



# CULTIVATING HAPPINESS

Turn happiness into a habit

We all want to be happy but it's easier said than done. Things spring up daily that make us angry or disillusioned and it's not easy to hang on to the feeling of happiness. Of course, there are steps we can take to ensure that our lives are more joyful and fulfilled. The first thing to acknowledge is that happiness doesn't just come to you – passively sitting and waiting for it won't get you very far. If you want to be happy you need to put in the effort. Read on to discover how to get more happiness and satisfaction out of life.

**Build connections:** It's part of our nature as humans to be social and there is plenty of research showing that strong, meaningful social connections not only make us happy but are also good for our health. It has been found that loneliness raises our levels of the hormone cortisol, which is responsible for stress, and we know that ongoing stress can contribute to a variety of health issues. To make sure our happiness is long lasting we need to work on building and maintaining positive, trustworthy, close and strong bonds with people throughout our lives.

**Practice mindfulness:** Mindfulness is staying in the moment rather than worrying about the past or getting anxious over what might happen in the future. Mindfulness is a skill that can help to reduce our stress, manage our emotions and make smarter more considered choices.





Paying more attention to the present means having more control over our lives which brings with it a feeling of calm and well-being. Living in the moment and taking time to appreciate what is around us stops us from taking things for granted. Give it a try and you will soon realise that practicing mindfulness makes us more reflective, more compassionate and better, happier people all round.

**Cultivate joy:** Do you know what makes you happy? We spend a lot of time thinking of what's wrong with our lives, and more generally in society so ring the changes by looking at the many things out there that bring a smile to your face. Reflecting on what brings joy to your life and then making it a central part of your reality will go a long way to making you a contented person.

**Find a purpose:** Having a reason to get up in the morning is central to living a full and happy life. Research shows that having a goal to work towards motivates us, drives us forward and delights us as we reach our objectives. Having purpose and meaning in life helps us persevere towards building our happiness. If you don't yet have a clear purpose then put some conscious effort into discovering what you are good at, what you can feel passionate about and what gives you energy.