

The Seven Daily Happiness Habits...



You've probably heard of the 80/20 principle – also known as the Pareto Rule – which says that most results come from a small number of causes.

What most people don't realise is that this applies not just to business results, but also to our careers and personal lives too.

If we do a few things right, we can be more successful – and happier too. It makes sense to concentrate most energy on positively seeking happiness. Happiness is profoundly existential. Happiness only exists now, so no times like the present.

THE SEVEN HABITS OF HAPPINESS

1. **Exercise**
2. **Mental stimulation**
3. **Spiritual or artistic stimulation**
4. **Doing a good turn**
5. **Taking a pleasure break with a friend**
6. **Giving yourself a treat**
7. **Congratulating yourself**

1 Exercise – One essential ingredient of a happy day is physical exercise. I always feel good after – even during – exercise. They say this is because exercise releases endorphins, natural anti-depressants that are similar to certain exhilarating drugs – but with none of the dangers or expense! But it must be daily – because it is easier to do if you get into a regular routine that must never be violated.

2 Mental stimulation – You need this every day to be happy. Maybe you get this at work, but if not, ensure that there is some intellectual or mental exercise every day. Puzzles, reading, talking for at least 20 minutes to an intelligent friend, writing a blog ... there are myriad ways. But make sure you check this off each day.

3 Spiritual or artistic stimulation – This may sound forbidding, but it isn't – all you need is half an hour or so of food for the imagination or spirit. We are not just material machines. Going to a concert, art gallery, theatre or movie, reading a poem, watching the sun rise or set, attending an event where you get excited (a sports match or a race meeting are fine) or meditation – all these qualify.

4 Doing a good turn – This doesn't have to be a major work of benevolence; it can be a random act of kindness such as paying for someone else's parking meter or going out of your way to direct a stranger, or answer an email from someone who needs help and can't offer anything in return. Even a brief, altruistic act can have a great effect on your spirits.

5 Taking a pleasure break with a friend – An uninterrupted break lasting at least half an hour – have a cup of coffee, a drink, a leisurely walk or a meal with someone whose company you really enjoy.

6 Give yourself a treat – To prompt you each day, have a handy list of all the pleasures in which you could indulge. Chalk up at least one a day.

7 Congratulate yourself – Having followed your daily happiness habits, congratulate yourself! Since the point is to make yourself happy, you can count five hits (including this one) as a success! This is a worthwhile day's living.