lasting well-being.
10. **Look for the gift.** Even in the most challenging times, identify something positive that you can harvest from the experience, be it a lesson about life or about yourself. Remember that bad times end and offer you reasons to be grateful afterward. You can be grumpy—or you can grow. Which will it be?

