

Make a Commitment to Happiness!

Ask your community to consider pledging to do one or more of the following:

- I will connect with friends and family and others in my community today.
- I will thank someone today.
- I will try something new this week.
- I will play, exercise or get into flow this week for at least 20 minutes.
- I will help someone or volunteer my time this week

Check out Action for Happiness to take the happiness pledge:

www.actionforhappiness.org

Take Steps!

Knowing the benefits of being happy is a great start to building a happier life. Remember, there is no one-size-fits-all recipe, but the benefits to being happy are universal. Some days it's easy. Some days it's harder. But it's always worth it. Here are some initial steps to begin building more happiness in your life for you and your community.

• Play/Move

Get moving! Get outside. Walk. Run. Dance. Stretch. Garden. Play!

Just because we grow into adults doesn't mean we don't need to play and move at every age! Research shows we increase endorphins (happy body chemicals) when we move. So, move, a little or a lot, whatever you can. Find ways to change the scene a bit, shake things up, try something new. Change your attitude if needed. From playing a game to taking the stairs to wiggling to music to doing chores to surfing our bodies like to move. Moving can invigorate your mind and increase your happiness. You may want to invite someone to join you to boost the benefits even more.

• Build Relationships

Find ways to connect with the people around you, especially those who make you feel good.

Take time to connect with your neighbors, co-workers, school friends and teachers. Building these relationships will enrich your life and increase your support circle. Are there groups who share an interest? Can teach you a new skill? Make you laugh? Volunteer? Find a connection that feels good and helps you be part of something bigger than yourself!

• Increase Gratitude/Appreciation

Take time to notice the good things in life. The more we stop to notice them, the more there seem to be! By noting "simple" things like a warm shower, a friendly greeting, or helping hand, we begin to see the many ways that others positively affect our lives. We also see the ways that our presence and our actions affect others.

Keep an on-going gratitude list; write gratitude letters to others who have done something you'd like to acknowledge. Before you fall asleep, recall three good things that happened during the day and you'll almost always feel better about your world.

Research shows that when we practice gratitude, we are happier, more likely to reach our goals, and feel more connected to others and to life in general.

Give to others, too! Few things make us feel better than doing something nice for another person, simply because we can. Sometimes we forget that it is a gift to be able to help someone.

• **Find Flow/Engagement**

Get engaged! Get lost in the moment by using your strengths.

Try to note times when you are “in flow” – when you are unaware of time passing and you are thoroughly engaged in an activity. You may be using your strengths like creativity, perseverance, love of learning, or kindness. Maybe you were helping a friend move, cooking a meal, playing a game, solving a problem.

What were you doing? Was it enjoyable? Meaningful? How can you build more flow into your life?

Do you have something you already know engages you? Is there a way you can begin to build a little more time for flow into your routine? By spending time in flow, we increase our well-being.

• **Find Meaning**

Find a way to connect to something larger than yourself.

Join a spiritual group or religion that shares your values. Tie a personal passion like art, drama, or sports to a specific issue or cause that you support and contribute in a manner that motivates you. There are many organizations that need volunteers and/or contributions. Begin to think about what could engage you and how you can use that to benefit others.

Organize, teach, coach, fundraise, sew, cook. Many groups could use your expertise or help. By connecting with others, in support of something that has a purpose beyond our personal gain, we often feel a deeper sense of well-being and happiness.

• **Meditate**

The more we practice meditation, the easier it becomes to enjoy more positive control over our emotions. People who meditate on a regular basis have been found to have more energy, better handle stress and recover more quickly from illness. Levels of happiness are higher and depression is lessened. Meditation can literally make positive changes in our brains.

If you are new to meditation, with a little practice you can quickly feel the benefits.

Begin by taking 5 minutes a day to sit in quiet surroundings and simply concentrate on your breathing.

When you find yourself distracted (which is normal at first) gently guide your thoughts back to your breath, in and out, in and out.

Some people like to pick a word or phrase to slowly repeat while they meditate, something like relax... or peace... Others use a compassion meditation to build awareness of others. This may include phrases such as: I wish myself love and peace... I wish my family love and peace... I wish my neighbors love and peace... I wish my enemies love and peace... I wish all things love and peace...

Share Happiness!

Happiness is contagious. As you become happier, your friends, your friend's friends, and even your friend's friends, friends, become happier. Pass it on.

We'd love to see your HAPPY pictures and videos from your screenings! Please email to Info@TheHappyMovie.com or post on facebook at www.facebook.com/HappyMovie. It's a great way to share happiness and inspire others to do the same

Explore More!

There are many sources for building happiness and well-being in our lives. Now, that you've seen HAPPY, continue to explore happiness through online communities, newsletters, books, websites, and more.

- **HAPPY - www.TheHappyMovie.com**

Sign up for the newsletter, view additional HAPPY videos, and find updated listings of resources

- **HAPPY facebook community - www.facebook.com/HappyMovie**

Check out the latest articles and videos about happiness and discuss with your HAPPY community

- **Books**

The How of Happiness (Sonja Lyubomirsky)

Flow (Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi)

Happy for No Reason (Marci Shimoff)

Stumbling on Happiness (Daniel Gilbert)

Happiness: Unlocking the Mysteries of Psychological Wealth (Ed and Robert Diener)

Happiness: A Guide to Developing Life's Most Important Skill (Matthieu Riccard)

The Emotional Life of Your Brain (Richard Davidson)

The Essence of Happiness (Dalai Lama)

Positivity (Barbara Fredrickson)

Authentic Happiness (Martin Seligman)

- **Websites**

Action for Happiness - www.actionforhappiness.org

Huffington Post Good News - www.huffingtonpost.com/good-news

Center for Consciousness and Transformation - www.cct.gmu.edu

Meet-up - Find happiness-related groups - www.meetup.com

Center for Positive Psychology - UPEN - www.ppc.sas.upenn.edu

VIA Institute on Character - www.viacharacter.org

Psychology Today Blogs - Find happiness-related blogs - www.psychologytoday.com/blog/index

Positive Psychology News Daily - www.positivepsychologynews.com

Volunteer Match - www.VolunteerMatch.com

The Happiness Initiative - www.happycounts.org