

the little book of
HAPPINESS

live · laugh · love

How do *you* put happiness into words?

It cannot be defined. It's not a set formula for all but a unique quest where the journey is as important as the final destination. Many have fallen in their pursuit of happiness, tempted from the path by the glimmer of external treasures which provide only a fleeting and superficial glimpse of joy.



Finding happiness

To find true happiness you first need to find yourself.

Ask yourself:

- Who are you, really, truly and honestly?
- What makes your heart sing and gives your life purpose?

Therein lies the overflowing cup of joy that is your Holy Grail.

Happiness

It is a fleeting thing.
You search for it in vain and then,
while wondering where time has gone
you catch a glimpse and know
you saw it, then.

Stare from a window as the music plays
and catch the moment you become aware.
Maybe this time a sense will help you stay,
see this or that, a thought you recognize;
a feeling you can't analyse. A joy,
a fleeting thing.

VIV APPLE



Stop and let it be

When the feeling of happiness rushes
through you, just stop, feel and be in
that moment.

Happiness is intangible. It is a feeling, a moment that impacts your being and life. It is something you can't put in a pocket and save for later; it is something that can often feel out of reach.

“Happiness is a butterfly, which when pursued, is always just beyond your grasp, but which, if you will sit down quietly, may alight upon you.”

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

Happiness – the facts

- The hippocampus is the area of the brain responsible for happiness.
- The neurotransmitter serotonin, which is synthesized from the amino acid tryptophan, helps to stabilize mood and regulate sleep patterns.
- The neurotransmitter dopamine also helps control emotional responses and the brain's reward and pleasure centres.

Together, serotonin and dopamine are a mood-boosting team that make us feel happy and balanced.

You can increase your levels of serotonin and dopamine by including turkey, eggs, dark chocolate and green tea in your daily diet. Other dopamine-boosting foods include almonds, avocados, bananas and chicken.

*“Keep your face to the sunshine
and you cannot see a shadow.”*

HELEN KELLER

According to research, twenty minutes outside in the sunshine boosts the mood and increases levels of happiness.

*“Happiness is good health
and a bad memory.”*

INGRID BERGMAN

**Healthy people are twenty per
cent happier than average**

You can make your brain happier by exercising, as this produces proteins and endorphins which interact with opiate receptors, giving a natural ‘high’.

The Danes do it best!

The World Happiness Report measures levels of happiness throughout the world, looking at variables such as generosity, life expectancy, freedom to make choices, and trust. The report is published by the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network.

According to the 2017 report, Norway is the happiest country, closely followed by Denmark, Iceland and Switzerland.

“Our greatest happiness does not depend on the condition of life in which chance has placed us, but is always the result of a good conscience, good health, occupation, and freedom in all just pursuits.”

THOMAS JEFFERSON

Our genes influence fifty per cent of how we feel; a further ten per cent is affected by outside circumstances such as income and environment, leaving forty per cent which is influenced by day-to-day activities and the choices we make.

*“Faith is to believe what you do not see;
the reward of this faith is to see what
you believe.”*

SAINT AUGUSTINE

Happiness is universal and timeless. It's something we are all searching for, and was just as important to our ancestors as it featured in mythologies around the world. Folklore is littered with deities and spiritual beings who either represent joy, or who serve to bring this feeling to those on earth. These gods and goddesses were worshipped in different ways. Some were given offerings and rituals, while others had statues and artwork created in their honour. The Ancients saw happiness as something external to be obtained through being pro-active and appeasing the deities with magical rites and practices.

“It is folly for a man to pray to the gods for that which he has the power to obtain by himself.”

EPICURUS

Happy gods

Baldur is the Norse god of light, joy and brightness, and son of Odin and Frigga. A beautiful being in appearance and nature, he was liked by all the gods except the trickster Loki, who ultimately killed him with an arrow made of mistletoe. Luckily he was resurrected and served to spread harmony through the land.

Budai, also known as the 'Laughing Buddha', has evolved over time in Chinese mythology as a god of happiness. Always smiling or laughing, he's also depicted with a large protruding belly which is a symbol of abundance and joy. He carries with him a sack which contains the sadness of the world, along with a heap of treasures, including sweets for the children, rice crops and other gifts. A protector of children and a symbol of true contentment, statues of Budai can be found in many sacred buildings and temples.

Euphrosyne was one of the three Graces in Greek mythology and a daughter of the god Zeus. The goddess of joy and mirth, she and her sisters were created to bring pleasure to the earth. Usually pictured dancing in a circle with her sisters, Euphrosyne was called upon to raise the spirits and encourage the flow of happiness.