

# Celebrate International Day of Happiness Every Day



Happiness is a fundamental human goal. In recognition of this, the United Nations General Assembly instituted the International Day of Happiness in 2012. The day, held annually on March 20, calls for “a more inclusive, equitable and balanced approach...that promotes the happiness and well-being of all peoples.”

The United Nations website encourages governments and international organizations to invest in conditions that support happiness.

Though the designated day has passed, why not make every day a day of happiness? A growing body of research suggests that if we want to be happy and flourish in life and relationships, there are simple things we can do every day that boost our brains and bodies.

Research conducted on more than 1,500 people across three

states found that the happiest people scored high on three character strengths: positivity, compassion, and humility. It turns out that people who are open to learning and being influenced by others, who are optimistic about what lies ahead, and who look for ways to help others are much more likely to flourish. Here are more research-based tips for a happy life:

1. **Start your day in a positive way** – A study reported in the Harvard Business Review showed that watching just three minutes of negative news in the morning made viewers 27 percent more likely to report having a bad day. On the other hand, those who started the day with positive and inspiring stories reported having a good day 88 percent of the time. Other ways to start the day off right include exercising, meditating or taking slow, deep breaths, eating a healthy breakfast, having positive thoughts, and feeling grateful for specific things or people in your life.
2. **Broadcast happiness** – We are all constantly transmitting information to our families, co-workers and those around us. The information we broadcast through our face, voice, and body language sends signals influencing how others view and respond to us. Smiling, for example, sends signals to our brain, called biofeedback, to help us be more positive and happy. Paying attention to what we are broadcasting can affect our mood, attitude, and overall level of happiness and well-being.
3. **Grow in gratitude** – Feeling thankful and expressing gratitude are some of the quickest ways to feel happy. Write in a gratitude journal about two or three things you are grateful for each day, write a letter of appreciation to a loved one or someone who has influenced you for the better, or send a text or email to someone to let them know you are thinking of them. Learning to savor and appreciate the positive elements

of our past and present helps us flourish and feel positive – not to mention the numerous physical and psychological health benefits!

4. **Find flow** – This occurs when you are fully immersed and focused on an activity that brings enjoyment. Another term for flow is feeling “in the zone.” Often, flow is related to an activity that stretches our mind or body, such as putting a puzzle together or working on a challenging piano piece – when creativity and productivity work together. Being immersed in flow can be both difficult and worthwhile. Sometimes, the best moments in our lives are not the relaxing, passive ones but the engaging moments when we are so immersed in what we are doing that we may even lose track of time.
5. **Connect with kindness** – Results from decades of research suggest that one of the best ways to boost your mood is to do something kind for someone. People who flourish tend to have an outward mindset that seeks ways to make others happy. This can include random acts of kindness such as opening a door for someone, paying for another person’s meal, or simply smiling at someone and acknowledging them.

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