



Discovering Happiness in Your Life

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Happiness is a choice. It's true. ***You can choose to let life's circumstances get you down or you can choose to be happy no matter what challenges life brings.***

Happiness is already within each of us and we are born to be naturally happy! For example, have you ever noticed how infectious a baby's giggle is? So why is it that, as we get older, we forget where to find happiness within ourselves and, instead, allow outside forces to determine our happiness?

You can determine your own happiness by following these simple strategies:

- ***When life gives you lemons, make lemonade.*** Cliché, I know, however it's so true. You don't have to let life's troubles and problems get you down. Yes, there will always be troubles because no one is perfect, but you can *choose* your reaction to situations. Look at the positive side of things and work hard to see the good in people and circumstances.
- ***Find something you love to do and do it.*** Do you have a lifelong dream or desire? If so, start working toward it. Taking baby steps towards a dream or goal will help you feel like you're accomplishing something. You'll find drive and determination to reach that goal when it's something you love to do.
- Do you have a gift or talent you're not using? One reason so many people are unhappy is that they're not doing what they're called to do with their God-given talents. Each and every one of us has a purpose in life. ***You have natural gifts and talents to help you achieve your purpose, so use your gifts effectively!***

- ***When you're feeling down, don't wallow in your sorrows alone; do something about it.*** Call a friend who you know is positive and cheerful. Talk about your feelings and listen to their advice. So often, people allow themselves to go deeper and deeper into self-pity or depression because they think it has to be that way. The truth is, you don't have to be sad and you shouldn't be. You *can* decide to be happy. You just have to make up your minds to do so.
- ***Think about all the things you have to be thankful for.*** Often you get so caught up in what's wrong with your life that you forget to look at what's right and good. Take a step back and reflect on your life. How far have you come from, say, six months ago?
- Do you have children or family to be thankful for? Yes, they may not be *everything* we'd like them to be, but imagine life without them. Now, be thankful that you have them in your life.
- Do you have a job? Maybe it's not your dream job, but in today's economy, those of us who have a job should be thankful for it.
- ***When you're feeling down, journal your thoughts and feelings.*** Often you'll find that just getting your feelings down on paper will allow you to work through them, helping you to feel better about yourself and your beautiful life!

If you've been prone to look at life negatively, then you'll have to put more effort into seeing and choosing happiness. But don't let that stop you from being happy! You, too, can learn to be happy.

Practice the steps above and train your mind to focus intensely on the positives. When you feel a negative thought coming on, or your mind gravitates toward the negative, learn to recognize it, stop it in its tracks, and then start thinking happier thoughts.

Starting from this moment onward, ***make the conscious choice to be happy!***