

THREE KEYS TO HAPPINESS NYT 2023

Triangulate joy. This phrase was hovering in my consciousness as I surfaced from sleep the other morning.

It continued to nudge the edges of my brain while I made coffee.

During breakfast, a bit more of the idea emerged.

Three points to happiness. Okay.

Could a subject that has inspired countless self-help books and been obsessed over for the last century at least really be simplified into three points?

What are the three points?

By the time I sat down at my computer, I had hit on these:

1. Care for others
2. Care for self
3. Care for dreams

It seemed to me that while there are a million things to be wrangled and reckoned with in between, the weight-bearing points on this triangle of joy came down to these three things.

CARE FOR OTHERS

When we care for others, whether friends, family, or strangers, we tap into all that makes us human and we insulate ourselves to a degree from life's hardships. Generous behavior releases all the feel-good chemicals in our brains—serotonin, dopamine, and oxytocin—amplifying happiness.

Neuroscientists at the National Institutes of Health studied brain scans and found that when the volunteers placed the interests of others before their own, the reward centers in the brain were activated.

Generosity can take many forms. Whether it's volunteering, making charitable donations, helping a neighbor or stranger, or caring for a family member, the lifting effect extends to our own experience.

CARE FOR SELF

While a mani/pedi or some downtime with a facial mask and a cup of tea are certainly valuable for well-being and belong on your calendar, self-care means something beyond #SelfcareSunday. The deeper meaning is kindness toward oneself, refraining from self-judgment, and practicing self-compassion.

A study conducted by the Educational Psychology Department at the University of Texas at Austin found that self-compassion had a significant positive impact on happiness, optimism, wisdom, personal initiative, curiosity, and exploration. It also correlated with a decrease in neuroticism.

The authors of the study defined self-compassion as being kind toward oneself in instances of pain or failure, perceiving one's experiences as part of the larger human experience, and holding painful thoughts and feelings in balanced awareness.

According to psychology and mental health researcher Elizabeth Hopper, PhD, "self-care is always an important habit to practice, but it can be particularly valuable when we're under stress or when we're hearing about negative events happening to others." So in challenging times like we're experiencing now, it's particularly important.

CARE FOR DREAMS

Curiosity, plans, ambitions, hopes, the ideas that refuse to be pushed aside, these are the things of which dreams are made.

Our dreams are not just fanciful ideas. They matter immensely. Dreams are the things that motivate us to learn more, to challenge ourselves, to find our courage, to grow, and to achieve; all things necessary for happiness. Our dreams are life itself.

When we're young, our dreams underpin the map of our future. But at some point, the details of life may intervene, closing off one avenue or another. It's up to us to find alternate routes.

Care for your dreams. Don't let roadblocks or detours stop your progress. And never leave your dreams unattended; they can't survive on their own.

"THROW YOUR DREAMS INTO SPACE LIKE A KITE, AND YOU DO NOT KNOW WHAT IT WILL BRING BACK, A NEW LIFE, A NEW FRIEND, A NEW LOVE, A NEW COUNTRY." -ANAIIS NIN

OTHER SOURCES

1. "HOW HAPPY ARE YOU? VS HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH YOUR LIFE ?
2. Is happiness a temporary state of mind or emotion? Is happiness something we are born with, attain with time, or both? Or Is happiness a period of long-term life satisfaction and general well-being that we all aspire to have in our lives?
3. Why is Finland considered the happiest country?

High levels of trust and freedom also help explain Finnish happiness. Finland consistently ranks among the best in the world for transparency and for political, civil and press freedom. Denmark now very close, and all five Nordic countries in the top 10. countries of Eastern Europe rising in happiness (especially Czechia, Lithuania and Slovenia). Partly for this reason the United States and Germany have fallen to 23 and 24 in the ranking

4; Health, Hope, and Harmony: A Systematic Review of the Determinants of Happiness across Cultures and Countries Int J Environ Res Public Health. 2023 Feb VERY COMPLEX SYSTEM SEE BELOW

Health

Mental

(+) Creativity, Conscientiousness, Construct of Mental Health, Coping with Stress Cognitive Competence, Decreased Post-Traumatic Stress, Developing Positive Thinking, Desirable Outcomes in Psychological Domain, Enhancing Psychological Strengths, Freedom from Anxiety, Grit, Growth Mindsets, High Core-Self Evaluation, Handicapped Youth, Happy Memory, Higher Counsellor Sessions, Health Cognition, Healthy Mental Status, Holistic Wellness, Humility, Intelligence, Inner Attitudes, Mental Health, Mindfulness, One's Positive Evaluation of Self-Worth, Patience, Psychological Health, Positive Image, Psychopathic Personality Traits, Positive Energy, Psychological Well-being, Positive Inner Feelings, Psychological Motives, Positive Positive Affective State, Personal Strengths, Perceived Good Health Status, Remembering Happy Days, Rumination Inducing Messages, Resilience, Stress Reduction, Self-Affirmations, Self-Perception of Being Happy.

(-) Addiction, Depression, Distress, Fears, Heavy Screen Based Media, Higher Fatigue, Illness Related Concerns, Internet Addiction, Illness, Low Self-Evaluation, Psychologically Abused, Explicit Sexual Movies

Emotional

(+) Agreeableness, Adaptive Coping, Affective Intensity, Balance of Positive & Negative Emotions, Extraversion, Enthusiasm, Emotional Stability, Emotional Wellness, Emotional Intelligence, Fearlessness, Feelings of Happiness, Humor, High Need for Approval, Joy, Laughter, Less Anger, Less Sadness, Maternal Emotions, Managing Emotions, Not Having Negative Feelings, Openness To Experience, Optimism, Positive Emotions, Positive Psychological, Positive Experiences, Positive Mood, Pleasure, Relief, Satisfaction, Self-enhancing Humor, Subjective Well-Being, Self-Regulatory Efficacy, Subjective Happiness,

(-) Alexithemia, Anger, Guilt, Less Desirable Personality Traits, Negative Emotions, Neuroticism, Regret, Sadness, Shyness,

Physical

(+) Basic Relaxation, Better Sleep, Cochlear Implantation, Exercise, Desirable Outcomes in Physical Domain, General Health, Health Insurance, Healthy Diet, Healthcare, Home Dialysis, Healthy Personality, Physical Activity, Middle Age, Non-Exercise Physical Activity, Personal health Efficacy, No Smoking History, Physical Health, Participation in Sports, Pleasant Activities, Physical Wellness, Post-Traumatic Growth for Individuals with Physical Disabilities, Surgery, Satisfaction with Health,

(-) Abuse, Disability, Disability, Disfigurement, Handicap, Health Problems, Higher BMI, Perceived Illness, Poor Health, Physically Abused, Suffering Severe Unhealthy Days, Sexually Abused, Severe Disability, Transgender Youth Intervention, Gender Dysphoria

Hope

Goal Achievement

(+) Attainment of Goals, Commitment, Ego Involvement, Engagement, Enjoyment of Work, External Situation, Election to Office, Felt Power, Favourable Life Outcomes, Goal Pursuit, Goal Focus, Goal Evaluation, Hope, Hardworking Living, Hope for the Future, Having Set of Goals to Pursue, Higher Occupational Status, Goal Achievement, Intrinsic Goals, Individual's Position Job Training, Job Satisfaction, Keeping Busy, Occupational Status, Organized Work, Occupational Control, Occupational Wellness, Mastery Approach Goals, Positive Choices, Pursuing Goals, Purpose, Pride, Person-job Fit, Scholastic Achievement, Self-esteem, Sense of Purpose, Compensation, Success at Work, Self-Employment, Task Achievement, Task Involvement, Task Performance, Work, Value of Success at a Task

(-) Failure at a Task, Lower Self-Esteem, Position Power

Personal Growth

(+) Academic Performance, Doing Well in School, Emotional Intelligence, Education, Growth Mindset, Fulfilment, Freedom of Choice, Feeling of Growth, Hope Inducing Messages, Holistic Life, Higher Personal Control over One's Life, Life Satisfaction, Meaningful Life, Meaning, Opportunities For Learning, Perceived Power, Personal Development, Positive Engagement, Popularity, Personal Growth, Recognition of New Possibilities, Sense of Accomplishment in Life,

Economic Growth

(+) Baseline Life Satisfaction, Earnings, Economic Freedom, Economic Capital, Employment Earnings, Economic Growth, Financial Independence, Good Things in Life, Government Decentralization, Government Employment, Independence, Increased Independence, Income Expressiveness, Level of Income, Needs-Supplies Fit, Optimization, Optimistic Future Outlook, Prosperity, Personal Financial Situation, Post Materialization, Rise in the Price of Housing, Rapid Economic Growth, Quality of Life,

(-) Adversity, Earnings Of Others, Economically Abused, Economic Scarcity, Inflation, Less Economic Freedom, Unemployment

Harmony

Social

(+) Acts of Kindness, Caring For Self and Others, Connected to the Collective Way, Caring Climate, Community, Community Engagement, Citizens Participating in Politics, Cohesive Societies, Desirable Life Outcomes in Social Domain, Favourable External Circumstances, Facebook Users, Feelings of Social Support, Gratitude Visit, Homeless People, Higher Social Functioning, Inter-Personal Harmony, Increase in Social Class, Influence, Life Balance, Larger Social Network, Liesure, More Social Cohesion, Nurturing Social Relationships, Pro-Social Spending, Positive Thinking, Positive Events, Socio-Demographic Factors, Sense Of Community, Social Virtues, Stable Friends, Strict Identity Duality, Social Support, Social Context, Social Wellness, Social Network, Surrounded by Happy People, Spending More Time Socializing, Sense of Connectedness, Success in Dealing with People, Strengthening Social Relations, Social Competence, Trustworthiness, Trusted Neighbors, Valuing Friends,

(-) Antisociality, Fear of Violent Crimes, Group Discrimination, Higher Levels of Lonliness, Increased Levels of Intrusiveness, Interpersonal Struggles, Personal Discrimination Segregation, Unfavourable Social Comparisons

Family

(+) Balanced Marriage, Caring Climate, Children with Mothers, Contextual Wellness, Cohabitation, Duality of Wife's Role, Emotional Support, Elders At Home, Early Adulthood, Family Life, Family Income, Family Communication, Family Support, Feeling at Home, Family Well-being, Family Health, Family Happiness, Gender Levels, Greater Relationship Satisfaction, Health of Parents, Helpful Spouse, Intra-Couple Education, Living with a Partner, Maternal Age, Marital Relationships, Marriage, Positive Relationships, Positive Life Events, Perceived Help from Spouse, Quality Eating with Family, Role of Women, Relationships, Relationship Status, Stable Partner, Sexual Identity, Stable Family, Sex, Successful Aging, Synamic Relationship between Mothers, Teaching And Raising Kids, Women's Self-esteem, Uprbringing, Work-family Conciliation,

(-) Advancing Age, Bereavement of a Child, Being Younger, Death of a Loved One, Failure in Love, Lonliness in Old Age, Less Involvement with One Another, Living Alone, Low Harmony, Less Shared Sexuality, Negative Communication with Husbands, Older Age Groups, Separated from Spouse, Terminating Pregnancy, Widowed, Women in Post-Socialist Countries, Unhappy Couples, Yelling and Hitting of Children

Cultural

(+) Alignment With Culture and Traditions, Country Ethnic Identification, Ethnocultural Empathy, Indigenous Culture, Multiculturalism, National Identification, Nationality, National Pride, Polymorphism, Self-Identification, Stable Identity

Religious

(+) Acceptance, Beliefs, Contentment, Desirable Life Outcomes in Spiritual Domain, Inner Peace, Forgiveness, Gratitude, Gratitude Journal, Intrinsic Religiosity, Peace of Mind, Non-organized Religious Activity, Practicing Religion, Practicing Meditation, Practicing Islamic Based Gratitude Exercises, Personal Virtues, Religious Faith, Religious Attendance, Religious Transformation, Religious Services, Religious Involvement, Self-Realization, Spirituality, Synagogue Attendance, Stronger Personal Values, Savoring the Moment, Transcendence,

(-) Divine Struggles, Moral Struggles, Religious Struggles, Spiritual Struggles, Ultimate-meaning

Environmental

(+) Absence of Air Pollution, Clean Water, Clean Air,

