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## The 7 Best Pieces of Advice for Living a Happy Life

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If truth is relative to what you believe, then happiness is directly correlated to what you pursue.

Everyone is in search of how to live a happy life--when in reality, the search begins with you. Happiness is not "found." It is realized.

It is already right here.

(For all of you rolling your eyes, read the above sentence again and take a big deep breath as you read it.)

### **1. Stay true to yourself.**

So much unhappiness stems from making decisions that go against what you know in your core, your gut, to be right. Deep down, you don't want to do it--but you do it anyway. You listen to your head. You try to convince yourself the raise is worth it, or the risk is too great, or it's better to just stay put, to keep your head down.

Staying true to yourself is a challenge, yes. But effectively suppressing your true self is even more challenging.

### **2. Do what you love--not what you're told to love.**

To spend time (especially a considerable amount of time) doing what you love takes work. Hard work. And the truth is, most people give up. They get a job to pay the bills and do what they love "on the side." Eventually, they lose motivation, fall into the comfort of routine, and give up the very thing they once valued the most. And for years, then, they look back in regret, almost basking in the statement, "I wish I could have..."

It might take a while for you to realize it, but at some point you will. You will feel an immense sense of loss for not having stuck with the thing that once brought you true joy. Even if you never make it your career. Even if you only do it for yourself, still, do it. The fact that "doing something for yourself" is seen as a waste of time and energy is testament enough to our achievement-based society.

### **3. Create the environment that's right for you.**

If you are an extrovert, don't allow yourself to work a job that suppresses that part of you. If you are an introvert, don't try to contort yourself to an extroverted company culture. Your own happiness is a reflection of your day-to-day, the things you're doing, and most important, how you are doing them.

Create your own environment. Put yourself in a place that will help you grow, not suppress your growth. Surround yourself with people who understand, or at least make the effort to understand you. There are always options. Do not settle for someplace that does not feed your core.

### **4. Choose your friends wisely.**

You are a reflection of the five people you spend the most time with--choose them wisely. If they complain a lot, you will inevitably complain a lot. If they are lazy, you will become lazy. If they are not actively improving themselves, you will not actively improve yourself--unless you leave the situation and find others who will reflect that part of you.

It is very difficult to remain in a state of happiness when you are surrounded by negativity.

## **5. Develop positive habits.**

We as humans like to believe “happiness” is the destination wherein there is no more challenge. Everything is easy.

In fact, it is quite the opposite. We love challenge. We thrive off challenge. We grow through challenge. We discover ourselves by being challenged. And it is not the thing itself, but your emotional state that decides whether or not that process of growing and being challenged is enjoyable, in the same way a workout can be enjoyable or grueling and painful (in the same way a workout to someone out of shape can be grueling and painful).

The simple act of developing positive habits in itself brings a deeply “earned” happiness. We are happy because we have overcome ourselves.

## **6. Create certainty and leave room for uncertainty.**

If everything in your life is planned out, then it’s boring. If nothing in your life is planned out, then it’s risky and uneasy.

Happiness is found somewhere in the middle. You want just enough certainty in your life to feel like you have ground to stand on, you’re not completely in danger, but you’ve left the window open for spontaneity to sneak in for a sleepover every now and then.

It’s the spontaneous adventures that bring extreme moments of joy. But they are best enjoyed when you know you have something safe to land on as well.

## **7. Be vulnerable.**

Frightening, but there is an unrivaled happiness that comes through acts of vulnerability. These moments confirm we are human. That we are imperfect. We open ourselves and, as if looking in the mirror for the first time, are able to step back and see who we are a bit more clearly—for better or worse. We accept ourselves, and let others do the same.

Vulnerability is the secret. We as a society go to great lengths to hide who we are, and create masks, personas, and images to portray the parts we know will receive approval—while banishing the rest to the shadows. But all our best work comes from being vulnerable. All our happiest moments and saddest realizations come from being vulnerable. All our deepest loves and greatest friendships come from being vulnerable. All our art, all our music, all our creativity comes from being vulnerable.

Vulnerability is the secret to happiness—and that is why I started this article with the breath. Happiness is not out there somewhere, waiting for you. Happiness is hidden within vulnerability, and vulnerability is hidden within you.