


Core Habits of Happiness



❖ AWE

❖ KINDESS AND COMPASSION

❖ CULTIVATING STRENGTHS

❖ MEANING

❖ CONNECTION

❖ GRATITUDE

❖ SELF-COMPASSION

❖ HEALTH & WELLNESS

❖ FORGIVENESS

❖ MINDFULNESS

❖ SAVORING

❖ FOSTERING RESILIENCE

❖ OPTIMISM

PRACTICING GRATITUDE

3 GOOD THINGS: Write down three things that went well today. Explain, why they happened and what was your contribution. They need to be different every day — no repeats. Do this every day for at least two weeks.

GRATITUDE LETTER: Identify someone who has helped you in some way but you haven't properly acknowledged. Write them a detailed letter of thanks. In a perfect world give it/read it to them face-to-face.

'GEORGE BAILEY TECHNIQUE': Think about something or someone positive and visualize what life would be like without that thing, experience or person. Contemplate the many things had to align for that to happen in your life.

REMEMBERING THE BAD: Think of the worst moments in your life — your sorrow, losses, sadness, trauma — focus on how you got through these troubling times. Remember this and look to see where you are now, focus on how you endured, triumphed and overcame, and the personal resources you tapped into to persevere.

GIVE GRATITUDE FOR THOSE WHO SUPPORT US: Every day our lives depend on the labors of other people — those who developed technology and modern conveniences like computer, internet, electricity, modern plumbing, mass production, automobiles, those who take care of our needs like food service workers, assembly line workers, doctors, dentists, sanitation workers. Extend to them the same measure as you have received and are still receiving. This can be done through meditation, journaling, letter writing, etc.

PRACTICING KINDNESS AND COMPASSION

KIND DEEDS: Consider discounting your services for those in need, pay for the person in line behind you, do a chore for someone in your household, take someone out for lunch, deliver meal/baked goods to someone in need, smile/greet a stranger in the hall, send a kind note/text/message, or volunteer.

5 KIND ACTS: Perform 5 Acts of Kindness each day, repeat for four weeks and write about your experience and impressions.

RECALLING KINDNESS: Recall acts of kindness you experienced or performed and write about or reflect on them. Choose 5 for the past week and repeat for 4 weeks.

PRACTICING AWE

IMMERSE YOURSELF: Fully engage in nature - lakes, mountains, oceans, Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, sunset/sunrise, changing leaves, eclipse, stars/moon. *Learn about/contemplate the universe/solar system. *Travel. *Practice spirituality and kindness. *Engage in peak experiences: snorkeling/scuba, sky diving, skiing, hiking, parasailing, forest bathing. *Fully engage in music, art, prayer intentionally and mindfully. *Observe acts of courage and inspiration.

PRACTICING SELF-COMPASSION

SELF COMPASSION BREAK: Reflect on something causing you stress. Embrace the experience and feelings and say to yourself: 'This is a moment of suffering. Suffering is a part of life. May you be kind to yourself.'

SELF COMPASSION LETTER: Write a comforting or encouraging letter to yourself from the perspective of a loved one.

SELF APPRECIATION: Reflect on five aspects of yourself you are proud of.

PRACTICE LOVING KINDNESS MEDITATIONS: There are many to choose from including apps, YouTube videos and websites. <https://self-compassion.org/category/exercises/>

PRACTICING MINDFULNESS

MINDFULL BREATHING: Use apps, YouTube, simple counting.

EVERYDAY MINDFULNESS: Be 100% present in activities you do every day such as eating, showering, dishes, gardening, walking, brushing teeth. Focus fully on your senses while performing these activities and engage sights, smells, sounds, touch, etc.

SLOW EXHALE BREATHING: Slow your breathing cycles by counting four to five seconds for inhale and six to seven seconds for exhale.

PRACTICING STRENGTHS

TAKE THE VIA: Tap into your strengths and values by taking the VIA survey at vaicharacter.org or authentichappiness.com.

EXPAND YOUR STRENGTHS: Choose one strength a day and actively engage, expand and exercise it. Consider using it in a way that is outside of your normal routine.

PRACTICING SAVORING

THREE As: **Attend** — create and notice create a good moment. **Amplify** - enrich the experience by exaggerating, intensifying or increasing it. **Absorb** - let it linger by drawing it out, engaging fully and reflecting on the experience.

BASKING IN ACCOMPLISHMENT: Remember the good times, marvel at life's wonders, luxuriate in the moment, anticipate future joys, share your experiences with others.
MEMORY BUILDING: Write or make mental notes about positive events in your life, look at photos and souvenirs from positive experiences. Congratulate yourself on accomplishments. Ruminates on the good.

PRACTICING CONNECTION

BEST POSSIBLE SELF: Take a moment to imagine your life in the future, and focus specifically on your relationships. What is the best possible romantic, social, and family life you can imagine? Think about what your best possible relationships would look like *for you*. For the next 15 minutes, write continuously about what you imagined about these best possible future relationships. Do this for fifteen mins a day for at least four consecutive days.

ACTIVE CONSTRUCTION RESPONDING: Practice effective interpersonal connection using Active Construction Responding. In daily interaction communicate intentionally, authentically, and with enthusiastic support using validation and strong eye contact.

INCREASE CONNECTED BEHAVIORS: *Before turning to Google to answer a question, reach out to a friend or family member who might know the answer. *Host a small dinner party or get together with guests who don't know each other very well. Your guests will have to exercise their social muscles right along with you! *If you notice a co-worker or friend having a rough week, surprise them with a fancy coffee drink or another treat. *Start a small hobby-based club such as a book club or hiking club. *Challenge yourself to smile at or greet five strangers a day (in a safe way such as checking out at the grocery store, holding the door open for someone behind you). *On public transportation or standing in line at the store put away your phone or book and focus on the people around you.

PRACTICE SOCIAL ALTRUISM: *Send a 2-minute "Thank You" email every morning for 21 days. *Practice solidarity by giving mutual support, creating a unified focus, and engaging in cooperation. *Practice being vulnerable by asking for support when you need it. *Practice anonymous and random acts of kindness. *Celebrate others by acknowledging their

strengths, praising their qualities and affirming their virtues. *Practice generosity through paying it forward by selfless giving. * Practice hospitality by cooking and eating together.

PRACTICING FLOW

SOCIAL EXERCISES: *Increase the positivity of group interactions by saying "Yes" to that new challenge and revel in it. *If you feel your skill level isn't where it should be in relation to a task — practice! With familiarity comes confidence. *Take calculated risks and push your abilities to the limit. *In groups be aware of the goals, familiarize yourself with what is expected of you from others and focus on playing your part as best you can. *Speak up! If you are hesitant to voice your opinion or convey an idea — go for it. The elevated risk level of taking yourself out of your comfort zone is an effective flow trigger. *Listen! Try to engage fully in the moment by giving companions your undivided attention.

CREATIVE EXERCISES: *Try taking a different approach when tackling a new challenge, really stretch your imagination, think outside the box and look at problems from a different angle than you would normally. *Raise the bar for yourself — allow yourself to believe you can do better. When you achieve your latest goal, set another! *Take a risk and trust that you will succeed — when you take a chance and it pays off, you encourage more of the same. *Immerse yourself in situations that would ordinarily be just outside of your comfort zone, the unfamiliar encourages us to see things from a different perspective and come up with solutions we may not have previously considered.

ENVIRONMENTAL EXERCISES: *Immerse yourself in new experiences and environments — unpredictable situations make us pay more attention to what is happening in the moment. Try playing a new sport or joining a social group either online or within your local community. *Take part in activities that have high consequences for you personally — whether they are emotional, intellectual or social risks, try pushing yourself to achieve things you never thought possible. *Take a walk — remove yourself from the familiar and immerse yourself in nature. Be mindful of your own body and movements to encourage complete physical awareness.

PSYCHOLOGICAL EXERCISES: *Consider your skill level and set clear personal goals. *Create your own personal mission statement — consider your abilities and targets and ask yourself, "What do I want to achieve?" *Create a vision board. *Don't look for external validation instead rely on your own internal validation. The goals you have set and achieved are enough to legitimize your success.