

# EVERYDAY HAPPINESS

Unlock The *Happiness* You Deserve



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## About the Author

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With a love of holistic nutrition and alternative medicine, Dr. Nancy believes in an integrative, comprehensive and functional approach to wellness with emphasis on addressing the root cause of health issues, not just treating symptoms. Her use of food with dietary supplements, effective stress management techniques like her podcast, "Braincation" with Dr. Nancy Lin, and consistent functional movements are at the core of what she preaches. Dr. Nancy's clients learn how to incorporate her 5 Pillars of Health into their lives and the lives of their families, including adopting her unique "Medi-Merican" diet for more pain free, energetic and happier living. Dr. Nancy is a lead health coach in her body transformation programs, offered in over 100 countries.

### Dr. Nancy's latest books:

- *Breaking The Bad* with Dr. Nancy Lin: Breaking the bad habits, mindsets, and beliefs 21-Day Transformation to a Leaner, Energetic, and Happier You!
- *Dr. Nancy's Getting To Great: 21 Day Journal For Breaking The Bad*

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**Everyday Happiness:**  
Unlock the Happiness  
You Deserve



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*“One must practice the things which produce happiness, since if that is present we have everything and if it is absent we do everything in order to have it.”*

- Epicurus

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## Introduction

What could be more universal than the pursuit of happiness? Do you know anyone that opens their eyes in the morning and thinks, *“I hope I have a miserable day”*?

Everyone is striving in their own way to experience more happiness and less misery. There are a variety of ways that we attempt to accomplish this.

- Money
- Career success
- Fitness



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- Social life
- Accumulation of possessions
- Spending time in nature
- Volunteering
- And more

But make no mistake about it, everyone is striving to be happy. Some people believe they'll be happier if they amass a billion-dollar fortune. Others believe they'll achieve happiness by sacrificing every dollar in their bank account for the needy.

### **There's no one way to achieve happiness.**

Your pursuit of happiness is entirely dependent on your values and interpretation of the world.

All mammals instinctively move from pain toward relief. Humans have the capability to form complex mental constructs that lead them all over the place. That's why we observe such a wide variety of approaches to chasing happiness. Some of those places make sense while others are more than a little odd.



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Compare that to your common canine. Your dog just wants a warm place to sleep, some companionship, playtime, and a regular meal. Humans are more complex. Your dog is always happy to see you, even if you haven't been particularly nice to him lately. Is that just because he's a "dumb dog," or is it because he has a happier philosophy on life?

The Buddhists believe that happiness is a natural state. It's merely the emotional state that exists when nothing negative is in the way. In other words, if all of your real challenges were resolved, you'd be happy by default.

In the Western world, happiness is often tied to accomplishments. Financial and career accomplishments most commonly lead the list. Yet many of the most successful people by these measures have been unhappy, some of them to the point of taking their own lives.

### **What does it take to be happy?**

- Does it take a mansion on the beach to be happy?
- Can a person truly be happy living in a cardboard box?



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- Is a spouse required for happiness? Freedom from having a spouse?
- Kids? Freedom from having no children?
- A stunning career?
- Giving to others?
- Meditating on a mountain top?
- Fame?

What does it take?

Take the time to answer this important question. What matters for your own happiness? Give yourself time to find an answer that resonates with you. Imagine that you were free from the expectations and opinions of others.

What would it take to make you happy?

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*“First we conceive the “I” and grasp onto it.  
Then we conceive the “mine” and cling to the material world.  
Like water trapped on the water wheel, we spin in circles,  
powerless. I praise the compassion that embraces all beings.”*



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- Chandrakirti

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# The Ego and Happiness

The ego is a great tool for success and accomplishment. It's a lousy guide for happiness.

Satisfying the ego is a primary reason why we have such amazing technology, architecture, billionaires, great musicians, and all the other people in the world that have accomplished amazing things. Ego is a critical part of great accomplishments. But will accomplishments make you happy?

Without the need to:

- Impress mom and dad
- Impress the neighbors
- Prove to everyone it can be done
- Prove to themselves that they're important
- Impress members of the opposite sex
- Be the first
- Or be the best



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There would be a lot less accomplished in the world. Think about it. **Without any ego-based motivation, your life would be dramatically different.** Arguably, you would accomplish fewer things that the average person considers impressive. Arguably, you would be a lot happier, too.

The trouble with ego-based motivation is that you eventually realize that no one cares for long. A few people may be impressed, but the thrill of impressing them doesn't last. And some people think negatively about you because of your accomplishments. You can't win!

Even if you're only trying to impress yourself, it's a hollow victory. Now you have to do even more the next time to earn your own respect. This isn't a recipe for happiness. It's a recipe for suffering.

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*"I am determined to be cheerful and happy in whatever situation I may find myself. For I have learned that the greater part of our misery or unhappiness is determined not by our circumstance but by our disposition."*

- Martha Washington

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# Keep Your Ego Under Control

Your ego is a significant barrier to happiness. You've been growing and shaping your ego for many years. It won't go quietly. Everyone has an ego to some degree.

**If you can put yours on a shorter chain, you'll discover that happiness is easier to find.**

**There are several common signs of an overactive ego:**

1. **Self-criticism.** If your ego is overactive, you're too hard on yourself. You avoid taking risks because you fear being judged by others. Interestingly, if you're worried about what others think, you probably spend too much time judging others and imagine that everyone else is the same.
2. **Judging.** Do you judge others? That's another sign that your ego is running rampant. How, you ask? Because you believe that things, people, and situations should be a certain way. Anything other than your



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perceived “right way” is offensive to you on some level.

3. **Impatience.** Impatience is another form of judging. You believe that something should take less time than it actually does.
4. **Complaining.** Complaining is also judging. The situation isn’t the way you think it should be, so you complain.
5. **Arguing.** The other person is wrong. You’re right and you’re going to prove it to them. Arguing is a result of judging.

How many of these signs of an overactive ego do you see in yourself?

**Tame your ego and create the possibility for happiness to enter your life:**

1. **Avoid comparisons.** Comparing yourself to others is a dangerous game, and one that you’ll always lose. We often compare our weaknesses to other’s strengths. Then we



discount our own strengths.

- With so many people in the world, there will always be those that are better and those that are worse.
  - Count your blessings. Pay some attention to what you already have. **Avoid spending too much time focused on the things you lack.**
  - The things you're comparing may not matter anyway. Does the attractiveness of your neighbor's spouse matter? Does it matter that someone has a nicer car than you do?
2. **Ask yourself what you would do if no one would ever know about it.** Would you buy a Mercedes for your next car if no one would ever know you owned it or saw you drive it? Would you still want to climb Mount Everest if you had to keep your successful summit a secret?



- **This can be an effective way to measure your true motivations.** Are you primarily motivated by doing it for others? Or do you have a more noble purpose?

3. **Avoid taking criticism or compliments personally.** Plenty of people are fools. Consequently, their compliments shouldn't be taken any more seriously than their criticism. Even if you receive a legitimate compliment about your artistic or athletic ability, it doesn't say anything about you as a person.

- Compliments and criticism are often about your looks, dress, behavior, decisions, accomplishments, or lack thereof. None of these define you.

4. **Give up the need to be right.** Is it important for someone to agree with you? Do you have to prove yourself to be correct and the other person to be wrong? That's just your ego playing with your mind.

- You'll save yourself a lot of pain and grief by speaking less and allowing others to



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have their opinions.

5. **Help others.** Get away from your ego by doing something for someone else. Volunteer your time to an organization or individual that needs your assistance.

Minimizing the impact your ego has on your life will be one of the hardest things you ever do. It will also be one of the most rewarding! **Your ego creates more turmoil and dissatisfaction in your life than you realize.**

You don't need to live in a temple in east Asia to tame your ego, but you do need to be persistent and patient.

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*"Happiness cannot be traveled to, owned, earned, worn or consumed. Happiness is the spiritual experience of living every minute with love, grace, and gratitude."*

- Denis Waitley

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# Obstacles to Happiness

1. **A lack of resources.** You're not unhappy because you don't have a shiny, new Lamborghini. You may, however, be unhappy because you don't have reliable transportation to and from work. The same goes for not having enough food, water, clothing, or love.
  - If you lack resources necessary for survival, you have a good reason to be unhappy. **That unhappiness serves a purpose. It can motivate you to do something to acquire those resources.**
2. **Distractions.** Distractions can be a big challenge. They make you feel better in the short-term, but offer no long-term benefits. You're not curing the cause of your discomfort, just hiding from it. Common distractions include:
  - Food
  - Drugs
  - Sex



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- TV
  - Electronic devices.
  - Shopping
  - Sleeping
  - Gossiping
  - And anything else that doesn't address the root cause
3. **Fear.** This emotion is a significant barrier to happiness. Fear is a sign that your mind believes something is wrong. This kind of unrest blocks the possibility of happiness. It's important to address issues that cause feelings of fear and resolve them. There's no room for happiness where fear resides.
4. **A lack of progress.** When your life isn't going well, a lack of progress can be disheartening. It gives the impression that the current situation may last for the rest of your life. Focus on making small changes and get excited about even the smallest amount of progress.



5. **A lack of social contact.** As much as we might like to think of ourselves as individuals, we're all social animals. We need others. Some of us need more time with people than others, but we all require human contact.
  
6. **Too much thinking.** Some thinking is useful, such as learning from mistakes or making plans for the future. Most thinking is not, such as daydreaming about how you'd like to run over your boss with your car, reliving arguments, grieving over choices made in the past, or dreading the future.
  - **Thinking can be addictive.** We think because we either believe that it's helpful in some way or we find it entertaining. We fantasize about owning a jet, throwing a winning touchdown, or spending time with the partner of our dreams. We relive our childhood drama and try to make sense of it or imagine a different ending.
  
  - Spend more time doing and less time thinking.



7. **A lack of purpose or meaning.** You don't really have to have a reason for getting out of bed each morning in order to be happy, but it certainly helps. When you feel that your time, effort, and contribution to the world lack value, you'll find happiness to be elusive.
8. **Negativity.** Negative beliefs lead to negative thoughts. Negative thoughts result in negative feelings. **How you see the world influences how you experience the world.**
9. **Significant change.** Divorce, the death of a loved one, or the loss of a job can make happiness a challenge. Any significant change can create stress that inhibits feelings of happiness and contentment.
10. **People.** The right people can add considerably to your happiness. The wrong people can have the opposite effect. Be selective regarding whom you allow in your life.

There are things that add to your happiness, and there are things that subtract from your happiness. **If**



**you can eliminate the things that detract from  
your happiness, you've won half the battle.**

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*“Be happy with what you have and are, be generous with both,  
and you won't have to hunt for happiness.”*

- William E. Gladstone

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## **Creating a Life That Supports Happiness**

You don't need to do great things to be happy. However, the way you spend your average day can have a lot of influence over your happiness. Creating a life that supports happiness is important. It provides the necessary foundation for everything else you do.

**Use these strategies to create a life that  
supports your happiness:**

1. **Acquire the resources you need.** It's easier to attain and maintain a state of happiness if



you have sufficient resources. These include:

- **Financial resources.** Ensure that you have a sufficient income to pay your bills and satisfy your needs.
- **Social resources.** Have enough friends that you can get out of the house and spend time with others at least a couple of times each week. Have someone to share a meaningful conversation with.
- **Time resources.** Without enough free time, it's impossible to take a break, engage in a hobby, or make use of your social resources.

2. **Find a career that you enjoy.** It's called work for a reason, so it might be too much to demand a job you love to do each day. On the other hand, if you despise your job, you're going to be unhappy most of the time.

- How much money do you need? You might find a more enjoyable career that



pays a little less.

- What type of work interests you?
  - Is the problem your career or your company/boss? Perhaps you can keep your career but acquire new surroundings.
3. **Choose your people wisely.** The right spouse can be a godsend. The wrong spouse can be your worst nightmare. To a lesser extent, your boss, coworkers, and even friends can have either a positive or negative influence on your life.
- It can be uncomfortable to remove people from your life, but sometimes it's the only solution.
4. **Be proactive.** Life is more enjoyable when you have a feeling of control.
- Have a plan for each day.



- Get your work done on time.
  - **Plan ahead.** Start saving for Christmas during the summer. Do your taxes at least a month ahead of time. Get your automobile tires replaced before you're stranded on the side of the road.
  - Avoid living a life that's reactive. **The common hassles in life are predictable. Take care of them before you're forced to.**
5. **Take care of your health.** It's not easy to be happy if you're in the hospital. Make your health a priority. It could be argued that your health should be your number one priority.
- Get regular exercise. You improve your fitness and appearance. More importantly, you feel better about yourself. Exercise also uplifts your mood.



- Many physical conditions can also affect your emotional health. For example, heart disease is a common cause of depression.

These are the basics that provide the framework for a happy life. Without these components, happiness will be elusive. Spend some time ensuring that you've satisfied the items on this important list.

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*“Achievement of your happiness is the only moral purpose of your life, and that happiness, not pain or mindless self-indulgence, is the proof of your moral integrity, since it is the proof and the result of your loyalty to the achievement of your values.”*

- Ayn Rand

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## Creating a Mind That Supports Happiness

It's not only your environment and career that determine how happy you'll be, but also the activity between your ears. **Fortunately, this aspect of happiness is 100% under your control.** You don't



need anyone or anything else to take control of your mind.

**Control your thoughts and you can control your happiness:**

1. **It starts with positive thoughts.** Your thoughts are completely under your control. Some circumstances are distracting enough that you feel like you don't have control, but you can consciously choose which thoughts are running through your mind.
  - **Monitor your thoughts.** Notice when you have a thought that isn't positive. Ask yourself if that thought is detrimental to your attitude and emotions. If so, change it! Choose a more supportive thought.
  - **Avoid underestimating the power of self-talk.** You could have a constant companion that criticizes you and attacks your dreams all day long. On the other hand, your constant companion could, instead, uplift you and cheer you on all



day! It's your choice! **Which companion do you want?**

2. **Examine your beliefs.** Do you believe that you can't be happy until you're making at least six figures? Do you believe that someone like you will never find the love of your life? Do you think that someone with your educational background is greatly limited? Do you believe that it's too late for x, y, or z?
  - Limiting and negative beliefs are like roadblocks, except they only reside in your mind. **Examine your beliefs and challenge those that don't serve you.**
  - Install new beliefs. Repeat them to yourself each day. Find evidence to support them. Be persistent until they become second nature.
3. **Focus on mindfulness. Mindfulness is like a wonder drug for your emotional ills.** It's being used to treat a wide variety of mental health issues, including many that are quite severe. It has been shown to have significant



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physical health benefits. It also enhances happiness.

- The dictionary defines mindfulness as *“a mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations, used as a therapeutic technique.”*
- In other words, keep your mind on your current task. And when thoughts arise, notice them without becoming involved in them.
- Imagine you're working in the garden. You're paying attention to your weed-pulling activities when you suddenly realize you're thinking about the fact that your mother-in-law will be arriving in the morning. As you don't care for her, this causes feelings of dread and resentment.
- The common response is to engage with the thought further. You might relive your last argument with her or ask yourself why



your spouse forces you to put up with her. You start imagining how awful the weekend is going to be.

- **If you're mindful, you'll avoid all of that.** Simply notice the physical sensations that are occurring when you remember that your mother-in-law is coming. You might notice that your neck is tight, your stomach upset, and you have a slight pain behind your eyes.
  - Stay with those physical sensations until they subside. Then return your attention to pulling weeds. You're not avoiding the thought. You're just not engaging with it further. If something else needs to be done, by all means do it, but do it without the burden of negative emotions weighing on you.
4. **Be useful.** Studies have shown that people are happier when they believe they are needed and are contributing to the world in some way. You don't have to be a pediatric cardiothoracic surgeon to be relevant. You can help an old lady cross the street or



volunteer with the Special Olympics.

- What do you consider to be important and meaningful? **Get involved!** Visit websites that list volunteer opportunities by city and interest to find an opportunity that interests you.
5. **Let go.** If you're 53 and work in a factory, it's time to let go of your childhood dream to be an astronaut. It's also time to let go of your ex-girlfriend. While you're at it, let go of the fact that your dad was a lousy parent. You might even let go of the disagreement you had with your coworker last week.
- Letting go isn't just for things in the past. You can spend too much time worrying about future events, too. Let go of those as well.
  - **The simplest way to let go is to just breathe and relax.** Stay with the feelings until they subside. You might have to do it ten times over the next several days, but



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the process works. Mindfulness is the best defense.

6. **Plan a future that excites you.** It's important to have something to look forward to if you want to be happy. **Make plans to accomplish your visions.**
  - Set goals. Then you can believe that you'll actually achieve your vision for the future.
  - Visualize your success each day.
  - Plan an adventure, like a trip to an amusement park or a week in Rome. Sign up for classes or lessons on a topic or skill that interests you.
7. **Take responsibility.** While it can feel comforting to blame others, it's a trap. When someone else is responsible, you give yourself permission to sit back and be inactive. **You give up your power when you make someone else responsible.** When you're responsible, you have the power to make



changes.

- **Feeling that you have control over your life is pivotal to your happiness.**

8. **Be gracious.** The more thankful you are, the happier you'll feel. Keep a gratitude journal and list a few things each day that make you feel grateful. It seems like a Pollyanna activity, but studies have shown that it's effective at increasing your level of happiness.

Not an easy list of items to accomplish, but they have a powerful effect on the amount of happiness you experience. These items are really skills that can greatly increase your happiness even as you cultivate and develop them.

## Conclusion

All people are striving for happiness. **It's the fundamental drive in all humans.** Whether someone is chasing their first million, building an orphanage, or working diligently to increase the size of their biceps, the motivation is the same: happiness.



**It's important to define what happiness means to you.** Otherwise, you may find yourself chasing someone else's idea of what it takes to be happy. Take the time to think about it. Your environment can influence what you believe is required to be happy. Rise above that tendency and decide for yourself.

Start by removing the things in your life that are making you miserable. Clean house with the people in your life. Build a supportive social circle. Generate sufficient income to take care of the necessities in life.

Build a life that supports happiness by finding a work environment related to your desires. Be proactive and avoid unnecessary challenges. Manage your health.

Finally, work on your mind. Your beliefs, thoughts, and attitudes can all impact your happiness. **Take control of your mind and make it work for you.** Failing to take control will result in your mind working against you. Control your thoughts and build a future that fills you with enthusiasm.



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Remember that everyone around you is just trying to be happy. Be compassionate with them and yourself.

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*“If you want others to be happy, practice compassion.  
If you want to be happy, practice compassion.”*

*- Dalai Lama*

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