



Third Quarter 2021

To Live Longer, Be Happy

After a year like 2020, it's important to step back and remember that happy people live longer and have healthier lives. How can we be happier? One approach is to surround ourselves with happy, positive people. But if you are visibly unhappy, the odds are you are not only driving happy people away but making those around you and yourself unhappier.

A very basic approach to changing your mood is to put a smile on your face. Consciously act like a happy person would, even if you don't feel like it. For starters, the act of smiling, even if forced, helps relax your facial muscles and it helps others view you as a nicer person.

Sounds too simple to work? Before you spend a fortune on psychotherapy trying to figure out why you are unhappy, try to act like an extrovert for one week. Smile at others. Deliberately take a moment to thank others. Volunteer to help others. Try spending money on others. If you want to feel a certain way, act as if you already do and often your brain will go along. Richard Wiseman, a psychologist at the University of Hertfordshire, in the United Kingdom, calls this the "As If Principle." In other words, "Fake it 'til you make it."

Another tool – memorize the words to Bobby McFerrin's "Don't Worry, Be Happy" and when you start feeling blue, start singing.

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