

Your Happy Place

Happiness is a state of well-being that we all strive to experience, though many of us struggle to explain what it means to be truly happy. In general, we might all agree that happiness is a positive emotion, or how we feel at a particular moment in time, yet genuine happiness is a little more difficult to describe. Discovering what genuine happiness is for yourself may come from having a sense of meaning and purpose, deep satisfaction, and profound contentment. In the midst of such challenging times it can be especially hard to stay positive and focus on being happy, but there are some valuable—and smart—reasons why we need to try. Let's take a look at the benefits and how you can invite more delight into your life and feel more fulfilled each day.

The benefits of being happy

Feeling good is one thing, but research shows that *being happy* is more beneficial with respect to physical health and mental and emotional well-being. In addition, having a positive outlook generates greater life satisfaction, enriches our relationships, and can even affect our success. Being happier can lead to:

- **An easier life.** Individuals who have a positive attitude are better able to navigate life's hurdles, deal with grief, and bounce back from adversity than their less-positive peers. Happy people tend to be more creative and productive, and when it comes to work, friends, marriage, and finances, they are more likely to encounter success. In addition, happy people are typically content with what they have and are less inclined to envy others or want for more.
- **Better relationships.** Happy people have more friends and stronger bonds with those closest to them. They engage in more meaningful conversations, and others look forward to interacting with someone who brings positivity wherever they go. They also tend to be more supportive of others and are more willing to lend a helping hand.
- **More positivity.** Positive individuals inspire positivity which can have a great influence on others. Positive energy is contagious and spreading more of it can be as simple as smiling at a coworker, complimenting a stranger, offering an optimistic solution to a loved one's problem, or giving the benefit of the doubt to a slow driver instead of getting angry.
- **Improved health.** Happy people are more likely to adopt good habits, get more sleep, and make healthier choices. They exercise more, eat better, get sick less often (and experience fewer symptoms when they do), and tend to live longer.

Tips for adopting a happier, more fulfilling lifestyle

- **Choose happiness.** It may sound strange, but happiness is a choice. When something doesn't go your way, you can choose to get upset, or you can choose to reset and move forward.
- **Practice gratitude and show appreciation.** Each night, reflect on your day and acknowledge at least one thing you're grateful for. Encourage your family members to do the same by starting a daily gratitude routine together. Demonstrate your appreciation for others with a note, a verbal thank-you, or another simple gesture such as a smile or a hug.
- **Journal.** Regularly write down all the positive things that you encounter day-to-day. Not only will you have a happiness diary to reflect on, reading past entries will make you smile about those things again and keep the positivity front of mind.
- **Be mindful of what matters to you.** Life is too short to do things that can steal your joy. While we can't love everything we have to do each day, it is possible to strike a balance. Do more of what you love, be conscious of what can drag you down, and for those things that must get done that we don't always like to do, try focusing on the positive benefits of the task to help ensure you're leading the satisfying, fulfilling life you deserve.

Find your happy place with the help of your Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Call any time to speak with a consultant about all the ways you can invite more happiness and positivity into your life.

The EAP is a voluntary and confidential employee benefit available to federal employees at no cost.

24 HOURS A DAY

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