

Life<sup>2</sup>

How to be  
**Happy**



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# How to be Happy



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# Introduction

Happiness has become a modern obsession. We seek purchases and experiences which we hope will give our lives a happy meaning and purpose. Often we are mistaken.

Increasingly it seems that being happy is the single most important goal we can have in our lives. But what exactly is happiness? And what is it that can make us happy? It could be argued that in the western world, many people now experience a high standard of living and yet can we say that this has led to heightened levels of happiness amongst the population? It seems not. Depression, suicide, alcoholism, drugs mis-use, obesity and violence all appear to be on the increase, suggesting that our pursuit of what we think will give us lasting happiness actually appears to be doing the very opposite. Clearly this is not a happy state of affairs.

So why does it seem to be so difficult to find lasting happiness? Flick through any magazine or newspaper, walk down any high street or spend just a minute or two browsing the internet and you begin to get a sense of the volume of people currently engaged in the happiness trade. Buy this bag, have that facial, wear these boots, pump iron in this gym, travel to that hotel... even Ikea offers advice on finding happiness ('in the little things') in its catalogue. If you're in the happiness market you can be preened, massaged, shod and pampered to an illusion of happiness,



but if research is to be believed, none of this will actually work. The study of happiness has been gaining popularity over recent years, and this has led to more public debate about what happiness actually is and what role it should play in our lives. It's actually very difficult to define exactly what we mean when we use the word 'happy'. One useful way of defining happiness is to see it as a way of being rather than a state that you can reach every now and then under certain restricting circumstances. This isn't about living a life of unparalleled bliss and abundance – it's about living in the knowledge that you have the resilience to deal with what life may throw at you and still being able to experience an underlying sense of ease and happiness - a sense that you feel good and your life is enjoyable.

Buddhist teacher and author Matthieu Ricard was labelled 'the world's happiest man' after scientists studied his brain. Although he resists this label, his definition of happiness as being a sense of 'flourishing' which is experienced deeply, rather than a transient and pleasurable feeling, is helpful. In this sense, happiness can pervade all we do, regardless of what we do and what we have to do.

Now we have a very basic idea of what happiness is and how it may be defined, take a few minutes to think about these questions:

- *What makes you happy?*
- *What has made you happy in the past?*
- *What is it that sustains your capacity to feel happy?*



# Why does happiness matter?

From the earliest writings of the great philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle up to the present day, humankind has grappled with the notion of happiness. Thinkers over millennia have sought to define it, contextualise it and offer ideas on how we can all achieve it. For some thinkers, happiness has been linked to social status and physical looks, for others it's about the wealth you have access to while for others it's about achievement and associations with family, friends and others. In the twenty-first century, however, there is perhaps more of a consensus that happiness means something that is not superficial or conditional and that is actually accessible to all, if we are willing to drop our preconceived ideas about how we will be able to achieve it.

Clearly, given the time we have spent theorising over and researching the notion of happiness, it has mattered deeply to us over millennia. In modern times, we have ever-increasing evidence of what a lack of happiness and well-being in our lives does to us. Although we are, in general, richer now than we have been in the past, this increase in material wealth seems to have failed to increase our happiness levels. In fact, what we are seeing now is an ever greater clamour for that which will make us happy in spite of this increase in material wealth. The 'science' of happiness (see page 15) has

given us plenty of warning that happiness is not to be found in the packaging of new technology, products and goods. It isn't to be found in the shopping malls of the world, nor is it to be found in exotic foreign travel, although all of these things may offer us the illusion of depth in our sense of well-being.

So, we often pursue the wrong things in the search for happiness. But if happiness is such an important concept in our lives, why don't we create an artificial chemically-induced happiness? The answer is that happiness is dependent on more than a feeling. It is about our links with family and friends and our wider community; it's about our experience of pleasure, the sense of engagement we have in the activities that occupy us and the degree to which we can make meaning in our lives. There are complexities in the pursuit of happiness which cannot necessarily be resolved through simple chemical inducement of a feeling.



This is backed up by research by nef (the New Economics Foundation), which was commissioned by the UK Government in 2008 to review the interdisciplinary work of researchers around the world to determine a set of actions that are proven to improve well-being. Five were identified - and these can be viewed in full here:

<http://www.neweconomics.org/projects/five-ways-well-being>:

1. **Connect... with others around you**  
(make a commitment to stay in touch with family, friends and neighbours)
2. **Be active... exercise**  
(do something active each day, preferably outside, to boost fitness and well-being)
3. **Take notice... savour the moment**  
(take time to pause and reflect)
4. **Keep learning... try something new**  
(find out what learning opportunities are going on in your local community)
5. **Give... look out as well as in**  
(which causes in your community could benefit from your support?)

We will explore these points, and others, later in the booklet.

Evidently, the path to happiness may be easier than we think so it's well worth focusing on how to be happier because we will be able to make a difference to our lives.

Science has also warned us of the consequences of not tending to our happiness levels as individuals and as a society as a whole. For example, depression and other mental health conditions which can sometimes be associated with deep unhappiness are costly and widespread, not to mention deeply debilitating for those who suffer from them. According to research by the independent research service of the House of Commons in 2009, depression costs the economy £8.6bn each year. There are heavy costs associated with treating depression too. It is important to say here that there is no suggestion that depression is simply an absence of happiness in a person's life. There are many triggers for depression and those suffering may need careful treatment in partnership with their doctor or other chosen healthcare provider. What we do know, however, is that depression and other mental health conditions are apparently on the increase – dramatically so in some cases – to the extent that some estimates suggest it could be second only to heart disease in the hierarchy of debilitating conditions by 2020.

All of this points to an urgent need for governments around the world to give the happiness of citizens a very high priority. In fact it could be argued that happiness should occupy a place at the heart of social and political decision making as an overarching theme in all policy agendas as well as being an ultimate end to aim for. With this in mind, the recent decision by the UK Government to consider well-being in policy making is a positive one – and it will be interesting to see the range of measures that are actually taken to promote this important idea.

In his book, *The Psychology of Happiness*, Michael Argyle suggests that if governments are serious about increasing levels of happiness in people they would ‘give some priority to leisure facilities and training, especially for the working class, to reducing unemployment and to increasing job satisfaction, to enhancing social relationships by provision of social skills training, more marriage guidance, more care for the socially isolated.’ Many communities would agree that these areas certainly seem like good places to start on a policy of happiness.

The notion of happiness is crucial in our lives. Serious study of the subject is not a fad or a transient fashion soon to be replaced by some other priority. Happiness and well-being really do matter so it is worth us

developing the self-awareness to notice what influences our happiness levels and how we might fill our lives with more of the ‘happiness promoters’ and fewer of the ‘happiness reducers’.

Education has long had an interest in helping students to live a happy life. There have been some high profile happiness projects in both the independent sector and the state maintained sector which have built on the methods that schools use to nurture values in children. This approach helps young people to appreciate that they all have choices when it comes to pursuing a happy life. But happiness is not just for children! We can all do with increasing our appreciation of how we can help others and ourselves to experience more happiness, without turning its pursuit into a chore or something that feels like it will end in failure. Happiness is important, but a little knowledge about how we might best achieve it will go a long way...



# The 'science' of happiness

Happiness is no longer a vague concept. While other features of human experience such as depression and anxiety have traditionally been under the spotlight of psychologists and scientists, for some time now happiness has also been investigated to help address the angst and sadness experienced by many people at some stage of their lives. Rather than simply neutralise the negative impact of low mood (and worse), scientists, public policy makers, economists, theologians, ethicists and psychologists came to realise that they must seek out what will enable people to flourish and thrive positively. It's clearly not possible for researchers from any discipline to determine exactly what will make each person's heart sing, but discoveries from across disciplinary boundaries have helped us to refine our approach to the pursuit of happiness.

Anyone who has spent serious time considering the notion of happiness in their own life will probably have reached the same conclusions as the researchers, namely, that the things we assume will bring us happiness – getting married, having children, having a good job, earning more money, going travelling – don't actually have much of a positive impact on our overall happiness levels.

Other factors however do have an influence on our happiness levels including our attitude, the circumstances (family, politics, economics) we are born into, our biology, the people we mix with, the amount of exercise we get and the quality of our work and relaxation. In economist Nick Powdthavee's book, *The Happiness Equation: The Surprising Economics of Our Most Valuable Asset*, he calculates a monetary value of life events such as getting married or having a baby. There are some surprising outcomes to such an exercise.

For example, it seems that we won't necessarily become happy by having a baby. New births may help us to feel a spike in happiness levels in the first years after birth but this isn't a long-term transformation. So what happens after these spikes in our experience of happiness levels? It seems that we may revert right back to where we were before the 'spike' event, experiencing levels of happiness dependent on our biology, circumstances and attitudes (among other factors). This may seem hard to believe, but at least we are likely, in general, to recover eventually, from the troughs of life's experiences too – events such as the death of a spouse or the loss of a job. It seems that we are able to assimilate these peaks and troughs and get back to our 'normal' levels of happiness.

Another researcher into what makes us happy is Richard Layard, author of *Happiness: Lessons from New Science* and one of the directors of the new Action for Happiness initiative. He holds that while consumerism has become the dominant feature of society over the last fifty years or so, there has not been a matching rise in happiness levels alongside this dependence on a consumer culture. He has also observed that despite better health, high employment, low inflation, better cars, food and holidays, we are not identifying ourselves as being happier. Layard suggests that this may be due to fractured communities, family break ups and an overall loss of trust.

Layard and his colleagues in happiness research were boosted by research which found a correlation between happiness and activity in the cerebral cortex, the part of the brain which is mostly concerned with memory, attention, awareness, consciousness, language and thought. It would seem that levels of happiness are, in some ways, measurable. For Layard, this meant that happiness could be defined in objective terms which may then lead to a greater understanding of how we might create more of it in our lives.

While these are just some of the ideas put forward by researchers from many fields exploring the idea of happiness, perhaps the last word on the 'science' of happiness should be left to Piers Steel, a happiness researcher and professor in the Haskayne School of Business, who was quoted in the Calgary Herald (November 28th, 2010) as follows: "Having studied happiness, we should be concerned with a meaningful life rather than a happy life;" - a point that was articulated poignantly decades ago by Viktor Frankl in his classic tribute to hope from the Holocaust, *Man's Search for Meaning*.

# Being happy

There are many possible ways of boosting the happiness you feel in your life, and many are free. Below are some ideas. These are not meant to be exhaustive in any way, but we hope they provide a starting point to inspire you in dreaming up your own ideas on how to promote your own happiness and flourishing.

## 1. Find a sense of balance

*“There is no secret to balance. You just have to feel the waves.”*

*Frank Herbert*

The notion of happiness as being somehow equivalent to joy and even ecstasy can be so seductive that we may feel we want to experience it all the time. But in reality, life is not a continuously joyful experience. When we forget that being happy does not necessarily mean being joyful, we are less likely to embrace the full range of human emotion and experience as being part of a happy existence. There are elements to day to day living that are positively joyless, but those events and activities don't have to mar our overall sense of





happiness when we look at the bigger picture of our lives. Aristotle believed that we can only be evaluated as being happy or otherwise at the end of life. Rather than happiness being a repeated emotion, for Aristotle, happiness is something which is measured over a whole lifetime. Happiness is distinct from amusement too – being amused does not always mean being happy!

A happy life, therefore, is not necessarily one which is devoid of emotional states such as melancholy and sadness. These states can help us to appreciate the natural ebb and flow of life and give us an understanding of the transient nature of emotions. Gaining this kind of balanced perspective on our experience of life is an excellent grounding for discovering happiness in the bigger picture of our lives. This is not to say that the symptoms of depression should not be checked out by your doctor or other health care provider, but it is acknowledging that there is great breadth to human emotional experience.

You can add to your sense of balance by doing the following:

- Think back to a time when you felt low or despondent. Now that there is some distance between that time and the present, aim to

identify something positive which came out of that period; perhaps a deeper sense of self-understanding or a resolve to make a change in your life. Identifying what you have gained from each and every experience in your life can be a short cut to an overall sense of happiness.

- Get into the habit of keeping a journal. This needn't take long; just a few minutes each day or every few days will be enough to track your overriding thoughts and feelings. Read back on it periodically to gain balance and perspective on your experiences.

## 2. Improve the environment you work in

*“Satisfaction lies in the effort, not in the attainment, full effort is full victory.”*

*Mahatma Gandhi*

Unless you are in the position of not needing to earn money, you will be engaged in some kind of work in return for an income. While some people are in the fortunate position of being able to choose what they do and others truly love what they do, for some, work is just a necessary evil. It also appears, if surveys are to be believed, that nearly all of us are likely to experience dissatisfaction at work at some time or another.



Research into job satisfaction cited in Michael Argyle's *The Psychology of Happiness* has found that we enjoy our work more if we are able to employ a variety of skills, if we have a degree of autonomy and if we get to complete meaningful tasks. But how often do we really experience this? If you want to boost your levels of happiness at work, think about how you would respond to these questions:

- *Do I feel engaged at work?*
- *Do I have a voice at work?*
- *Does my job enable me to work with integrity?*
- *Do I get to make decisions at work?*

It seems that a sense of freedom and democracy in the workplace enhances performance and therefore satisfaction levels. This in turn boosts happiness levels among workers. If you were unable to answer positively to any of the questions above, it may be time to think seriously about whether you are working in the right environment for you. This needn't mean a full scale career change, but it may mean making some small but significant changes to enable you to experience more happiness through your work.

Remember that, as the poet, philosopher and scholar John O'Donohue says, your identity is not equivalent to your biography. You are more than what you do. But if you want to make what you do more 'you', try these suggestions:

- Make sure that your immediate working environment is conducive to a sense of well-being and happiness at work. It's not always possible to have a great deal of influence over where you work, but even taking small steps like keeping your desk tidy and clutter-free will have a positive impact on your sense of control at work.
- Be strict about your time management to ensure that work does not bleed into your leisure time. There are many time management tools available. Try searching the internet for some ideas that suit you. A good place to start is: **www.timemanagement.com**

### 3. Make time for contemplation

*"Contemplation seems to be about the only luxury that costs nothing."*

*Dodie Smith*

Numerous studies have shown that those who regularly set time aside for prayer, meditation or contemplation



experience significant benefits in their life particularly when it comes to the levels of happiness and well-being that they experience. If you belong to a worship community, it is likely that prayer is already a part of your life, but if you don't, and don't want to, you can still gain benefits through learning about meditation and contemplation (see our booklet 'The Amazing' for more on this).

It is important to appreciate that the purpose of these contemplative activities is not the pursuit of happiness. Rather, these activities (and they are activities in that we must take action of some kind in order to undertake them) can help us to find some peace of mind or inner peace, which can, in turn, help us to be more resilient in our lives regardless of what happens to us. Knowing that you will be able to deal with whatever events occur in your life is undoubtedly a huge source of potential happiness.

If you want to increase the amount of time you set aside for contemplation it helps to think about where and when you are most comfortable doing it. Some people prefer to get up a little earlier than they need to so that they can spend some peaceful time before the day properly kicks off. Others find that the end of the day works better for them. While it's important that you aren't interrupted during this time, it also helps if



you can be a little flexible. It's better to spend time in prayer, meditation or contemplation in an imperfect setting than to give up altogether because you can't find absolute peace and quiet!

These ideas will also help to improve your contemplative experiences:

- If you are new to this, try to build up slowly. Sitting for just a few minutes a day at first will help you to get into the habit of being still and silent. Aim to increase the time you spend over the next few days and weeks. You may notice that the more you do this, the more you need to do it!
- Try joining a group to learn more. While most religious organisations will offer sessions on prayer, meditation or contemplation, most towns will also have groups running secular approaches to contemplation as well. The internet is a rich resource of techniques too.

## 4. Make connections with others

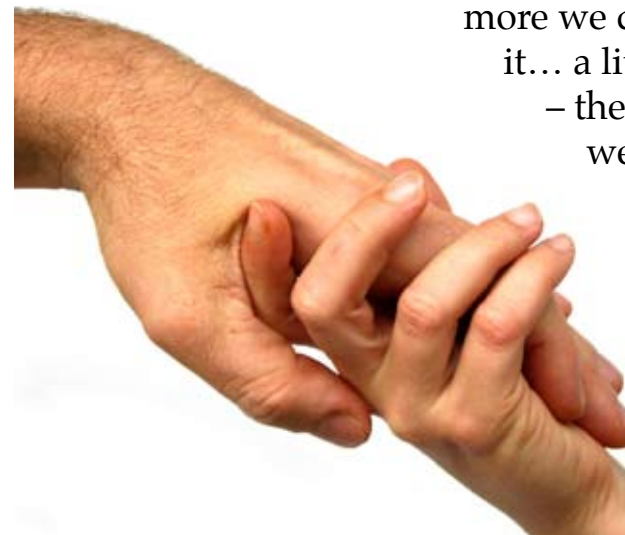
*"Only Connect."*

*EM Forster, 'Howards End'*

Life can be incredibly busy, and having the time to spend with family, friends and neighbours in our communities isn't always an option for us. But when it comes to nurturing the degree of happiness we experience on a day to day basis, making connections with others is very important. And if we treat making these connections as a way of life, we won't resent the time spent on building relationships. After all, life is all about our relationships with others.

Not having enough time to connect with others is a common complaint. The reality is, though, that when we make a commitment to meet up with friends or to spend some quality time with our partners and children, we make the time, and the more we do that, the more value it... a little like taking exercise – the more we do it, the more we feel we benefit from it.

Take a sheet of paper and write down as many



connections that you have with others as possible. Start in the middle with your closest family and friends. Now work outwards including other friends, work colleagues, more distant family, neighbours and acquaintances. Are there any relationships that you think you take for granted? Where would you want to direct your attention regarding the connections you have with others? Now look at your diary and identify blocks of time when you can arrange to meet up with or speak to others. Make a date and stick to it – you’ll be pleased that you did.

As well as actively making arrangements to meet up with those who are important to you, try these ideas for boosting the connections you have with others:

- Join a group in your local community. There are bound to be hundreds to choose from: choirs to drama groups, local interest groups to sports teams... the possibilities are endless! If you’re interested in green issues, find out if there is a ‘Green Drinks’ meeting near you: [www.greendrinks.org](http://www.greendrinks.org)
- Get to know the people in your local community by organising a street party. You can find loads of great tips and ideas at [www.streetparty.org.uk](http://www.streetparty.org.uk). This is a superb way of getting to know those you live closest to, finding out about similarities and differences and creating friendships.

## 5. Be grateful

*“If the only prayer you said in your whole life was, ‘thank you,’ that would suffice.”*

*Meister Eckhart*

We all know the old saying about being grateful for small mercies, but it seems that there is some wisdom in it when it comes to maintaining great mental health and happiness. In his book, *59 Seconds*, Richard Wiseman explains the psychology of gratitude by equating it to a smell in a room that you quickly get used to. The only way to reawaken your sense of the aroma is to leave the room and re-enter it. The same goes for the things we are grateful for. When we get used to what we have, we no longer feel a sense of gratitude and are perhaps more likely to seek out further gratification elsewhere that we don’t really need perhaps through shopping or over-indulging.

One way of focusing your mind on the things you are grateful for is to keep a gratitude diary. Research (see Wiseman 2009) has shown that if you spend a little time each week writing down five things that you are grateful for in your life you will become happier and more optimistic. This puts a whole new slant on keeping a diary! While journaling has undoubted benefits in helping you to understand your thoughts

and feelings, there is clearly a lot to be gained from keeping a diary specifically to express gratitude either daily or weekly. Those who try this soon find that they can nearly always find at least one thing that they are grateful for in their lives, no matter what else has happened to them that day. Use a notebook or some other way of recording your gratitude that is easily portable and aim to get into the habit at least weekly, if not daily. Take a moment every now and then to read back on what you have written too as that helps to boost the gratitude effect!

As well as keeping a gratitude diary, try these ideas for boosting your sense of gratefulness:

- Say 'thank you' as often as possible. Acknowledging what people have done for you or said to you, no matter how apparently small or insignificant, is a great reminder of the good things in life. Handwriting 'thank you' letters is even better, especially in this day of texting, tweeting, facebooking and emailing. Keep a stash of 'thank you' cards to send when you are grateful for a gift, a meal shared or some help given. And if handwriting a card is a step too far, pick up the phone, or say 'thank you' face to face.

- Develop gratitude in others by giving them something to be grateful for. Give a small gift out of the blue, do a task that needs doing or offer your time in some other way. Making these connections with others can be a great way of enhancing happiness.

## 6. Act 'as if'

*"Smile when it hurts most."*

*Anon*

Even when you are not feeling particularly bright and happy, it does seem that we can convince ourselves that things aren't as bad as they seem by the way we walk and talk. Research cited in Wiseman (2009) shows that people who are happy tend to move and behave very differently from those who do not describe themselves as being happy.

Wiseman suggests that we can use this information about the way in which happy people behave to enhance our own sense of happiness. Happy people, so the research says, tend to walk in a more relaxed way than people who are tense, sad or unhappy. Their arms move more freely and, although it sounds like a cliché, they walk 'with a spring in their step'! Try walking as if you had just heard some really fantastic news and notice if that feels different.

Wiseman also suggests that happy people tend to use more hand gestures when they speak and are generally more animated. They engage with others through showing signs of listening such as nodding their head and often use 'positively charged emotional words' such as 'love', 'like' and 'fond'.



As well as acting 'as if' you were happy by walking more freely and engaging in conversation in a more animated way, try these other ideas for boosting a sense of happiness:

- If you're always wearing dark and sombre colours, try brightening up your clothes a little. Wearing more colour can have a positive effect on the way you feel as can your posture; apparently sitting up can boost your mood too while slouching and slumping may do the opposite.
- Think about the way you come over to others when you meet them for the first time. People

who are happy tend to have a firm handshake and speak with a larger variation in the pitch and tone of their voice than those who do not describe themselves as being happy. They also use fewer self-references too (such as 'me' and 'I') so taking an interest in the person you are speaking to and asking about them and their life rather than speaking about you and your own life may also boost your sense of happiness.

## 7. Buy experiences, not things

*"People don't buy for logical reasons. They buy for emotional reasons."*

*Zig Ziglar*

Go to any high street on practically any day of the week and, even in times of relative austerity, people will be buying non-essential items in order to feel good, or at least better, about themselves. Add to that the hoards of people who shop in the 24/7 mall on the internet and it looks like we may have a problem. After all, average household debt in the UK excluding mortgages is, at the time of writing, £8,628 (source: [www.creditaction.org.uk](http://www.creditaction.org.uk)). Yet, the old adage that 'money can't buy you happiness' appears to be true. While sufficient amounts of money to enable us to buy shelter, food and clothing are essential for our health and well-being, it seems that



riches beyond those required to meet basic needs don't actually make us happy, possibly because it's all too easy to slip into a downward spiral of dissatisfaction followed by more purchasing followed by further dissatisfaction and purchasing.

This is good news for our pockets and the planet. If there is little point in buying yet more 'stuff' in the pursuit of feeling good about our lives, what should we do with any residual income we may have once basic costs have been met? According to research cited in Richard Wiseman's book, *.59 Seconds*, we are better off buying experiences than products. There are many reasons for this but one of the most important is that in buying experiences we are in fact buying the opportunity to spend time with others and being sociable is a short-cut to a happy life.

Try these ideas for buying experiences rather than 'stuff':

- Sign up for a course to learn a new skill. Go for something you've always wanted to try. Whether that's a new sport or style of cookery or arts and crafts, just go for whatever lifts your spirits and sounds like fun! Investment in learning is never wasted, especially when you get to meet a whole new crowd of friends too.

- Treat yourself and a friend to a meal out or some other trip that you will enjoy. Seeing as research has also found that it's better to give than to receive (see Wiseman, 2009) why not treat them! Even a few pounds spent on others can boost your levels of happiness. And if you really don't have any spare cash to treat others, gifts of time are just as valuable.
- If you have some spare money, give some of it to a good cause – whether it is a charity you care about or helping someone out. Helping others can give us a great sense of well-being.

## 8. Spend time in nature

*“Climb up on some hill at sunrise. Everybody needs perspective once in a while, and you'll find it there.”*

*Robb Sagendorph*

Sights of natural, breathtaking beauty are inevitably uplifting. If we remember to look around us, we can be treated to stunning views when travelling by car or train, and particularly when cycling and walking. There is something deeply restorative about spending time in nature. Many of the world's major religions use imagery of nature in their sacred texts and literature, and film and art all draw on nature to a greater or lesser



extent as inspiration. Observing nature helps us to feel in and of the world.

There have been numerous research studies exploring the impact that the natural world can have on our overall well-being and levels of happiness. From simply walking out of your front door and into your street to your nearest park or open space to undertaking daring treks and climbs, there are psychological benefits to be had from our encounters with nature.

Simply being more aware of the natural environment around you can help to raise your happiness levels. Try making a conscious effort to notice the changing of the seasons and the effect this has on the wildlife around you. It doesn't matter whether you live in an urban or rural environment – nature is everywhere! You could also try varying your routes to and from work or wherever else you routinely visit in order to discover something new about the natural world in your vicinity. Seek out encounters with nature throughout your day and notice the impact this has on your overall well-being.

You may also want to try these ideas for boosting your happiness:

- Join a local conservation group. This not only gets you out into the open but also introduces you to new friends, new skills and new

experiences in a safe environment. And as you will be giving your time as well as being out in nature that's a double hit of happiness! Find out more about volunteering here: [www.btcv.org.uk](http://www.btcv.org.uk)

- Devote some time to exercising outside. Not only does this keep you fit and healthy but it may release endorphins too, which give us a natural high. Exercising outside is also free. Compared with the costly charges of many gyms, it's impossible to beat the 'green gym'!

# Final points

From the growing body of research, it would seem that happiness – leading a happy life – is not outside our reach. This is especially so if we have a realistic idea of what happiness actually is and if we accept that we can, to a degree, take action to improve the amount of happiness we experience. Knowing what can have a positive effect on our own happiness can put us in a great position to help others to discover how they can experience greater happiness too.

As this booklet has shown, if we take just a few simple steps to adjust our usual daily routines and our habits of thinking, we can access a happier life without necessarily spending more, consuming more or reducing the happiness of others. And that's a happy thought in itself!



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# How to be Happy

We all aim to be happy – and some people seem to be able to experience life with a higher level of happiness than others. In recent years, happiness has become a serious topic of scientific investigation, and the results of this research to date provide some interesting ideas on how we can improve our mental health and experience of life.

This booklet explores the issue of happiness and provides some practical tips that could help you to promote your happiness.