

# How To Be Happy

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The best minds in science and academia weigh in on the mystery of happiness.

## Step 1:

### **Be A Do-Gooder**

Researchers caution against mistaking "pleasure" for "happiness." Pleasure is based on external factors, and leaves one craving more, more, more. Happiness, however, is influenced less directly- even by putting off your own pleasure for the good of someone else. People who perform selfless acts of kindness, whether by volunteering for a shelter or just helping out a friend, raised their reported level of happiness.

## Step 2:

### **Don't Sweat Decisions**

The longer a choice is debated, the less happy the decider is with the outcome. Whether it's what to eat or where to live, first set your standards- the factors most important to you- then take the first option that meets them.

## Step 3:

### **Spend Well**

If you're going to splurge, do it on an experience you'll remember, not goods or gadgets. Research indicates that people often regret purchasing an expensive ITEM, but tend NOT to regret money spent on "experiences" such as dining and travel.

## Step 4:

### **Aim High- But Not That High**

Those at the pinnacle of financial success don't report significantly higher levels of happiness than the average Joe. Ask yourself if that overtime is REALLY worth it.

## Step 5:

### **Be A Joiner**

Whether it's a church choir or street dance crew, being part of a defined community group raises happiness levels.

## Step 6:

### **Stop Dwelling**

Leading psychologist Sonja Lyubomirsky has found that the happiest people don't dwell on negative or ambiguous events. Furthermore, excessive introspection may sap your mental resources, making it harder for positive changes to occur. So turn off that Morrissey record and go outside.

## Step 7:

### **Be Grateful**

Several professors and scholars in this field instruct students to keep a regular journal of what they're thankful for. The results indicate that gratitude reliably increases happiness. Who knew that those greeting cards urging us to "count our blessings" were right?