

Cultivating Happiness

Many people are searching for a life balance that prioritizes happiness and wellbeing. If you would like to cultivate a life that is more fulfilling and emotionally sustaining, these tips may help:

- ▶ **Redefine happiness.** The sugar rush of ecstatic or joyful emotions that many of us think of as “happiness” is actually just a biochemical reaction to a fleeting mood. Enduring happiness is something we create from within ourselves.
- ▶ **Determine what happiness means to you.** Some key questions to consider include:
 - What am I grateful for?
 - What are my strengths?
 - What choices do I have?
 - What does “life balance mean to me?”
- ▶ **Determine what you can control.** Review the answers to the questions you asked yourself. Create a list of what makes you happy, based on the answers you provided, and put a star next to each item on the list that you can control. Then, list the starred items in order of priority.
- ▶ **Set goals.** Determine what actions you can take to cultivate a more meaningful or fulfilling life. Keep in mind that material possessions are more likely to produce happiness if they are tied to an emotional or spiritual goal. For example, the goal of moving to a larger house might be tied to



“creating a more comfortable living space for my family.”

- ▶ **Engage in realistic optimism.** Thinking positive is important, but avoid inflating your expectations. Emphasizing effort over outcome will help you stay motivated, without setting you up for a major letdown if you run into setbacks.
- ▶ **Focus on values.** As many of us have learned in the last year, the best-laid plans can fall by the wayside due to circumstances beyond our control. Concentrating on your values can guide you through difficult life challenges.
- ▶ **Be thankful.** Expressing gratitude for what you have will help stave off negative emotions, such as fear, uncertainty, and jealousy. Thankfulness is also a key component in maintaining a positive mindset.
- ▶ **Take responsibility.** Blaming others for your problems may lead to anger and resentment. Accepting mistakes can help you grow and may serve as a springboard to greater emotional contentment.

If happiness seems elusive, LifeMatters can help. Call 24/7/365.

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