

u3a learn,
laugh,
live

10 Ways to be Happier !

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Council Rep, W Midlands Region

Lichfield u3a



How Important is Happiness?

In 2024, the “happiness market” was estimated to be worth about \$1.5 trillion pa
consumer spend on health, fitness, nutrition, appearance, sleep & mindfulness

In 2011, the UN urged member states to recognise the importance of “the pursuit of happiness & well-being in guiding public policies.”

2012: the UN launched annual World Happiness Report & the first International Day of Happiness*

2013: **The Happiness Research Institute** was founded to promote the “science of well-being”.

2017: Academics formed the **Global Happiness Council** “to advance the causes of happiness”

2019: **The Wellbeing Research Centre** set up “to advance our understanding of human wellbeing.”

2025: World Happiness Report – Finland is top, Uk is 23rd out of 147 countries

For ages 7-11

Funny and full of wisdom, I loved this book!
Katie Fforde

It's the smallest things that make the biggest difference

HOW TO BE HAPPY

Eva Woods



Est 2-4M pa

DON'T WORRY, BE HAPPY

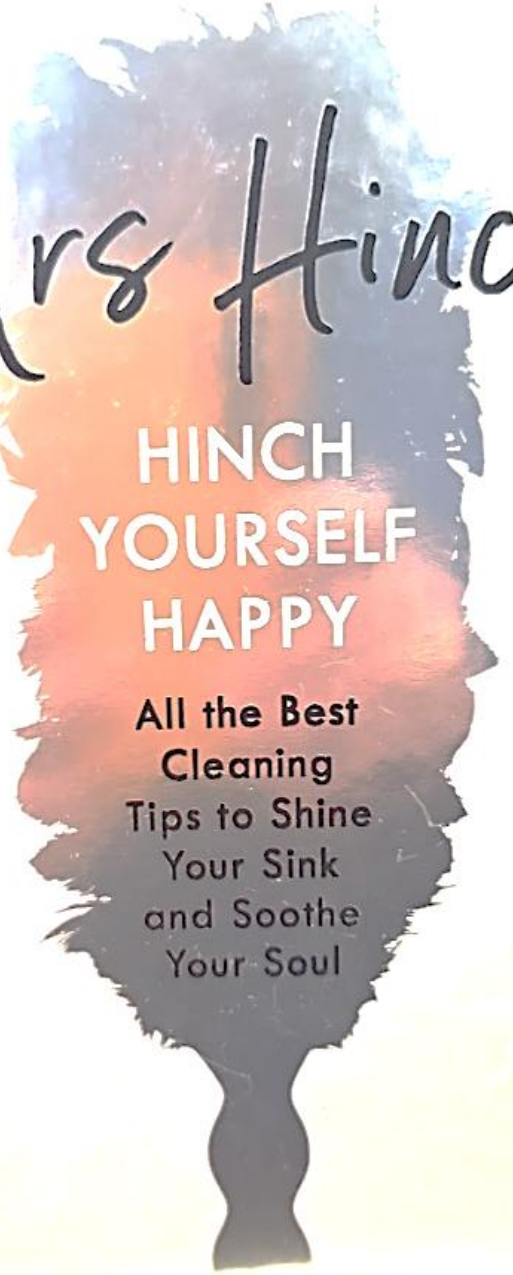


Poppy O'Neill

Mrs Hinch

HINCH YOURSELF HAPPY

All the Best Cleaning Tips to Shine Your Sink and Soothe Your Soul



u3a 1. Music can lift your mood : try upbeat

Upbeat music can help you handle stressful situations...

Sad music can be comforting!



u3a What's your song?

NLP (*Neuro-Linguistic Programming*) anchors a memory to change a mood

TYPES OF ANCHORS

NLP Anchors use your memory:

the anchor may be a sound, image, touch or taste that triggers an experience



2. Exercise can make you healthier and happier!

Covid “prescribed” a daily walk: morning walks (pre 11am)
reset your circadian rhythm. Get out into nature!

“Travel is the only thing you buy that makes you richer”*



* Attributed to Mark Twain

Do you *move* enough?

STANDING UP helps muscle & bone health

Standing (not sitting) burns an extra 40 calories per hour



"Usually **within five minutes** after moderate exercise you get a mood-enhancement effect."

But the effects of physical activity extend beyond the short-term. Research shows that exercise can also help alleviate long-term depression.

The American Psychological Association

If you really can't do much exercise, make small changes

1. **STAND UP!**

SITTING is the new smoking.

Standing burns 85 calories/hour, sitting 65

Can you stand up more often?

2. **IMPROVE YOUR BALANCE**

Can you stand on 1 leg?

Try it when you're brushing your teeth

If you fell over, could you get up?

3. **BUILD YOUR STRENGTH**

Lift weights?

GO SHOPPING....



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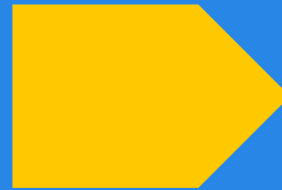
3. Be more “present” – *what does that mean?*

Focus on one thing, without distraction.

Don't worry about past mistakes or things that MAY happen..

“**Mindfulness**” is all about **NOW**. Anxiety is about the future.

1 min video from **HeadSpace**:



Look up “**Box Breathing**”

– focuses your mind on the present moment, to remove stress and anxiety

Factors that help to maintain good cognitive function

– according to Professor Ian Deary of Edinburgh University

- Eat more oily fish or take omega 3 fish oil supplements
- Do crossword puzzles or read a lot
- **Do more physical activity**
- Speak 2 languages fluently
- Don't smoke



Age 65+

The average woman does not do the recommended levels of exercise; age 35–63 = 5%

Only 5% of men do the recommended levels of exercise; age 35–63 = 5%

SOURCE: Health Survey for England 2008

u3a 4. Be kind to yourself

Do you tend to put others first – all the time?

Need to look after ourselves “can’t pour from an empty cup”

As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands, one for helping yourself, the other for helping others.” — **Maya Angelou**

It’s the small habits. How you spend your mornings. How you talk to yourself. What you read and what you watch. Who you share your energy with. Who has access to you. That will change your life.” — **Michael Tonge**

Do you consume a lot of CNN? Does it make you sad or angry?

u3a 5. Be kind to others!

1. SMILE! – your expression affects your mood –
Basis of “laughter yoga”

2. “Pay it forward” : in 1999, Catherine Ryan Hyde wrote
a novel of the same name

She set up the Pay It Forward Foundation, to spread
Kindness around the world.

“If you want happiness for an hour, take a nap

If you want happiness for a day, go fishing

If you want happiness for a year, inherit a fortune

If you want happiness for a lifetime – help someone else”

– Chinese Proverb



Every year on April 28th,
**Global Pay It Forward
Day** encourages people
around the world to engage
in a small act of kindness.
It's a day to respond to
someone's kindness toward
you by being kind to
someone else.

u3a 6. Practise Gratitude: *value, notice, be grateful for what you have*

- Envy is one of the 7 deadly sins
- “Count your blessings”
- Can improve your health & mind



Develop an “Attitude of Gratitude” – thank people for what they do for you.

u3a 7. Be social – and Eat with others

Dining alone isn't good for wellbeing*: people who eat with others are happier & slimmer. In the USA, eating alone's linked to declining wellbeing.



People living alone often experience lower levels of happiness – and it's worse for men.

62% of adults who reported bad health reported that they felt lonely at least some of the time, compared to 35% of adults with fair health and 18% of those with good health

* *World Happiness Report 2025 Chapter 3*

u3a 8. Learn something **new!**

Being a lifelong learner is linked to longevity & and happiness

Don't get stuck in a rut !

Learning a new skill can change
hundreds of millions of cortical
connections.

— *Michael Merzenich* —

American neuroscientist & professor emeritus
at the University of California, San Francisco.



Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new.” – Albert Einstein.

u3a 9. Be optimistic !

Why do we dwell on the negative? – *it's the way we're wired...*

People are kinder than we think... says research! 10%+ since Covid

Don't put things off... be realistic, not afraid



**“I'd rather be an optimist
and a fool
than a pessimist and
right.”**

– Albert Einstein

u3a 10. Find your purpose in life

What energizes you?

What do you love to do?

Cleaning? Sewing? Art? Music?

"nourish your soul"

Who might you want to help?

Volunteers are healthier, live longer, take better care of themselves

The Guardian

A new start after 60:

I was unfit and prediabetic.

**A month tracking turtles
changed everything**

A new start after 60:

**I'm a 90-year-old drummer
with a leather jacket**

24 Jun 2021 · A 74-year-old man
"The Skipping Sikh" who starred in
exercise videos to inspire his
community during lockdown has
been awarded an MBE.

u3a

SHARE

with

others!

Happiness

is

Contagious

THANK YOU!

