

how to be happy



THERE'S NO SECRET FORMULA: IT'S NOT SHOES, MONEY OR A MAN ... HAPPINESS HAS TO BE WORKED AT, EVERY DAY IN EVERY WAY WE CAN. EVEN THE GOVERNMENT NOW HAS A HAPPINESS TSAR. BUT WHERE SHOULD WE START? WE ASKED SOME OF WALES' LEADING EXPERTS FOR THEIR SHORTCUTS TO SUNSHINE

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Happiness haiku: 'Learn from your mistakes and stay positive'

When we are inundated with messages about how we should look, what we should wear, how much money we should make and what car to drive, it is hard to decide for ourselves what makes us happy, and how to achieve this without worrying about 'what everyone will think...'
Happiness depends on one's ability to maintain a positive outlook or perception while coping with life's numerous stressors and difficulties. Those who learn to use unpleasant experiences or 'bad' choices to improve their lives have a better chance of happiness than those who rarely experience negative or challenging events. Finding happiness means seeking a balance between predictable stability and positive challenges and change. Without meeting our basic needs we cannot be happy; but if we rely only on material things we cannot feel satisfied either. Happy people tend to have an underlying understanding of 'the bigger picture', which helps them cope with hard times and embrace and cherish the good, on a day-to-day basis.

Happiness haiku: 'Be a good friend and really listen to people'

Unfortunately, happiness isn't the common currency we would all hope it to be. People call Samaritans when they are in despair. And one of the most common cries we hear from our callers is that, 'there is no-one who will really listen to me'. All too often, not having their feelings, worries and troubles really heard has brought our callers to this point of despair. We all think we are good listeners but how often do we choose to put our own point of view across when someone wants us to just listen? Samaritans believe in the importance of having the opportunity to explore difficult feelings and that being listened to, in confidence and accepted without prejudice, can alleviate despair and suicidal feelings. The lesson we can all learn from this? That anyone can be a Samaritan to their friends, relatives and colleagues. Simply taking time to really listen to someone can improve life and levels of happiness for everyone. We were born with two ears and one mouth – we should use them in that same proportion.

Happiness haiku: 'Go with the flow of everyday joys'

Happiness is created by the little things in life which are available to us all. It could be found in engaging with a work task, a project at home or a social occasion – anything really – with some degree of unpredictability and challenge that we know we can meet spontaneously, naturally, with 'flow'. Where can we look for happiness? In the 'small stuff': it could be in just meeting up with a friend you haven't seen for a while. What have they been up to? The conversation flows naturally. It could be meeting friends who introduce you to their own friends whom you don't know. Who are you going to meet; what is going to happen? You don't have to think about what you are doing; the evening is flowing. It could be found in working on a project, or spending time with the children, becoming so engrossed that time flies by. Happiness comes from the smooth interplay between you and your environment. All is going well, but you are not sure exactly what is going to happen next. And we can all reach for this achievable goal, every single day.