The 7 Habits of Happiness

Research shows that 50% of our capacity for happiness is genetically predetermined and only 10% of our happiness is due to life circumstances. That leaves a good 40% within our control. Here are some practical strategies for building the 7 habits of happiness.

1. Cultivate your strengths
Take the VIA Signature Strengths questionnaire at www.viacharacter.org. Review your top ten strengths and use one of them in a new way each day. Take notes of your experiences.

2. Practice gratitude
Think of someone for whom you are grateful. Write down what they did and what it meant to you. Express your gratitude in person, by letter, or by phone.

3. Think positively
To become more aware of the good things that happen to you, each night before bed this week write down three things that happened that day that were good, went well, or that you felt grateful for. These things can be small and seemingly insignificant or meaningful and highly important.

Then, next to each positive event, write down why this good thing happened. Be specific and focus on things that happened that day rather than on generalities.

4. Live in the present
Choose any of the following savoring strategies and practice once a day.

- Savor a routine activity or ritual
- Share your savoring with others
- Make a list of happy memories and take time to re-experience them
- Seek bittersweet experiences – precious times that are about to end

5. Invest in social connections
Listen carefully this week when people you come in contact with report good events. Practice active-constructive responding and record your experiences.

6. Take care of your body and soul
Begin or renew a personal practice for physical and/or spiritual health. Also, practice the facial feedback hypothesis.

7. Commit to your goals
Write a brief summary of your life as you would like to have it shared with those who never had the pleasure of knowing you. Include a description of your values and strengths and how you may have contributed to a positive human future.