



PENNY HOLBURN COACHING

It's about You and Results

10 Ways to be Happier

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Okay, so I decided to write something on happiness, which always feels like venturing into Holy Grail territory, because what do people want most? To be happy. And do we know how to achieve this? I suspect we don't really know all about what makes people happy. We are playing around with a concept we don't really understand that well. I don't think anyone has yet come up with a formula as to how to attain happiness 100% of the time that works for everyone.

But we do know something about what makes most people feel better in their lives. Sometimes it is something we need to add to our lives. Sometimes it is something or someone we need to let go of. Sometimes it is surrendering to what is and making peace with the moment as it is. So below are some suggestions which have helped most people feel somewhat happier.

1. Make the decision to be happy. We are thinking creatures. We can make decisions. If you want to be happy then decide you are going to be happy no matter what the day brings.
2. Make a list of 10 things that make you happy – that you enjoy doing. Then do some of them each week. The anticipation of doing something you love doing can be as enjoyable as actually doing it as well.
3. Set yourself goals and take actions to achieve those goals. Our brain is goal-directed. When we are healthy, we are meant to be taking action towards achieving goals in life. Most people are never happier than when they are pursuing goals. In contrast, people who do nothing all day are seldom happy.
4. Get enough sleep. There is a reason sleep deprivation is a commonly used form of torture. So stop torturing yourself and get enough shut-eye.
5. Do exercise – but do exercise you like. If you tell yourself you must go to gym three times a week but you hate going to gym or it doesn't fit into your schedule you will eventually give it up. So work out something, at a place and time that works for you. It can be walking, dancing, martial arts – anything that you get a kick out of (no pun intended).

6. Do something new once a month or more often if you like. Novelty stimulates the production of dopamine, a feel good neurochemical. So make sure you do some different, new, and exciting things in your life. You may feel like you have had a holiday afterwards.
7. Volunteer. Help out. Support a charity. Giving back to others makes almost everyone feel happier.
8. Make new friends. Attend events and make the effort to engage with people. If you have social anxiety then know that with help it can be overcome. You don't have to be an extreme extrovert. Even introverts enjoy meeting new people and engaging with others in measured doses and small groups.
9. Be grateful. No matter what your life looks like you will have things to be grateful for. Being alive; family; friends; some money (even if it is not much); food; donations; caring people; etc. Because our thoughts influence our feelings, when we are thinking negative thoughts such as what we don't have, we don't feel good. When we are focusing on positive thoughts such as what we do have and are thankful for, we feel good.
10. Take responsibility for yourself. You are not responsible for other people unless you have underage children – and you are responsible for them. But you are responsible for you. You get to choose how to respond to what is said and done to you. You get to choose the actions you take. And there are always more choices in a situation than we realize. Stop blaming others for what they do and choosing to be a victim. Take charge of your life and consider all the options available and make the best choices for you.

Then my favourite mantra – Take Some Action. The happiest people in life are usually engaged with life – they are busy. They are not sitting around and doing absolutely nothing all day. So do some of the items listed above and do them often.