



Finding Happiness YES! It IS Possible!!!

*An Important Message Shared with ALL
From Carolyn at Empowerment Starts Here.com*

Finding Happiness... YES... It IS Possible!

People say Janet was born happy. Nothing seems to get her down. Even though she's had a tough life with difficult relationships, thankless jobs and a recent health scare, she's always quick to offer a genuine smile, and find the best in every person and situation.

Then there's Phil. Phil seems to have it all: good health, a loving family, a nice home, fun friends and a good job. But Phil complains all the time. He always seems to be looking for the cloud beneath the silver lining.

We all know people like Janet who, despite their circumstances, exude happiness. Most of us also know people like Phil who, despite having every reason to be happy, never seem to be.

It turns out, there are more 'Phils' out there than 'Janets'. A recent Harris Poll indicated that only 1 in 3 Americans are happy, with the rest wishing they could find that missing ingredient to their happiness. That is a lot of unhappy people.

The 'new' happiness

Many of us, including Phil, grew up being bombarded with messages from society, culture, and popular media convincing us we'll only be happy if and when we:

- have more money
- find the perfect job
- lose weight
- meet Mr. or Mrs. Right
- buy this brand of car (shoes, soft drink, etc.)

The trouble with these messages is that once we achieve the external stuff, our expectations expand to fit our new reality, and we're back to being as unhappy as we were before we got that new smart phone, car, or raise.

Luckily, like Janet, more and more of us are turning away from money and 'stuff' as our source of happiness and discovering other ways to find our bliss.

According to The Life Twist Study commissioned by American Express, the authors found the top 5 indicators of a happy and successful life are:

- Being open minded and flexible.
- Finding time for the 'important things in life'.
- Having healthy relationships.
- Managing personal finances.
- Good work - life balance.

So how do we focus on experiencing more happiness and live more like Janet and less like Phil? By looking for the best within ourselves, in others and in all of life's situations.

Here are a few practical tips to help us find our own personal bliss in our pursuit of the truly 'important things in life':

Choosing open mindedness and flexibility by:

Deciding to be happy. Happiness is a personal choice. Realizing that you are both the source and the cause of your wellbeing (and your suffering) is the first step to achieving happiness.

Not judging. No one likes the feeling of not measuring up. Judging others and ourselves turns life into a competition and that causes stress and drains the joy from life.

Not complaining. We often complain in an effort to influence others to abandon their own viewpoints in favor of our own. It's a form of manipulation that fosters a negative attitude. Being more tolerant towards others' thoughts and toning down our own opinions makes us more open-minded. If something must be said try focusing on constructive criticism vs. complaint.

Finding time for the important things in life by:

Practicing daily gratitude. Appreciating what we have – loved ones, a home, clothing, our health can be a

source of happiness. The simple act of saying ‘thank you’ to a loved one or the clerk who packed our grocery bags can lift their spirits as well as ours.

Laughing more. Laughter is therapeutic. Our bodies release endorphins that contribute to our sense of wellbeing. Tell a joke, watch a sitcom, or spend some time with the office comedian.

Developing healthy relationships through:

Self-acceptance. It’s hard to be happy if we don’t like ourselves. Accepting ourselves is an act of love. And feeling love makes us feel happy. List 10 qualities you love most about yourself. Learning to laugh at ourselves, accept constructive feedback, and forgive our misdeeds and shortcomings also helps create space in our heart for happiness.

Forgiveness. Holding a grudge keeps us isolated from others. Practicing forgiveness releases us (and the other person) to move forward. We practice forgiveness by accepting and offering apologies graciously and by understanding others by putting ourselves in their shoes.

Managing personal finances by:

Understanding your relationship to money. Have you ever stopped to contemplate your relationship to money? How we view money dramatically influences how much we make and how much we keep. Is money your friend? Or is it a ‘necessary evil’? Do you deserve it? Or is wealth reserved for others more fortunate than you? Are wealthy people to be envied and hated for their ambitions? And poor people to be revered for their

humility? How you look at money will determine how much you attract in your life. Or not.

Putting yourself in charge. When it comes to managing your personal finances, first and foremost is to ensure that you are managing your money and that it is not managing you.

Here are a few tips:

Pay your bills on time. Ignoring them doesn't make them go away. It just makes it worse. So pay them on time so you don't have them hanging over you.

Live debt free. I know for some people this is no easy feat. Even if your get-out-of-debt plan is 20 years, chipping away at it slowly is better than not at all. Debt is a heavy load to carry and lightening it as much and as quickly as possible will go a long way toward more joy and contentment in your life.

Save for a rainy day. Knowing you have money in the bank for an unexpected illness, job loss, or major repair will help you be prepared and ease your worries about any unforeseen life situations.

Develop a work life balance by:

Loving What You Do. The majority of our days are spent working so if our job is a drag chances are it'll drag down the rest of our experiences. Even the worst jobs offer something to be grateful for - learning new skills, interacting with interesting people, travel opportunities, paying the rent.

Living in the present. It's hard to experience happiness if our thoughts are anchored in the past or fixated on the future. Try meditation to help you connect to your feelings and ground you in the present moment.

Conclusion

Perhaps Abraham Lincoln expressed it best when he said, "People are just as happy as they make up their minds to be."

Happiness is an attitude not an event. It doesn't just happen by accident. It takes effort. There's no need to wait for things to be perfect in order to be happy.

Remember Janet and Phil?

Each face challenges in life but interpret them very differently. You can live like Janet, or you can live like Phil. Phil focuses on the negative while Janet's found happiness throughout the good, the bad, and the ugly that life has to offer. Once we learn that happiness is a decision, we can then choose happiness over sadness, gratitude over bitterness, forgiveness instead of grudges.

Take a minute to review the above and circle your top 3 doable tips and begin today.

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