

FIVE PRACTICES TO MAKE YOU A HAPPIER PERSON

According to Ben-Shahar, psychologists have traditionally focused on everything that is *wrong* with us—our anger, our anxiety, our depression. The field of positive psychology turns that strategy on its head, focusing instead on what is working well in our lives. If all we ever do is try to eliminate ailment, he points out, then the best we'll ever do is not be sick. By learning to emphasize joy, happiness and personal development, we find benefits far beyond the “not sick” set point.

FIVE THINGS YOU CAN DO TO CHEER UP:

- 1. Give Yourself Permission To Be Human:** “When you feel like crying, cry,” “When you feeling like laughing, laugh.” Suppressing an emotion will only ensure its clear announcement later. Permit yourself unconditional acceptance and be okay with exactly who you are— tears, shame, crazy fits and all.
- 2. Develop Self-Concordant Goals:** In order to be happy, positive psychologists say, align your goals and values. When we register our accomplishments as Meaningful PLUS Pleasurable, we get document-able benefits in return.
- 3. Cultivate Your Mind-Body Connection:** There is great impact of movement and physical affection on well-being. There are studies wherein major depressive patients who took medications and exercised were less likely to “relapse” after ten months, compared to groups who improved by medication alone.
- 4. Value Your Healthy Personal Relationships:** Too many folks make a big mistake when it comes to long-term relationships. We end up looking for friends and lovers who validate us or assure us that we're likeable and normal. That kind of validation should come from within. In healthy relationships, the partners seek to *understand* each other, to know one another's most private fears, insecurities and motivations.
- 5. Focus On The Positive:** This one is probably easier prescribed than carried out, but there are scientific reasons why we should develop a habit of dwelling on the positive. Positive psychologists find that happiness is more dependent on STATE of MIND than on any environmental factor, *as long as basic needs are met*. Practices like listing everything you're thankful lead to statistically significant increases in happiness.