

6

habits of
happiness
worth
cultivating

PAY ATTENTION

Studies show that mindful people have stronger immune systems and are less likely to be hostile or anxious.

GIVE THANKS

Research reveals the enormous power of simply counting our blessings. Regular expressions of gratitude promote optimism, better health, and greater satisfaction with life.

DROP GRUDGES

When we forgive those who have wronged us, we feel better about ourselves, experience more positive emotions, and feel closer to others.

PRACTICE KINDNESS

Being kind to others makes us feel good. Altruistic acts light up the same pleasure centers in the brain as food and sex.

KEEP FRIENDS CLOSE

Social connections are key to happiness. Research indicates it's quality more than quantity: Make time for those closest to you.

GET MOVING

Regular exercise increases self-esteem, reduces anxiety and stress, and may well be the most effective instant happiness booster of all.

Gratitude

1. Watch the video.
2. Write your own letter.
(*bonus: Call up and read your letter to its intended recipient.)

Gratitude

Research by Michael McCullough, Robert Emmons, Lyubomirsky, and others has revealed the power of simply counting our blessings on a regular basis. People who keep “gratitude journals” feel more optimism and greater satisfaction with their lives. And research shows that writing a “gratitude letter” to someone you’ve never properly thanked brings a major boost of

happiness.

Mental Subtraction of Positive Events: Visualize what your life would be like without the good things you have. Why do it? It's easy to take the good things in life for granted, but research suggests that the more we stop to appreciate what we have, the happier and healthier we are. This exercise is designed to help you increase feelings of gratitude for positive events in your life by visualizing what your life would be like without them. By getting a taste of their absence, you should be able to appreciate their presence in your life more deeply—without actually having to lose them for real.

Source: The Greater Good: The Science of Meaningful Life (UC Berkley)

Mindfulness

1. Take a chocolate..but don't eat it yet.

2. Scan the QR code to listen to and participate

in “Smiling Mind: Exploring Tastes”



(Please note: This particular exercise is for 16-22 year olds, however, the Smiling Mind website and app have programs designed precisely for use with classes of all ages and with teams. To achieve the same objective, the language and time allotted are adapted to be better geared towards the identified age.)

Mindfulness

A study at UCLA showed that students who participated in an 8-week mindfulness course showed significantly lower levels of stress in comparison to a control group. This same research group also found that participating in a mindfulness course enhances concentration, cognitive flexibility, attention, empathy and self-awareness.

“I believe mindfulness offers the potential to transform education so that we are truly educating the whole person.” – Dr. Shauna Shapiro, PhD, Associate Professor of Counseling Psychology at Santa Clara University.

What is mindfulness? (Take a handout for a more detailed description.)

Source: Shapiro, & Manber, in press; Shapiro, Brown, & Biegel, 2007; Shapiro, et al., 2005; Shapiro, et al., 2003; Shapiro, et al., 2001

Happiness

1. Think of one word or phrase that makes you happy. Write it on a sticky note and post it onto the poster. We'll build a happiness “wall”.

**Add your first & last name to the sticky note, and you'll be in the running to win a parting gift at the end of the session!

Happiness

In addition to making us feel good,

- Happiness is good for our health: Happy people are less likely to get sick, and they live longer.
- Happiness is good for our relationships: Happy people are more likely to get married and have fulfilling marriages, and they have more friends.
- Happy people make more money and are more productive at work.
- Happy people are more generous.
- Happy people cope better with stress and trauma.
- Happy people are more creative and are better able to see the big picture.

Source: Greater Good: The Science of a Meaningful Life

Movement

1. Watch and participate with GoNoodle 101.

Don't just watch...MOVE!!!

2. Explore other activities.

(Brainercise with Mr. Catman is a favorite of my students)

Movement

Exercise isn't just good for our bodies, it's good for our minds. Studies show that regular physical activity increases happiness and self-esteem, reduces anxiety and stress, and can even lift symptoms of depression.

“Exercise may very well be the most effective instant happiness booster of all activities,” writes Lyubomirsky in *The How of Happiness*.

Source: Greater Good: The Science of a Meaningful Life

Coloring

1. Choose a mandala that “speaks” to you and color it.

****Take your time.** You may not finish; please don't let that cause you stress. Take it with you to continue in a moment when you need a sense of calm.

Coloring

Findings suggest that structured coloring of a reasonably complex geometric pattern may induce a meditative state that benefits individuals suffering from anxiety.

Source: Art Therapy: Journal of the American Art Therapy Association, 22(2) pp. 81-85

Coloring is an activity that we tend to associate with children. As we grow older, we put aside our crayons and colored pencils in favor of more respectable writing utensils like pens and highlighters. However, it turns out coloring can be beneficial for adults -- namely for its de-stressing power.

The practice generates wellness, quietness and also stimulates brain areas related to motor skills, the senses and creativity.

Coloring has a de-stressing effect because when we focus on a particular activity, we focus on it and not on our worries. But it also "brings out our imagination and takes us back to our childhood, a period in which we most certainly had a lot less stress." This leads us immediately and unconsciously to welfare, exposes the specialist.

"I recommend it as a relaxation technique," says psychologist Antoni Martínez. "We can use it to enter into a more creative, freer state," he assures. We can also use it to connect with how we feel, since depending on our mood we choose different colors or intensity. "I myself have practiced that. I recommend it in a quiet environment, even with chill music. Let the color and the lines flow."

Source: Huffington Post

Happiness, Health, and Health Class: Resource List

[Greater Good: The Science of a Meaningful Life](#) (website)

**A new section has recently been added specifically for educators!

[Smiling Mind](#) (app and website)

**Mindfulness program available with teacher/facilitator guide for elementary, middle, and high school classes, as well as for sports teams, corporations, and individuals.

[Happify](#) (app and website)

**Intended for use by people over 18 years old. Remember...you need to “put on your oxygen mask first.”

[HeadSpace](#) (app and website)

[Left Brain Buddha](#) (website/blog)

[Yoga Calm](#) (curriculum/curriculum supplement)

**Mindful Moments cards available here.

[MindUP](#) (curriculum/curriculum supplement)

Just One Thing: Developing a Buddha Brain One Simple Practice at a Time by Rick Hanson

Raising Happiness by Christine Carter

The How of Happiness by Sonja Lyubomirsky

Mindfulness for Teachers by Patricia Jennings

**A very active Facebook group/page by the same name

Mindful Monkey, Happy Panda by Lauren Alderfer (children’s book)

[Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning](#)

[The Garrison Institute](#)

[Sportime](#) (shoulder folders, giggle whistles, fluffballs, spots)

[Bloomboard](#) (website of teacher-compiled collections of resources)



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