

December 2018

## Three Simple Ways to Sustainable Happiness

There's no questioning that we all want to be happy. For some people happiness comes easier than others, but what we're starting to understand is that happiness — that sense of connection and ease of appreciating the good moments and being more graceful and resilient during the difficult ones — is a skill and strength that we can all build and sustain.

### Here are Three Simple Ways to Increase Happiness in Daily Life

(Note: Set all judgments aside when you read this, practice these techniques for yourself. Also, know that in making any habit stick, it takes time, there are no shortcuts, but stick with these three simple ways, be forgiving when you stray, learn from the obstacles and come back again and again — let experience be your teacher.)

1. **Relax your body** — We happen to live in a world that is more rapid than ever. It's no wonder that stress and anxiety are on the rise. It's important to literally relax your body a few times a day. Take a deep breath, scan your body, and soften or stretch the muscles that are tense. Make this a practice throughout the day. You'll be surprised how much this can help.
2. **Be gentle with yourself** — If there's one constant in life besides death and taxes, it's stress and pain. We all experience it, it's inevitable and there's a common humanity to it. The key here is to learn to get better and better at knowing what you're needing in the tough moments. Our brains usually trend toward self-criticism, but really what we're needing is a sense of caring and tenderness. Just think of a physical wound, it's the same concept. If you're physically wounded, you would attend to the pain, be gentle with it and apply the proper care. Emotional wounds are no different and tenderness is the fastest route to healing.
3. **Practice happiness for other people's happiness** — When you see others care of themselves such as exercising, laughing with a group of friends, or experiencing an accomplishment, practice being supportive to them in your mind. Provide encouragements like, "good for you for taking care of yourself" or "glad you're having a moment of joy." Smile in your mind at them or just say, "Yes!"

### Oh and one last thing...what's going to make this all sustainable?

Finding other people out there who want this for themselves and creating more connection with them. In other words, mentorship and community provide our brains with the positive social cues they need to be more naturally inspired to do this work. If you have friends who share these intentions, find time to connect with them more in some way (in-person, on phone, text or messaging). If you don't have friends with these intentions, see if there's a likeminded group you can join. Nurturing relationships takes time, but creating this supportive and inspiring web is key to sustainability. Of course, there are all kinds of other ways to support happiness, such as sleep, exercise, getting out in nature, play, etc. Although these are all important, and it's good to know there are many opportunities to support our well-being, the three we're focusing on here are all habits that take no extra time out of your life

### Here's the simple instructions that come with this formula:

Practice this for one work week. Go down the list and just focus on one each day. Then see what you notice at the end of the week. As a bonus, emotional contagion is a real science, and so as you do this, imagine the ripple effects.

Modified from: <https://blogs.psychcentral.com/mindfulness/2017/09/three-simple-ways-to-sustainable-happiness/>

### HOW TO USE YOUR EAP:

**ERC** is your company's Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

For additional information, visit our website [www.ERCincorp.com](http://www.ERCincorp.com) or simply call 1-800-222-8590