

TOP 10 SECRETS for BEING HAPPY

One of my favorite songs is Bobby McFerrin's refrain, "Don't Worry, Be Happy". I recently had the opportunity to observe people's reactions in their cars when a highway was closed because of an accident ahead. As we waited, I watched as some listened to radios, a few began tossing a Frisbee, others seemed to be working or reading, and some opted for a quick nap. But, there were also a handful who were clearly agitated and angry. Pacing about, swearing, and upset, they decided that the best response to this event, which none of us could control, was to be very unhappy. I was reminded of Abraham Lincoln's comment that, "**Most people are about as happy as they make up their minds to be.**" The following are the Top 10 Tips to increase happiness in your life:

1. **Decide to be a happy person.** As Lincoln observed, most people, most of the time, can choose how stressed or happy, how troubled or relaxed they want to be. Choose to be happy.
2. **Watch and Read less news.** As a recovering news addict, I know this can be difficult because the stock market fluctuates, politicians politic, and sports teams compete. But, most of the time, you don't need the stress. So, just don't watch. I think it was Henry Thoreau who noted that if you've ever read about a train wreck, you understand the principle and don't need to know any more about it.
3. **Practice the Attitude of Gratitude.** We all have so much to be grateful for. Just thanking the many people who assist us, encourage us, teach us and open doors for us could take all day!
4. **Take Time.** My dog has taught me much about loyalty, about noticing the sights, sounds, and smells in the yard, about being relaxed and about play. Eat when you're hungry, nap when you need it. Get your ears scratched whenever possible!
5. **Laugh everyday.** Hear a joke, tell a joke, laugh at yourself, and laugh with your friends and family and co-workers. There are very few medicines as powerful as laughter, and I don't think you can over-dose, although it is addicting!
6. **Love well.** Express your affection, appreciation, friendship and warmth to those around you, and they will almost always respond in the most amazing ways! Be generous-it pays great dividends!
7. **Work hard.** This one comes as a bit of a surprise, but there is tremendous satisfaction in being competent, and joy in completing our assigned tasks. One of the great sources of happiness is to do work that is worthy of you, and to do it well.
8. **Learn something new, everyday.** To be happy, most of us must also be growing, expanding, learning and challenging ourselves. Read, listen, adapt and stretch to accommodate new ideas and new information.
9. **Use your body as it was designed.** Walk and run, stretch, throw things, and lift things. Dance! Exercise is good, but so is making love, mixing up a batch of cookies, or exchanging backrubs. You have a body and it can be either a source of joy, or a source of aches and pains. Your choice.
10. **Avoid toxins.** I prefer writing positives (things to do) rather than negatives (things to fear), but reality says there are negative people and there are bad chemicals, stressful noises, and unsafe places. Don't go there! Avoid poisons whenever possible. It seems to work out better that way.