

BE WELL

Join me for Some Happiness Hacks this Summer

**"Happiness is not a station you arrive at,
but a manner of traveling."**

~ Ellen Petry Leanse ~

Happy Summer Everyone! We may be halfway through 2020, a year of hindsight that is propelling us all forward into a new mode of being, whether we like it or not! So, instead of allowing the drastic shifts in your life increase feelings of negativity, depression, anxiety or sadness, take charge of your mind and try these hacks to increase your overall feelings of Happiness, Joy, and Well-being.

These Happiness Hacks are based on science (links to all supporting articles are below) as well as my own experience embodying them since the WHO declared a Pandemic on March 11, 2020. So, join me in cultivating your own experiential wisdom about how to dramatically increase your feelings of happiness and joy, despite the state of the World around you. Then, your actions will come from a deeper place of intuitive wisdom and responsiveness, not negative reactivity. All of these activities stimulate the happiness centers of the brain and create at least one of the mood-boosting "happy" chemicals: serotonin, dopamine, and/or oxytocin to counteract and lower the levels of stress hormones in the body, including Cortisol. Additionally, they downregulate the nervous system from its active sympathetic nervous system state of **"DOING"** to the relaxing parasympathetic nervous state of **"BEING"**, which is where we **REST, DIGEST, and HEAL**.

So, join me for these Happiness Hacks this Summer as you conduct your own personal Happiness Experiments:

1. Get More Sleep!

Most humans need 7-9 hours of sleep each night, so do some experiments to determine when you operate optimally and try to go to bed and rise at the same time each day to lock in your sleep schedule.

2. Smile :-)

The simple act of smiling – even if you have to force it – activates the happiness centers in your brain.

3. Play or Interact With your Pet (or another's pet)



4. Cultivate Present Moment Awareness and Cultivate Faith and Hope

Practice Meditation or Prayer.

5. Engage in a Mindful Practice.

Movement, such as Yoga, Tai Chi or Qigong where you align your breath with your movements.

6. Help Others for 2 hours/Week OR Ask for Help.

Both actions stimulate oxytocin and reduce stress hormone levels.

7. Listen to Music and Sing Along.

Lengthened exhales stimulate the vagus nerve, which downregulates the nervous system to being more relaxed and calm.

8. Clean and Decorate Your Living Space.

Our living spaces are a reflection of our inner mental health. Perhaps buy flowers for yourself-- just the visual can boost your mood.

9. Move Your Body Outdoors.

Try to move your body 25-30 minutes each day out in the Sun to glean Vitamin D and endorphins. But pick something you enjoy doing, otherwise you will create stress hormones and counteract the positive effects!

10. Connect with Happy People and Those You Care About.

Not via texting or email, but through in-person contact (safely with a mask and 6 feet apart), a phone call or video connection via FaceTime, Skype or

Zoom. Individual happiness spreads through groups of people, and if they are geographically close, that has the greatest effect on happiness.

11. Practice Gratitude.

Just being grateful for what you already have will cause more things to arise to be grateful for! Try giving up your favorite things (coffee, wine, chocolate, Netflix), just for a day or two, NOT forever. This increases your enjoyment of it when you come back to it. You are able to find more happiness by practicing patience with the things you love.

12. Learn something new, even if it's stressful.

Stress now, happiness later! For example, my hiking training to Thru Hike the 273-mile Long Trail has been extremely challenging thus far hiking mountains with sunburn, insect bites, Elia experiencing heat stroke due to heat and humidity, and just the sheer toll hiking 9-20 miles a day has on the body. But I feel extreme satisfaction and joy at each individual accomplishment building my cumulative strength and endurance.

Activities that increase our competencies, meet a need for autonomy, or help connect us connect with others may have decreased happiness in the moment, but increased overall happiness on an hourly or daily basis.

13. Food that Increase Mood-Boosting Chemicals in the Brain:

- Dark Leafy Greens, such as Spinach and Kale;

- b. Mushrooms;
- c. Smelling Citrus Fruits, either fresh or diffuse as essential oils;
- d. Healthy Whole-Grain Carbohydrates as an afternoon snack when serotonin levels drop;
- e. Add turmeric to your meal as curcumin is a natural antidepressant and is anti-inflammatory;
- f. Eat chocolate, poultry or eggs, which contain tryptophan, which boosts serotonin levels in your brain;
- g. Drink coffee;
- h. Sip on Green Tea;
- i. Consume Healthy Fats with omega-3 fatty acids, such as Salmon, Avocado, nuts, grass-fed beef, and chicken; and
- j. Try St. John's Wort.

14. Cultivate Self-Awareness and Self-Care.

- a. Invest in good therapy, it is 32 times more effective than cash at increasing your happiness.
- b. Engage in hobbies and carve out time to relax and do nothing.
- c. Embrace opposing feelings at the same time, such as Cheerful + Downcast = Happy. This ability detoxifies the bad experiences so you can find meaning in a way that supports your psychological well-being.
- d. Press pause on an extreme pursuit of happiness with its increased expectations. Instead, just find happiness calmly and rationally through your own daily "happiness experiments".
- e. Celebrate your strengths and recognize your weaknesses by focusing on being more of who you already are and putting energy into developing your natural talents.
- f. Keep your daydreams grounded as wild fantasies dull the will to succeed. Remain grounded, hopeful, and eager to see happiness in your future.

15. Prioritize Your Time and Money.

- a. Spend money on experiences, not things.
- b. Plan something fun on your calendar to look forward to in the future.
- c. Take micro-breaks in your day to watch a funny video.
- d. Prepare for the worst but hope for the best. In most situations, discover that your anxiety or your fears about those situations were exaggerated and now you feel more in control when you planned for all of the outcomes.
- e. Say "No" to almost everything, but frame as "I don't" (insert how you stay true to your own happiness), such as:

- i. I don't spend my time doing things that stress me out.
- ii. I don't spend time over-committing.
- iii. I don't have time to get less sleep staying out late.

"We can have an understanding of yesterday, we can have a plan for today, and we can have hope for forever."
~ Tom Hanks ~

Supporting Articles:

- Happiness Hack: 10 Ways To Be Happier, Backed by Science¹
- 25 (Scientific) Happiness Hacks²
- These 5 Activities Can Make You Feel Happier, According to Science³
- 8 Tips for Improving Happiness (That Actually Work)⁴
- Happiness Hacks: The 10 Most Unexpected Ways to Be Happy, Backed by Science⁵

**** ATTENTION: My Happy Human Projects website (<https://www.thehappyhumanprojects.com>) is up in an evolving state. Stay tuned for more resources and support ****

Virtual Classes

Mondays and Fridays, 12:00 – 12:30 pm, Mindful Practices for Stressed Humans (via Zoom)

These short 30-minute sessions will include various practices to reduce your overall stress response during these uncertain and challenging times. Mindfulness simply means choosing to be in the present moment without judgment. If you can learn these tools during moments of calm, you will be better equipped to meet any stressful situations that may arise in your life or the world. These sessions will guide you into using mindfulness tools to anchor you to the present moment, such as breath and body awareness. All practices can be done from your desk and require no special equipment, outfits or experience.

NOTE: Sign in early as the Zoom sessions are limited to the first 100 participants.

Join Zoom Meeting⁶

Meeting ID: 433 938 263

Password: 588354

Dial in for Audio only: (646) 876-9923

Wednesdays, 12:00 – 1:00 pm: Mindful Practices for Stressed Humans (via Zoom)

Similar to the 30 minute sessions above, these 1-hour sessions will include various practices, including simple physical movements, to reduce your overall stress response. All practices can be done from your desk and require no special equipment, outfits or experience.

NOTE: Sign in early as the Zoom sessions

are limited to the first 100 participants.

Join Zoom Meeting⁷

Meeting ID: 507 388 730

Password: 320887

Dial in for Audio Only: (646)876-9923

ATTENTION LAWYERS

Vermont Bar Association Wellness CLEs and FREE Mindful Moments

I have partnered with the Vermont Bar Association to create online Wellness Webinars every other week with opportunities to receive your mandatory Wellness CLE credits in a fun way. There will be alternating 30 minutes Mindful Moment sessions that are FREE and 60-minute sessions where you can receive 1.0 Wellness CLE and the cost is only \$35. **And once you pay \$35 for one CLE session, you get ALL REMAINING CLE SESSIONS FREE.**

Dates/Registration information below, with more dates being added in 2020:

- **July 23** - Mindful Moments for Wellness 30 minute FREE session, 12:00 – 12:30
- **August 6** – Mindful Moments for Wellness 1.0 CLE, 12:00 – 1:00, VBA members \$35, Non-VBA Members \$90 (LIVE WEBINAR)
- **August 20** - Mindful Moments for Wellness 30 minute FREE session, 12:00 – 12:30
- **September 24 (Post thru-hiking the 273-Mile Long Trail)** – Mindful Moments for Wellness 1.0 CLE, 12:00 – 1:00, VBA members \$35, Non-VBA Members \$90 (LIVE WEBINAR) REGISTER for all these programs on the VBA website CLE Calendar!

Samara Anderson is a Legal and Policy Advisor for the State of Vermont, Agency of Human Services, a Registered Yoga Medicine™ Yoga Teacher and a social entrepreneur teaching mindfulness to stressed professionals and creating a non-profit community farm in Vermont to use farm animals, nature and mindfulness to heal people. She co-chairs the VBA Lawyer Well-Being Section.

¹ <https://www.lifehack.org/articles/lifestyle/happiness-hack-10-ways-happier-backed-science.html>

² <https://www.cnn.com/2016/01/22/health/happiness-hacks/index.html>

³ https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/5-science-backed-ways-to-be-happier-today-and-build-resilience-in-the-process_uk_5f02dda6c5b6ca970920c8d5?ncid=newsltushpmgnews&guccounter=1

⁴ <https://mindbody.io/blog/wellness/8-happiness-hacks-actually-work>

⁵ <https://buffer.com/resources/happiness-hacks-unexpected-ways-to-be-happy/>

⁶ <https://zoom.us/j/433938263?pwd=K2U2RW5NRjU0SVkzMUhWRfVtUVIUT09>

⁷ <https://zoom.us/j/507388730?pwd=Z1UrK2NP Tmh5UDlyMEsxbldDd0gxUT09>

