



10 Ways to Get (and Stay) Happy

by award-winning author / stress-relief expert Susie Mantell

1. **Make a list of 100 things that make you happy.** (*Yup--100.*) Focusing on what makes us happy has a way of, well... making us happy!
2. **Carrying a full plate? Enjoy a Stress-Reduction "Buffet."** Plan pleasurable exercise, mindfulness and meditation, breath-work, gentle touch, healthy nutrition, journaling, play and laughter. Help yourself to some creative expression, personally meaningful spiritual practice, healthy relationships. Balance the tough days with an activity just for you.
3. **Under Pressure? Blow Off Some Steam.** Call a friend you trust. Set a timer for 6 minutes. Ask if you may please whine for 3 of them. Switch and listen to their 'stuff' for 3 minutes. Your release, plus refocusing on someone else, creates breathing space in a stressful day.
4. **Woe is You? Re-frame Problems in a More Positive Light.** Create meaning in your predicament. (*e.g. Snow cancellations? Organize a closet and donate the overflow to a shelter. Cozy in and read.*)
5. **Unhappy? "Imagine" You're Smiling.** Smiling sends an internal message that all is well. (*"I must be okay--I'm smiling!"*) Close your eyes, picturing yourself smiling. Just a little non-committal half-smile is fine. Now open your eyes. Stay that way all day, kind of half-smiling so you won't have to reach so far down to start, if an opportunity to share a smile comes along.
6. **Overwhelmed? Practice Mindfulness.** Staying in-the-moment allows us to release injuries of the past and worries for the future and Be Here Now.
7. **Irritable? Release Anger, Envy and Resentment.** This takes time but each of these toxic emotions is like a white-hot coal. We hold onto it intending to throw it at someone, but the truth is that it never really leaves our hand. I recently heard another great comparison: Harboring a resentment is like setting yourself on fire hoping the smoke will annoy the other person. (Source Unknown)

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8. **Forgive.** Forgiveness is something we do as much for our own healing as for the other. Forgiveness is not acceptance of abuse nor permission, rather a release of that act's affect on you knowing it came out of someone else's pain, fear, emotional illness or poor judgment.

9. **Need New Ways to Feel Good? See My List of, "70 Ways to Feel Really Good...Fast!"**

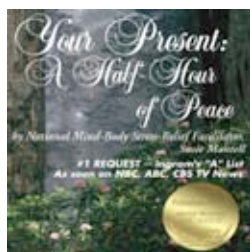
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10. **Enjoy Some Mood Music.** Get together with friends and score each other one point for each 'Feel-Good' song you can name. (e.g. "I Feel Good"--James Brown, "Friends"--Bette Midler, "Day by Day"--Godspell, "It's a Beautiful Morning"--The Young Rascals, "Higher Love"--Steve Winwood, "Whenever I Call You Friend"--Kenny Loggins, "59th St. Bridge Song," (aka, "Feelin' Groovy")-- Simon & Garfunkle, "Up On the Roof"--The Drifters, "Carolina in My Mind"--James Taylor, "Dancin' in the Street" --Martha and the Vandellas. (And yes. As you can tell, I am a boomer.)

Bonus: Thank You "Notes"

- Keep a journal of all the people and things for which you are thankful. (*It's especially helpful to do this on rough days.*)
- Write three one-paragraph Thank You notes to people you appreciate for no special occasion-- just to remind them that they are cared for. Why not take five minutes and contribute to someone else's happiness? You will like yourself better for doing it. (Which is, by the way, one of the *true* secrets to Happiness!)

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END OF THIS TIP##