

# 50 Ways To Increase Your Happiness



An eBook By Julia Barnard

Welcome to my eBook 50 Ways to Increase Your Happiness. The book is broken down into ten distinct sections and each section has five accompanying tips you can apply to your own life.

Use the book at your leisure. It is an opportunity to recognise the small changes you can make to bring about a happier life. Try out the tips and note the impact they have on your life.

Hopefully by the end you will realise the importance of having a good balance in your life, that allows you time to relax and look after yourself.

Enjoy this book and your life.

Best wishes

Julia Barnard

Get more tips and information related to your happiness and wellbeing @ [promotinghappiness.com](http://promotinghappiness.com) and [makethechange.com.au](http://makethechange.com.au)

Permission is given to copy, download and distribute this eBook, provided it is without monetary gain. The contents or digital format should not be altered in any way and authorship should be acknowledged.

## Contents

Goals.....	4
Change.....	6
Work and Leisure.....	8
Stress and Relaxation.....	10
Talents and Strengths.....	12
Generosity.....	14
Thinking.....	16
Learning.....	18
Liking Yourself.....	20
Healthy living.....	22

# Goals

**G**oals give our lives focus: they are something to work towards. People who set themselves meaningful goals are happier and more satisfied with their lives than those who just drift. By formulating your goals you are in a position to live the life you want. Of course you need to put the work in to actually achieve your goals. As such, it is important that you enjoy the process, rather than just worrying about the end point.

If a person always has a goal in their life, they will have something to look forward to. This can boost feelings of hope and optimism. In turn, having hope increases your ability to achieve your goals.

Goals can be large or small and should be set to meet your needs not anybody else's. Do what feels right for you. However, don't be afraid to step out of your comfort zone. You will be glad you did and probably wonder what all the fuss was about.

Try to use your goals as an opportunity to develop your strengths and reduce your stress. ♦♦♦

## Tips

- ◆ Make a list of your goals, both short term and long term. Choose one that is most important to you right now and set up a plan of action for getting started on it.
  
- ◆ You should enjoy working on your goal. As such you deserve to work on it without distraction. Keep an eye out for things getting in the way of you working on your goal and do what you can to rid yourself of these obstacles.
  
- ◆ If you have stalled on a long term goal, take the time to reflect on the reasons why you set yourself the goal in the first place. Reconnect with the positive emotions you felt when you chose this goal. Write down your thoughts and feelings and refer to it when motivation is low.
  
- ◆ Reward yourself for every step closer you get to reaching your goal. Work out what it will be beforehand and when you will receive it. Just make sure it is something that does not harm the goal in any way.
  
- ◆ It may be your goal, but don't be afraid to ask for help and support along the way. Support can mean many things, from talking through obstacles with a loved one to obtaining more information from a discussion forum.

# Change

Change is an inevitable part of life. Being able to cope when change happens and being aware of how much change we are personally capable of is an important component for overall happiness.

We can bring about change through our own actions, giving us a feeling of empowerment and control. However, changes also happen which are beyond our control. The death of a loved one is an example. Remember though, that we may not be able to control such happenings but we do have control over how we manage these situations.

It is important to recognise however how much we can change in our lives. There may be good reasons for not making a change (for instance not leaving a job because it pays well) but this is a choice you have made and should be acknowledged as such.

If you are uneasy dealing with change, start by making small changes. It can stop you getting into a rut and allows you to be open to trying new things. These small things add up and can help you cope when the larger changes inevitably crop up. ♦♦♦

# Tips

- ◆ Let yourself be open to change. Being open-minded and willing to learn from others will help you on your quest for change. Don't always assume you are right and there is only one way to live. Rather than automatically saying no, give it some thought.
  
- ◆ Do something different each week. Have a go at things you would not normally do. It's not easy stepping out of your comfort zone, but by doing so you may surprise yourself as you realise how much you are capable of.
  
- ◆ Rather than trying to break a habit you want rid of, work to actively replace it with a new one. In the early days you will need to practise it lots, until it is ingrained. However, it should be part of your life within a month.
  
- ◆ Don't hold onto old ways of doing things just because they have always been with you. Think about better, more efficient ways, that you will be happier with. Remember: you make the rules, so feel free to change them.
  
- ◆ You may need to spend time facing the challenges that are preventing change. Write down all your fears and anxieties. Try to be honest—it is your list and nobody is judging you. This way you can tackle each fear one by one, helping you a step closer to change.

## Work and Leisure

Until you retire, generally your day is divided into work, and not working. The time spent working is huge so it is really worth doing what you can to be happy whilst you are there. Try to set work-related goals, which will give you a feeling of accomplishment. Recognising the value of your work is vital also. If your job wasn't important, it wouldn't exist.

When it comes to work satisfaction one of the most important things to realise is that unless you tell your boss what you want or how you are feeling, they may never know. It is important to never assume that they know.

After work, do what you can to enjoy your leisure time. Ask yourself how you typically spend it. It is a great idea to have goals related to your leisure time. It seems a shame to spend this time complaining about work, rather than doing the things you enjoy.

Getting a balance between work and leisure is so important to your health. Getting overly involved in work and taking on too much can eventually lead to burnout. Not only are you no longer enjoying your work, but it has also impacted on the rest of your life. ♦♦♦

## Tips

- ◆ Make the most of the time you spend at work. Tune in and give focus to the elements that you enjoy. Don't let the negative parts be what determines how you think about your job.
  
- ◆ Learn as much as you can about your work and your hobbies. It will help you be open to new ideas, make you an expert in your area and will help keep you out of a rut.
  
- ◆ When you are not at work physically, try to switch of mentally. Engaging in hobbies and other activities will help. Even a small step like not checking your email will make a difference.
  
- ◆ List your strengths. These are all the things you are good at, the characteristics you are proud of. Now write down how you use them on a daily basis, whether at work or leisure. Make an effort to use those strengths that you are obviously neglecting.
  
- ◆ One of the easiest ways to make the most from your leisure time is to cut down on your television watching. Just an hour day will give you a chance to do the things you want to be doing.

# Stress and Relaxation

**S**tress is a response to an event in your life. Stress can be brought about through all aspects of your life: employment, health, finance, housing, family, relationships and unexpected life events. All these areas have the potential for causing stress, if you are unable to deal with them appropriately.

There are many symptoms of stress and can include:

**Behavioural:** lethargy, drinking more, eating more / less, smoking more, sleep problems, sexual problems.

**Physical:** headaches, shaking, stomach problems, high blood pressure, nausea, dizziness, increased sweating.

**Psychological:** procrastination, lack of concentration, negative thoughts, blaming self, feeling confused.

**Emotional:** mood swings, irritability, anxiety, depression.

If stress is not managed it can cause a variety of long term problems, including: diabetes, heart disease, migraines, ulcers and asthma.

This is why it is so important to make time for rest and relaxation in your life. Such activities will reduce your stress and relieve the symptoms that could bring great health problems later on in life.



# Tips

- ◆ One of the best ways to relieve stress and relax is to exercise. It is good for mind and body, enhances self-esteem and reduces anxiety and depression. Find an activity you like and do it on a regular basis.
  
- ◆ Spend time on your hobby. Try to make time each week to indulge in your favourite pastime. It gives you time out from the world and means you have time for you, doing something you enjoy.
  
- ◆ Drink alcohol in moderation. People often turn to alcohol, believing it will relax them. In reality, alcohol is a depressant. As such if you are stressed, it will end up making you feel worse, rather than better.
  
- ◆ Take the vacation time owed to you. There's no benefit in saving up as many days or weeks as you can, over many years. You need time out on a regular basis and it will allow you to be your best when you are at work.
  
- ◆ Take some deep breaths. This is particularly helpful when faced with a potentially stressful situation. Breathe slowly in through your nose, filling your lungs as you do so, then release the air slowly out through your mouth. Yoga is a good way to learn how to breath properly.

## Talents and Strengths

If you want to be happy, then you want to ensure a portion of your life is given over to finding, then being aware of and making the most of your talents and strengths. Although you could spend a great deal of your time trying to improve on something that isn't a strength (and I'm all for personal development), easily satisfied is nurturing the abilities you already have.

We all feel happiest when we are doing the things we love. It's not just about your practical skills and abilities. It is about your personality also. You may be a good listener, logical thinker, calm under pressure, honest...the list goes on. All these make up the things you are good at.

Another thing we are all good at is being ourselves. After all, how can we fail at that? Where we do struggle is when we try to be someone that just isn't the genuine us, since we believe that is how we should be. An introvert will be unhappy going to parties night after night, but do it as they feel they will be seen as unfriendly. Whereas an extravert may struggle spending evenings alone reading a book, but feel they should enjoy this as they believe they should enjoy their own company. ◆◆◆

## Tips

- ◆ Get to know your existing talents and strengths. Think about your hobbies, your work, your relationships as well as your personality. All the good things that make up you are your talents. Try to use them everyday. If you keep a journal you could also reflect on how these talents contribute to the happiness of yourself and other people.
  
- ◆ You could go one step further and think about how you could share your talents and knowledge with other people. Write a book, create a website, carry out volunteer work, display your work at a craft fair, talk to people.
  
- ◆ Stop struggling to try and be someone that you are not. Don't do things because you feel you ought to, or agree with opinions you find offensive. Life will become so much easier if you let the real you out.
  
- ◆ Enjoy the here and now. Forget what you are striving at for a while and relish what you have. For example, you may be learning to play the guitar and know what your goals are. This is great. However, remember to enjoy yourself along the way and appreciate the moment.
  
- ◆ See this as an excuse to keep learning new things, as you may find a talent you know nothing about. There's so much out there to try. It also means you will be learning from others – people who will have shared the things they are good at to increase your happiness.

# Generosity

**I**t's an interesting fact that giving to others makes us feel better about ourselves. Taking the time to be kind and thoughtful enhances happiness, wellbeing and gives us a greater sense of purpose. When you start being kinder, you will begin to recognise how much you have to offer, no matter who you are. During these times, you will find you have forgotten yourself and your own concerns. Your worries go on hold, as you stop focusing inwardly.

Acts of kindness come in varied forms and are opportunities to offer your time or your money. However, if you want to get the most out of being generous, giving your time is going to be most beneficial. Research consistently finds that people who volunteer are a happy bunch. Furthermore, the more a person volunteers, the happier they are.

If you wonder why you should bother being kinder, reflect on how it feels when someone is kind to you. The thing about generosity is it benefits both the recipient and the giver. ♦♦♦

## Tips

- ◆ You don't always need to go for the grand gesture when being kind. Any act, no matter how small makes a difference. Look for these opportunities in your life. It will change how you see the world.
  
- ◆ Look for opportunities to say something nice about another person, whether it is to their face or when they are not around. It's so easy to gossip about another person. How much nicer would it be to only say good things instead.
  
- ◆ Give someone a small gift, to let them know you are thinking of them. Enjoy spending time thinking about what they will like. Who wouldn't want an unexpected gift from a loved one?
  
- ◆ Come to the aid of a stranger. Don't be the one to keep walking, assuming another will assist. Of course this doesn't mean taking unnecessary risks, just do what you can to help.
  
- ◆ Don't expect each act to be appreciated. In fact, you are better off assuming you won't be. You are doing good things because you want to, not for the thanks. This will ensure you won't feel resentment if people don't respond as you'd imagined.

# Thinking

**Y**our thoughts play a powerful role in how you think about your life. They influence your emotions and behaviour. Two people can be in exactly the same situation and yet their thoughts can change not only how they feel about it but the outcome. One person may be weighed down with worry, whereas another may be relishing the challenge.

If you recognise that you can control your thoughts and that they do not control you, your life will be different. It may take some time as often your thought patterns will have been with you for many years. Try to recognise that negative, unhelpful thinking can cause a lot of stress as it impacts on how you cope with the world. Such thinking can overwhelm you, leaving you feeling powerless and at the mercy of other people and your surroundings.

Optimism is a way of thinking about the world that can be learned and can help bring about a happier life. Expect to do well—you do deserve it you know. Don't let setbacks overwhelm you. Instead, do what you can to overcome them, or be ready with a whole new plan of action. Also, try to recognise the role you played in your own success. Embrace the belief that you make your own luck, then go out and prove it to the world and yourself. ♦♦♦

## Tips

- ◆ Tune into how your thoughts impact on how you feel and behave. Observe yourself for a while, as though from a distance. With time, you will come to recognise how much impact your thoughts have over your life. Through this hopefully you can recognise that you can actually change them and as such your subsequent feelings and actions.
  
- ◆ Keep an eye out for thinking in always and never terms. ‘I always fail, so why bother trying’ or ‘I never get opportunities like Steve does’ are common thinking traps people fall into. Such thoughts are not realistic and do not reflect reality.
  
- ◆ When negative or unrealistic thoughts crop up, take the time to challenge them. Look for the evidence—does what you think hold up to the facts? Then you need to replace such thought with a more positive or realistic one.
  
- ◆ Don’t expect bad things to last. Know you have the skills and resources to get through it. Identify your sources of support and don’t be afraid to use them. Knowing things will get better allows you to look forward, rather than feeling powerless and stuck.
  
- ◆ Spend time thinking about and acknowledging your skills and talents. Do not doubt them or question whether they are really true. Take pride in what you do and who you are.

# Learning

**L**earning is not just something we do at school. Over the years we learn new ways of doing things, we experience new things and continue to expand and grow. As such it is not just an academic experience. Recognising that learning is not only about books can make the process enjoyable for many. It can help us enjoy our jobs more, discover new hobbies and become experts in the things we love.

If you make a conscious effort to look for learning opportunities, you are discovering new skills and acquiring knowledge. This is great for the brain and may even slow down cognitive decline later on in life. Furthermore, you are allowing yourself to renew your energies, get excited about life and get curious. You are open to opportunities, which means you are less likely to experience boredom. How nice to have new things going on in your life and something to look forward to.

The learning experience can take whatever shape or form that works for you. Whether you attend a class, read a book or website or get hands-on is up to you. Remember it's okay to give things a go. If you don't like it, you don't have to do it again.



## Tips

- ◆ Make a promise to yourself to learn something new each week. It can be in a particular area that interests you, or a chance to boost your general knowledge. Once you make learning a conscious pursuit, you will probably realise you are learning something new each day.
  
- ◆ Don't be afraid to learn from other people. Other people can offer new perspectives that you had not thought of. Be open to ideas that are different to your own.
  
- ◆ It is okay to set goals for your learning. However, for maximum happiness from your learning experience, try to enjoy where you are currently. Don't worry too much about getting to the endpoint.
  
- ◆ Take a trip to your local library and pick up books on topics you know nothing about. It doesn't matter if it fails to capture your interest—at least you know it's not for you. However you may discover something that tickles your fancy and leads to a new passion.
  
- ◆ List different areas of your life and for each area come up with a number of things you would like to learn more about to make that particular area more interesting or fulfilling.

## Liking yourself

**T**he one person you are with all the time is you. ALL THE TIME! There's no getting away from it. As such, it makes sense that you do what you can to like and accept who are.

If you like yourself, it will give your self-confidence a massive boost. You can feel at ease with yourself and know that you are okay. You may even feel happy spending time alone.

So what are the things that make up you? There's the psychological aspects: your personality, strengths, weaknesses, personal opinions, beliefs and values. There's also external aspects—what you look like as well as the clothes you wear. Even the things you do on a day to day basis are worth reflecting on to see if you are okay with them.

In identifying your weaknesses and flaws, it is okay to want to change them, but do it because you want to, not because you believe you have to. However, make sure they really can be changed—if not you will need to accept them. Taking steps to deal with your lateness is feasible, wanting to change your body shape isn't.

Accepting yourself also enables you to not worry so much about what other people think, or what you think other people think. It allows you to be yourself, and not someone you are not. ◆◆◆

# Tips

- ◆ Start a very big long list of all the things that you are good at. Focus on all areas of your life and don't compare yourself to other people. It's easy to have bad days where you doubt there's anything you are good at. Turning to this list during such times will help prove you wrong.
  
- ◆ Reflect on your personality, Brainstorm the characteristics that make up you. You can always take different personality tests to understand yourself a little better. Recognise all of your strengths and try to use them as often as possible.
  
- ◆ Don't rely on other people to bolster your self-belief. It's easy to find yourself waiting for compliments about something you have done or how you are looking. However, they may never come and you may end up feeling disappointed and despondent. Instead give yourself a quick pat on the back knowing you did good.
  
- ◆ Spend time using your talents. Set goals for yourself to enable you to make even greater achievements than you already have done. Be open to learning and personal development.
  
- ◆ Allow yourself time to relax each day. Enjoy spending time alone with your thoughts. Realise what great company you are.

# Healthy living

For a happier life, it makes sense to think about looking after your body. Health by itself does not necessarily mean happiness. Nor does it mean you will never be ill. However, taking care of your body does have important health benefits and puts you in a better position to get the most out your life, therefore hopefully making it a happier one.

Three aspects of living I think are important to your wellbeing. These are physical activity, the food and drink you consume and your sleep patterns.

Exercise is important to everyone. It's not just for people who are trying to lose weight. It brings many benefits physically as well as mentally and may even prevent depression. It is a great way to relieve stress.

Eat, drink, be merry. Well this would depend on what you eat and drink. You are not going to have a happy life if you turn to unhealthy foods time and time again. They are no good for your body and will prevent you from being at your optimum. Also, be aware of what you drink. Too much sugar is unhealthy, alcohol is a depressant and too much caffeine can prevent you sleeping well. It is important to try and get a good night's sleep. Being well rested is good for both your mind and body. ◆◆◆

## Tips

- ◆ Set up an exercise plan that you can carry out on a weekly basis. Try to include aerobic activity (which increases your heart rate), strength training and flexibility training. It should fit easily into your schedule and be something you enjoy.
- ◆ Know how to cook. The more time you spend in the kitchen, the more knowledge you will have on different ways of preparing food. It also puts you in control as you know exactly what you are eating and how much. Don't be afraid to try new things.
- ◆ Include foods known to increase your mood into your diet. Such foods include: nuts, wholegrains, garlic, bananas, oats, chickpeas, beans, capsicum, blueberries and spinach.
- ◆ Keep track of how much alcohol you drink each week. Be aware of what a unit of alcohol looks like and what are deemed safe amounts to drink. These can vary from country to country, so do your research.
- ◆ Know the things you should and shouldn't do to help you sleep well. You should: have a regular routine, have a herbal tea or glass of warm milk, practise relaxation. You should not: watch TV or work on a computer too close to bedtime, drink caffeine up to six hours before, smoke.

Thanks for reading!

I hope you enjoyed it and picked up some useful tips.

In appreciation of your time I would like to offer you a 15% discount off the price of my book Promoting Happiness.

You will need to order from [here](#)

And enter the discount code: W7969PZL

