

Sustainable Happiness or Well Being- Activity Nine:

It's relatively easy to become happier for the short term; the challenge is sustaining the level of satisfaction and well being. Long term benefits can be maintained by following the five principles listed here. With intentional activity you have the potential to harness the 40% of your feelings of well-being that are within your control (50% is set by your genes and 10% by acquired circumstances).

1. Positive Emotion: Although all humans endure negative emotions, happy people experience positive states more frequently than do their less happy peers. All our recommended activities promote positive emotions and states. A stream of positive experiences and emotions are typically short lived, many people believe they are trivial. This is a mistake. As Barbara Fredrickson has argued, moments of pleasure don't just make feel good. They broaden your horizon; build your social and intellectual skills. They summate and spiral up. For example you feel energized after exercise, which boosts your creativity, which gives you a new idea about how to enchant your partner, which strengthens your marriage, which stores up your satisfaction and commitment, which leads you to be more grateful and forgiving, which fuels optimism, which creates a self fulfilling prophecy, which buffers the setbacks at work. We tend to focus on the large and important events in our lives in the belief these are the important ones. However the day to day stuff must not be under-estimated. The positive emotions found in the days do add up. **Depression:** This has been described as a syndrome distinguished by a deficit of positive emotions; a lack of joy, curiosity, contentment, enthusiasm, that is an empty cup. The inability to take pleasure in joyful events is the hallmark of depression. Treatment of depression is jump started by positive events more than it is thwarted by negative events. All of the happiness activities boost positive emotion, foiling the effect of negative emotion. The happiness activities also boost positive thinking creating increased optimism. Thirdly, the activities encourage positive experiences. Using exercise, happiness activities and any medication or psychology will help. **Positive Emotions Verse Life Meaning:** Experiences that forge a sense of life meaning, whether it involves helping a friend in need, worshipping a higher power, or developing a superior expertise are happy moments even if they are not surrounded by positive emotions. Happy moods lead us to achieve more and to be more productive.

2. Optimal Timing and Variety: Adaptation to any activity is real; therefore we fail to increase our positive feeling with each exposure to a boosting activity. Therefore ensuring you do not do it too frequently and that you vary your strategies is very important.

3. Social Support: Developing a tangible support network is essential. Whether this involves a sole confidant, a circle of friends, your family or a psychotherapy group. Social support helps motivate and guide you along your path toward your goals.

4. Motivation, Effort and Commitment: Commitment, perseverance and dedicated effort are also critical to goal achievement and lasting happiness.

5. Habit: Whist the effort is massive at the start; if you persist it will become a habit, your ultimate goal.