

Power of Positive Psychology



Positive emotions have been linked with better health, longer life, and greater well-being in numerous scientific studies. On the other hand, chronic anger, worry, and hostility increase the risk of developing heart disease, as people react to these feelings with raised blood pressure and stiffening of blood vessels. But it isn't easy to maintain a healthy, positive emotional state. Here is a guide to the concepts that can help you find well-being and happiness, based on the latest research.

***Express gratitude.** Gratitude is a thankful appreciation for what you have — from a roof over your head to good health to people who care about you. When you acknowledge the goodness in your life, you begin to recognize that the source of that goodness lies at least partially outside yourself. In this way, gratitude helps you connect to something larger than your individual experience — whether to other people, nature, or a higher power. Set aside a few minutes every day and think about five large or small things you're grateful for. Write them down if you like. Be specific and remember what each thing means to you.*

***Leverage your strengths.** To reap the benefits of your strengths, you first need to know what they are. Unfortunately, according*

to a British study, only about one-third of people have a useful understanding of their strengths. If something comes easily to you, you may take it for granted and not identify it as a strength. If you are not sure of your strengths, you can identify them by asking someone you respect who knows you well, by noticing what people compliment you on, and by thinking about what comes most easily to you.

Certain strengths are most closely linked to happiness. They include gratitude, hope, vitality, curiosity, compassion, generosity and love. These strengths are so important that they're worth cultivating and applying in your daily life, even if they don't come naturally to you.

Savor the "good." Most people are primed to experience the pleasure in special moments, like a wedding or a vacation. Everyday pleasures, on the other hand, can slip by without much notice. Savoring means placing your attention on pleasure as it occurs, consciously enjoying the experience as it unfolds. Appreciating the treasures in life, big and small, helps build happiness.

Multitasking is the enemy of savoring. Try as you might, you can't fully pay attention to multiple things. If you're scanning the newspaper and listening to the radio during breakfast, you're not getting the pleasure you could from that meal — or the newspaper or radio program. If you're walking the dog on a beautiful path but mentally staring at your day's to-do list, you're missing the moment.

Take care of your health. When we are young, we take our health for granted. We may not be "sick" but we may be "unhealthy". Absence of disease does not mean we are fit. To be healthy AND fit, we need to proactively take care of our health. Good nutrition, daily exercise, work-leisure balance, regulated sleep times and some introspection are extremely important. Make all of these a way of life, which means, practice it at all times.