

Five Basic Essentials for Happiness

Hello everyone and welcome to my five top tips for happiness. These are some actions that I have found have worked for me, you may or may not find the same. Have a read and see if they resonate with you. There is no right or wrong way of living so experiment with everything and listen to you!

Be Your Own Best Friend

Be your own best friend? That is a bit of a strange concept, isn't it? How can I be my own best friend?

I would like you to close your mind for a moment and imagine a situation where your best friend has come to you with tears down their face. Someone has just said something rude to them. She has just made a mistake in work. He has just realised he has gained some weight and is so disappointed with himself. How do you react? What do you say to them to console them? Think about it.

Now I would like you to close your eyes and imagine the following scenarios. Someone has just insulted you. They have called you stupid, a loser, told you that you are a failure and that you will never amount to anything. Imagine you are in work and you have realised that you have just made a mistake that has cost the company not only a lot of time but also a lot of money and that you know that there is no way you can resolve this issue without bringing it to the attention of your line manager. Imagine that you are getting ready for an event and you take out your favourite outfit and no matter how hard you try you cannot get the zip to close. How do you react? What do you say to yourself in these situations? Close your eyes and think about it.

Did you notice a difference? How did you speak to your friend? Were you loving and sensitive and caring and cautious of your words you used so as not to make the matter worse? What about when you were speaking to yourself, what did you say? Most people would naturally be a lot harder on ourselves. We are quicker to take the opinions of others and call ourselves fat, useless, a failure etc etc etc. We would never say these things to our closest friends and family but we think it is ok to say them to ourselves. THIS is what I mean by being your own best friend.

Self-talk can be one of the best or one of the most damaging and limiting influence on our feelings and actions. It can literally control your life and the worst part is that for the most part it is instant and subconscious.

I urge you all to pay special attention to the words you use when speaking to yourself. Turn these passive thoughts into active thoughts and question if you would use them on someone you love when you are in a bad situation. Be your own best friend.

Be Honest

Do you ever remember telling a lie as a child? Be it to get something, to get out of a situation, to prevent yourself from getting in trouble, to appear cooler to other people? Were you ever left in a situation where you had to carry that lie and repeat it over and over? How did that feel? I know

personally I would end up dreading talking to people. I wished I had never started it. I wished I had just told the truth from the beginning or kept my mouth shut. I felt a physical heaviness on my shoulders, even anxiety hoping I would never be caught out or that someone wouldn't mention it again in conversation.

Have you ever got caught out on a lie? How did that feel? What impact did that lie have on others? What consequences did that lie have for you afterwards? What about the shame and disappointment you may have felt from hurting someone?

We are all adults. This is not about lying as a child, however, the consequences of lying, cheating and dishonesty are the same now as they were then. If you truly want to be happy speak and act with integrity. If others do not like how you think or act, then that is unfortunate but so long as you are not hurting others with your words and actions then this can only ever lead to sustained happiness for all involved. Your truth is good enough, don't hide it.

Become Comfortable With The Uncomfortable

“Nothing changes when you're comfortable”

The “comfort zone” is starting to become one of those clichés and may be starting to lose its meaning to some as it is used so often. It is becoming a phrase people use more so than the profound analogy it originated as.

The truth is that the majority of people have a set routine that we live day to day to day. We are creatures of habit and it can become unsettling when something changes, good and bad. Did you ever break up with a partner and even though the relationship was awful and you hated it you still got a little anxious or upset about it finishing? That's the fear of change. Did you ever plan a big trip abroad that you've always wanted to do and it was so exciting until the day you are due to leave and it is the last thing in the world you wanted to do? That is fear of change. Did you ever get the dream job/partner/house/car/opportunity and suddenly start worrying and decide not to pursue or get worried before going ahead with it? That is fear of change.

So, what is my point? My point is that the comfort zone is a real place and it is so beautiful being there in your bubble. The mundane is safe and we know what to expect. It is great to settle as expectations on us are less, fewer people watch over us and see what we are doing, performance isn't as important, and there is less possibility of failure.

Ask yourself this, when was the last time you did anything that gave you pure butterflies, fear or excitement and you push ahead and did it anyway? THAT is stepping out of your comfort zone.

Fear and excitement originate from the hormone adrenaline and the thinnest line in the world is between them. While some people jump out of planes for a living, others can't even stomach the thought, why? They both feel the same adrenaline, they just channel it differently.

Although the comfort zone is beautiful, nothing ever grows there. True life satisfaction comes from continuous growth. There you go. There is the secret. If you want to be happy become comfortable with being uncomfortable and who knows where you will be in six months, one year, five years, ten years.

Value Your Time

We all have the same hours in the day so how come some can achieve more than others? Have you ever been extremely busy but realised at the end of the day you've achieved nothing? Do you ever feel like you are running around in circles and going nowhere fast?

Value your time.

Time literally is your most valuable asset. You could have 110 years of it or 1 minute of it, no-one knows. THAT is what makes it so valuable. Money, cars, homes etc we can win and lose but time we can never get back. How much is your time worth?

If you want to get a good grasp of where you spend your time, for two full weeks write a plan of your day from 6am to midnight in 30 minute intervals. Plan your day each day the night before. Allocate tasks for the whole day on the 30 minute intervals. At the end of the day see if you achieved what you planned on achieving and what other situations popped up to take you off course. It could be social media, telephone calls, shopping, TV, cooking, cleaning etc. etc. etc. are you achieving what you set out to achieve in the time you set out to achieve it in and if not, why not? After two full weeks, 14 days, of doing this you will have a great perspective of how you value your time now and if there are any changes to be made. Once you start seeing results and are affectively ticking off your to do lists you will feel a lot happier within yourself.

Value Your Health

Last but not least, happiness is most definitely link to your health. I cannot stress this enough. I could talk for days on this and still have more to say but to cut it extremely short but sweet:

Make sure you are getting all your vitamins, minerals. micronutrients and phytonutrients. Your cells require these to function and your cells are your body so without these you are in trouble. Pay particular attention to Vitamin D, Vitamin B and magnesium.

Move. Get active. Please, your body needs it. Your muscles need to be able to pump the blood back to the heart. It helps both physically and mentally to move, we all know this. Without going into tonnes of details here, move.

Diet. It doesn't matter if you are paleo or vegan or gluten free or low fat or any other forms of diets. Listen to your body. Try everything and see what works best for you. What does your body respond best to and what makes you happiest? The most important point here is remove processed foods, eat fresh whole foods, eat the correct amount for your body type and activity levels and get all of the micro and macronutrients you need. Enjoy your meals, healthy food is ridiculously tasty and colourful and refreshing and feeling. You should feel energised after eating. Nourish yourself and your mind will feel nourished.

Meditate. Live in the now. Be mindful. Do this in whatever way works best for you but it is a skill you must practice actively and get good at. Your happiness will grow more and more each moment by being more in the moment.

Take care of yourself mentally and emotionally. Health as a whole is holistic and it is all entwined but physical health does not always equal mental health and vice versa, each component needs special individual attention. Trust your gut and pay attention to what your body and soul are telling you and then you will find true happiness.

Please let me know your thoughts and feedback on all of the advice above. There are plenty of books, audios, videos, articles and sources that back up everything I've said above and also say the complete contrary so take what you like and leave the rest. The bottom line is to do what works best for you, continue smiling, listen, talk, and be mindful of how you are living.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Brónagh.