

The pursuit of happiness : A day to day challenge

Happiness. What is it really? The Merriam-Webster defines it as a state of well-being and contentment, or good fortune. There is something very subjective about this state of mind, but everyone can cultivate happiness in his or her daily life. It is good to stop for a moment and give ourselves the right to be happy.

First of all, happiness is accessible to everyone; it is tangible, inside every single one of us. It is essential to look inside oneself to better grasp happiness, cultivate it and utilize it. This requires a discipline that can be summarized in a few points.

1. Enhancing your “joie de vivre”

First of all, we need to define what happiness represents for ourselves in our daily lives. This can vary from one person to another (enthusiasm, a relaxed attitude, energy, satisfaction, etc.). Once we have defined what happiness means to us, it is essential to learn how to connect with our positive attitudes. As an exercise, make a list of 5 to 10 things that motivate your “joie de vivre” and try to get in touch with those things daily. Enjoy each of these positive things or moments. Then, list everything that undermines your happiness and find ways to address them. Lasting happiness comes from the ability to identify and preserves the joys of life. It is to have dreams, dare to do things, care for ourselves, love, respect others and ourselves. Happiness can be found in the bond between people.

2. Let go

Regularly ask yourself: “Do I have control over this situation?” If the answer is no, don’t fight against it any longer. People have a tendency to spend their energy on things they don’t have much control over, which leads to dissatisfaction and frustration. For instance, trying to change some of the characteristics or personality traits of your partner; it’s already hard to change one’s self; it’s even harder to change someone else. The motivation to change always comes from within. It’s also important not to dwell on the past and regret mistakes, as we have no way of changing what has happened. It is more important to invest in the “here and now” in order to guarantee a happier future.

3. Pay attention to yourself

Take a few minutes everyday to close your eyes. Pay attention to your senses and take regular and deep breaths. Inhale, then exhale. Concentrate on the moment of calm between the two. The important thing is to pay attention to your body rather than your mind.

Paying attention to yourself also means taking care of your body and soul according to your personal tastes and preferences. This could mean taking walks, seeing friends, taking a long bath, eating out at your favourite restaurant, spending time with your partner, etc. This will help reduce your stress.

4. Identify and live with your emotions

Our emotions are neither good nor bad. They are intimately tied to our thoughts and our way of seeing the world. If you are experiencing a pleasant emotion, take a minute to feel it; this will increase your energy. When an emotion is negative, accept to feel it without identifying with the negativity, so as not to be overwhelmed by it. Feeling is to be alive. To be in touch with your emotions, take a few minutes everyday to ask yourself: “what am I feeling right now?”

5. Dare to be yourself

It is very important not to try to be perfect. We are all unique and this is what makes us even more interesting. Take some time to reflect on your personal strengths and showcase them. Don't try to be someone else, be proud of who you are. Happiness can partly be found by being authentic.

6. Put your future in action

To move forward, it's important to have goals. This puts us in motion and gives meaning to our lives. Whether it is for personal goals (travelling, sports, an art project), professional (getting a promotion, starting your own business) or family oriented (getting married, having children), planning these things gives us vital energy. From time to time, visualise what success in these endeavours would look like. Think positively.

It's not necessary to reach all of our goals, but it is essential to think positively about the future.

7. Discipline your mind

We must train to think positively and keep positive thoughts within ourselves to be able to use them in difficult situations. It can be a thought, a gesture, a smell or a memory that will relax you instantaneously. We can also turn our thoughts into reality. For instance, when we say, “I won't be able to do this”, it's important to try anyways. Keep a notebook of your successes and things you are proud of. It's a tool you can keep close to you to measure your successes.

Conclusion

If you are preoccupied, have questions or want to get help to find happiness, don't hesitate to contact your Employee Assistance Program.

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