



Kinship
Carers
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In this issue

As always, this magazine contains many more hints and tips to help you focus on your own health and wellbeing. Read the articles carefully, as in some of them you might find more than you bargained for!

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Dear Kinship Carers,

The advice in this magazine has been derived from many different sources, and while it is not advice that is specific to kinship carers, it is advice which we hope you will find can be applied to your situation as a kinship carer.

Helen Brown
OAM



Chairperson
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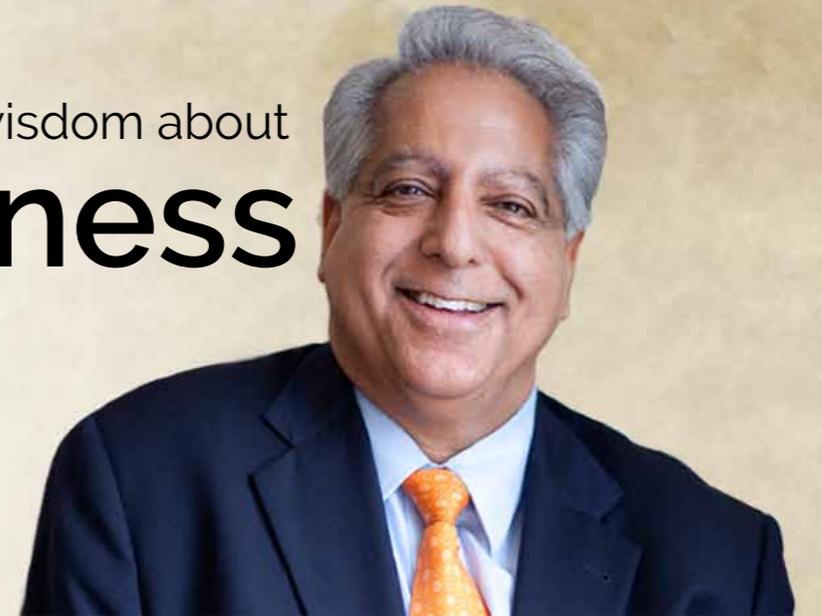
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Some pearls of wisdom about happiness



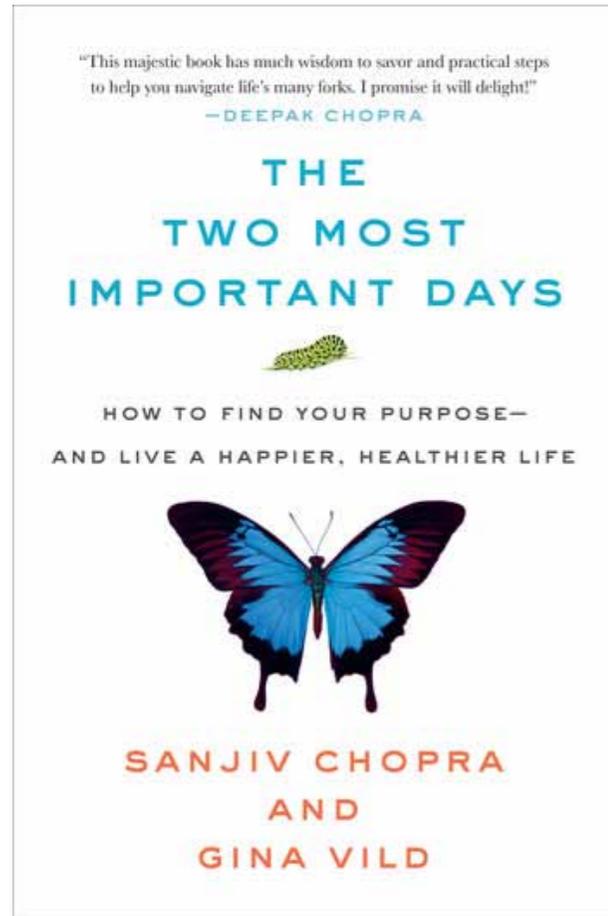
By **Dr Sanjiv Chopra**

Four things that are important for happiness

There are four things that have been scientifically shown to be associated with happiness. If you become more aware of these in your everyday life you will be well on your way to achieving happiness:

Friends	This is the 'family' that you get to choose. Having close friends that you can confide in is extremely important in boosting happiness and overall wellbeing.
Forgiveness	Gaining the ability to forgive frees you from the burdens of hate and other negative emotions that can negatively impact your happiness quotient.
Giving	Getting involved in charity and donating money to help others has shown to be one of the most happiness-inducing and fulfilling ways of spending your time, money, and efforts.
Gratitude	Taking the time to think of things you are grateful for makes you more aware of the positive things in your life, making you less likely to be biased by the fewer negative things in your life.

Armed with this knowledge, you can easily transform your life for the better.



What are the two most important days in your life? Mark Twain says, 'The day you are born and the day you find out why.'

The two most important days

What are the two most important days in your life? Mark Twain says, 'The day you are born and the day you find out why.'

The search for happiness is hardwired into our DNA. It transcends age, gender, geography, vocation, and personal circumstances. But how do you achieve it?

The best way to be happy? Discover and live your life's purpose. It's a sure path to human flourishing. In fact, you may be surprised to learn that living with purpose can even add years to your life.

Do you know your life's purpose? The book *The two most important days* offers a path to discovering it by illuminating the value of gratitude, forgiveness, meditation, music, friendship and so much more. It will set you on the right path and spark sustained happiness.

An extract from Dr. Chopra's book *The two most important days*:

'Think of it like this: We are born a pillar of exquisite marble. From this we carve our essential self. Our purpose is not given to us like a prize at a raffle. Our purpose is defined by our choices.'

There is a scientific formula to calculate your happiness quotient (HQ). This formula was a revelation made by Sonja Lyubomirsky, Ken Sheldon, David Schkade, and Martin Seligman, who studied identical twins separated at birth.

They created a formula that explains the three factors that determine your level of happiness –

The surprising bonus is that by reaching out you in turn enrich your own life. Using your life as a gift to others will make you happy.

biology, living conditions and voluntary action. Their study indicated that:

- *50% of your happiness quotient is inherited and considered a set point. Your set point is defined by the state where you balance, where you tend to fall despite the varied ups and downs in life.*
- *10% is dependent upon your living conditions and how satisfying they are.*
- *40% of your happiness quotient is the result of voluntary actions – how you choose to live your life. Do you volunteer? Do you use your life to make the world a better place? Are you a supportive and compassionate friend? Do you tend to think of only yourself, or are you concerned about those with whom you share your life's journey? If you make choices that put others first, these choices will lead you to a life defined by purpose.*

The surprising bonus is that by reaching out you in turn enrich your own life. Using your life as a gift to others will make you happy. It's a gift you give that gives back. This may seem counterintuitive,

that helping others leads to your own happiness, but there is an abundance of evidence – we're just passing it on to help make this a kinder, happier world.

An interesting side note to all of this is that beyond being able to boost your HQ through voluntary actions of compassion and service, you can actually increase your HQ genetic set point. You can alter it by the simplest practice of all – by expressing gratitude.'

The first five readers to contact the KCV office will receive a gift copy of the book: *The two most important days*.

References

[The Bucket Podcast www.thebucket.com](http://www.thebucket.com)
[Dr Sanjiv Chopra's website www.sanjivchopra.com](http://www.sanjivchopra.com)

***The two most important days* by Sanjiv Chopra and Gina Vild**

Available at bookstores

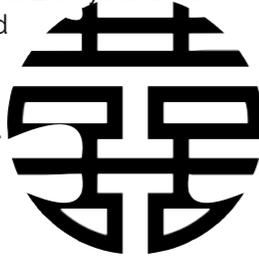
Ten keys to happiness

Today is the first day of the rest of your life. You are the maker of your future; you decide how you want to see your life ... positively or negatively

1. **Foster your own growth** ... it all starts with the one in the mirror. Radiate yourself outwards so that your positivity radiates the lives of others.

2. **Rest your ego and meaningless comparisons** ... if you think you are better than the rest, take a rest. You will climb higher in life if you shed the burden of ego.

3. **Be present in the moment** ... Live your life to the fullest. The past is a good place to visit, but not a good place to live. And the future is unseen so let it be unseen. Live and enjoy the present instead of brooding over the past and the future.



4. **Help others when you're able** ... Make someone smile – that's the biggest thing you can do in a day. Tell someone how special they are in your life. Make your dear and near ones feel wanted in your life.

5. **Focus on your authenticity and integrity** ... Face your worst of challenges with originality and persistent integrity. Your bliss of happiness is sure to follow, and your greatest triumph will contain the greatest quantity of you.

6. **Be ambitious enough to fail** ... That may sound weird but yes! Be ambitious enough that even failure bows its head in front of you. If you fail, don't cower – start to rectify the mistake with new vigour and new zeal.

7. **Spend time with those who inspire you** ... Identify the real appreciators of your potential. Surround yourself with them. Your lock to happiness is unlocked.

8. **Turn your goal into daily habits** ... It's a process! It's a process! it's a process! Make your mind understand whatever the goal is; it's nothing but a daily practice of making small choices that add up in the long run.

9. **Choose to push forward even when it hurts** ... We fall to rise up to fall again. Again, rise up to fight back. Where others give up, you make the change to rising up. Happiness will follow.

10. **Let go of needless worries and old wounds** ... Take life as it comes to you. Hurt is something you sometimes can't avoid, but being continuously miserable is a choice. Needless worries and past choices should not overcome you.

Source: www.marcandangel.com/2012/12/12/be-happier-10-things-to-start-doing/

Nutritional strategies to ease anxiety

Posted 13 April 2016, written by **Uma Naidoo, MD**

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, anxiety disorders are the most common mental illness in the United States. That's 40 million adults – 18% of the population – who struggle with anxiety. Anxiety and depression often go hand in hand, with about half of those with depression also experiencing anxiety.

Specific therapies and medications can help relieve the burden of anxiety, yet only about a third of people suffering from this condition seek treatment. In my practice, part of what I discuss when explaining treatment options is the important role of diet in helping to manage anxiety.

In addition to healthy guidelines such as eating a balanced diet, drinking enough water to

stay hydrated, and limiting or avoiding alcohol and caffeine, there are many other dietary considerations that can help relieve anxiety. For example, complex carbohydrates are metabolised more slowly and therefore help maintain a more even blood sugar level, which creates a calmer feeling.

A diet rich in whole grains, vegetables, and fruits is a healthier option than eating a lot of simple carbohydrates found in processed foods. When you eat is also important. Don't skip meals. Doing so may result in drops in blood sugar that cause you to feel jittery, which may worsen underlying anxiety.

The gut-brain axis is also very important, since a large percentage (about 95%) of serotonin receptors are found in the lining of the gut.

Foods rich in zinc such as oysters, cashews, liver, beef, and egg yolks have been linked to lowered anxiety.



'...fatty fish, like wild Alaskan salmon, contain omega-3 fatty acids. A study completed on medical students in 2011 was one of the first to show that omega-3s may help reduce anxiety.'



Research is examining the potential of probiotics for treating anxiety and depression.

Some Specific foods reduce anxiety.

- In mice, diets low in magnesium were found to increase anxiety-related behaviors. Foods naturally rich in magnesium may, therefore, help a person to feel calmer. Examples include leafy greens, such as spinach and Swiss chard. Other sources include legumes, nuts, seeds, and whole grains.
- Foods rich in zinc such as oysters, cashews, liver, beef, and egg yolks have been linked to lowered anxiety.
- Other foods, including fatty fish like wild Alaskan salmon, contain omega-3 fatty acids. A study completed on medical students in 2011 was one of the first to show that omega-3s may help reduce anxiety. (This study used supplements containing omega-3 fatty acids).

Prior to the study, omega-3 fatty acids had been linked to improving depression only.

- A study in the journal *Psychiatry Research* suggested a link between probiotic foods and a lowering of social anxiety. Eating probiotic-rich foods such as pickles, sauerkraut, and kefir was linked with fewer symptoms.
- Asparagus, known widely to be a healthy vegetable. Based on research, the Chinese government approved the use of an asparagus extract as a natural functional food and beverage ingredient due to its anti-anxiety properties.
- Foods rich in B vitamins, such as avocado and almonds.

These "feel good" foods spur the release of neurotransmitters such as serotonin and dopamine. They are a safe and easy first step in managing anxiety.

Should antioxidants be included in your anti-anxiety diet?

Anxiety is thought to be correlated with a lowered total antioxidant state. It stands to reason, therefore, that enhancing your diet with foods rich in antioxidants may help ease the symptoms of anxiety disorders. A 2010 study reviewed the antioxidant content of 3100 foods, spices, herbs, beverages, and supplements.

Foods designated as high in antioxidants by the USDA include:

Beans: *Dried small red, Pinto, black, red kidney*

Fruits: *Apples (Gala, Granny Smith, Red Delicious), prunes, sweet cherries, plums, black plums*

Berries: *Blackberries, strawberries, cranberries, raspberries, blueberries*

Nuts: *Walnuts, pecans*

Vegetables: *Artichokes, kale, spinach, beets, broccoli*

Spices: *Turmeric (containing the active ingredient curcumin) and ginger.*

Achieving better mental health through diet

Be sure to talk to your doctor if your anxiety symptoms are severe or last more than two weeks. But even if your doctor recommends medication or therapy for anxiety, it is still worth asking whether you might also have some success by adjusting your diet. While nutritional psychiatry is not a substitute for other treatments, the relationship between food and anxiety is garnering more attention.

Harvard Health Publishing
www.health.harvard.edu



Self-care for Kinship carers

In every airline safety briefing they tell you to put on your own oxygen mask before attempting to help others put on theirs.

The idea is that if you don't take care of your own needs first, you will not be able to effectively assist others. The same can be said for kinship carers who don't take care of their own health and wellbeing first. A few general things to remember:

- Self-care is not the same as self-indulgence
- It's okay to ask for help if you need it
- Keep up social contacts
- It's okay to say no
- Be kind to yourself – we all make mistakes, so forgive yourself and move on
- Celebrate small victories
- Take a break before you reach breaking point!
- Give yourself regular rewards.
- Do something special that makes you feel good.

Creative interests

Carers need to establish a balance in life that allows enough self-care to be effective over the long term. Recreation time is an important part of this, but it also means good time management and priorities to allow everyone's lives to return to normal. Make time for your usual hobbies and interests as much as possible.

Support groups can provide friendly space where you can meet others, have a break, find information and get support from people who know your situation.

If you are not already part of a support group, contact Kinship Carers Victoria on (03) 9372 2422 to find out the location of your nearest support group.

Preventing burnout



How to care deeply without burning out

In order to manage your potential to burn out, you need to understand a few basic rules.

Know the difference between empathy and compassion. Empathy is our natural resonance with the emotions of others, where we sense the difficulty someone might be feeling. Compassion is one of the many responses to empathy. Compassion implies a stability of attention and caring in a wise and balanced way – caring about yourself and others.

Realise when you're feeling overwhelmed. It's inevitable that we will all experience burnout. It is important to recognise what's happening and move towards balance.

Recognise you can't change others. You must develop the wisdom and intelligence to know it's not up to you to fix the world for others. You can't function if you're taking on others' pain all the time.

Plan for the future. It is better to act than react. Instead of just worrying about the future (e.g. who will take on the caring role if you can't?) think through all the potential future problems and make plans now. It will bring peace of mind to you, family and the person for whom you are caring.

By planning for future events, you will be ensuring the best possible care for the person(s) to whom you provide care. Planning ahead will also ensure minimised stress for others if you are unable to provide care.

There is a crucial balance: You can acknowledge the pain, you can want to help, but you have to recognise that you can't change other people's experience of the world.

Dan Harris puts it this way: 'My father says the hardest thing about having kids is letting them make their own mistakes. That's compassion with equanimity.'

In order to manage your capacity to burn out you need to understand a few basic rules that pivot around understanding depression and how it leads to difficult feelings that can be hard to manage.

Guilt, anger, resentment, fear, stress, anxiety, depression and grief are some of the emotions that may be encountered while looking after the children in your care, as well as supporting other members of your family. It is normal to feel as if you are going crazy at times, and it does not help to try to suppress or deny what you are feeling. With time, the worst of these feelings will go.

The best way to deal with your feelings is to accept them, but make sure you can talk about your feelings with someone who understands, whether it is a family member, friend, counsellor or support group. Depression is always a potential concern for carers, and you should seek professional help if it becomes a serious issue.

In order to manage your potential to burn out you need to take action to strengthen your capacities.

Get some exercise. Do something physical, like a walk or stretching. Try and do an exercise you enjoy. It will help you maintain your energy.

Get enough sleep. Carers often have trouble sleeping. Limit coffee and alcohol especially in the latter part of the day. Try relaxing with a warm bath or herbal tea or soothing music before bedtime. If you can't fall asleep after 20 minutes, get up and do something else then try again. Try a brief rest in the daytime if your night's sleep is disturbed. If you find sleeping difficult on a regular basis, see your nurse or doctor.

Maintain a healthy diet. Sometimes this can be hard, especially if your appetite is not so good. But you need your strength, so eat a balanced diet and remember to 'treat' yourself sometimes with food you enjoy.

Do something for yourself every day. List ten things you enjoy that would give you a short break and renew your energy. Do one of these each day.

Be social Try to maintain social contact with friends and keep up your usual activities as much as possible.

Practise your own spirituality or religion. Whether it be meditation, yoga, prayer or discussion with a pastoral worker, maintaining religious or spiritual practice will help you look after yourself.

References/resources

Australian Brain Injury Organisation
www.synapse.org.au

Mental Health Resources for Carers
www.mhr4c.com.au

Mindful Healthy Mind www.mindful.orgs

Raising Children Network
www.raisingchildren.net.au

Better Health Channel www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au



Developing a Self-Care Plan

A Self-Care Plan can help you enhance your health and wellbeing, manage your stress, and maintain professionalism as a worker with young people. Learn to identify activities and practices that support your wellbeing as a professional and help you to sustain positive self-care in the long-term.

Why make a Self-Care Plan?

A Self-Care Plan is an intervention tool that keeps you from being completely sucked into the vortex, saving you when you find yourself standing on the precipice gazing into the dark abyss. It's a fail-safe, created by you, and filled with your favourite self-care activities, important reminders, and ways to activate your self-care community.

1) Customising a Self-Care Plan is a preventative measure. By designing a roadmap that is unique to you, in moments when you're NOT in crisis, you're directing your best self to reflect on what you may need (and have access to) in your worst moments. The reality is that only YOU know how intense your stress levels can get and what resources are available to you. Write that sh*t down.

2) Having a plan takes the guesswork out of what to do and where to turn in moments of crisis. From a mindfulness point of view, it helps you respond instead of react to the situation at hand. When you have a plan in place, you'll feel more

in control of your circumstances and life won't feel quite as chaotic. (It also makes it easier to ask for help from those you share your plan with.)

3) A Self-Care Plan helps you stay the course. You'll find it far easier to stick to your personal care strategy and avoid falling into the trap of making excuses. Having a plan helps you establish a routine, ensuring that you and your self-care partners don't wind up in isolation, but rather check in with each other, hold each other accountable, and share the responsibility to support one another.

A word of caution

Once you have created a Self-Care Plan it is important to ask yourself, 'What might get in the way? What can you do to remove these barriers?' If you can't remove them, you might want to adjust your strategies. Think honestly about whether any of your strategies are negative and how you can adjust your plan to avoid or minimise their impact.

It can be challenging if your workplace is not supportive of self-care activities, but you can still do things outside of work to help yourself. It is important that your plan resonates for you and that you put it into action, starting now.

Resources

The Mighty www.themighty.com

Reach Out www.schools.au.reachout.com



Getting regular exercise is one example of physical self care

There are five different types of self-care

1. Physical

- eating healthier food
- getting regular exercise
- wearing favourite clothes
- attending to your hair or makeup

2. Emotional

- finding things that make you laugh
- complimenting yourself when you look in the mirror
- allowing yourself to cry when you feel sad
- spending time with loved ones
- re-reading/re-watching your favourite book or movie

3. Psychological

- going to an art exhibit or history museum,
- being curious for a day

- practising receiving compliments well from others
- making time for self-reflection

4. Spiritual

- contributing to causes you care about (donating money or volunteering)
- meditating
- spending time in nature
- engaging in inspirational videos or literature
- highlighting the nonmaterial aspects of life

5. Professional care

- taking time to chat with co-workers/peers
- decorating your workspace to your liking
- balancing your workload (literally meaning taking breaks as needed)

Some quick pick-me-up ideas

5 minutes

- Brush your hair
- Make yourself a warm drink
- Light a candle
- Listen to an upbeat song
- Drink a glass of water
- Give yourself a foot massage
- Step outside in the fresh air
- Text someone you love
- Do five minutes of focused breathing
- Write down 10 things you are grateful for
- Dance like crazy
- Buy yourself some flowers

15 minutes

- Have a shower
- Put on a face mask
- Go for a walk
- Make a smoothie
- Stretch
- Have a cat nap
- Call someone you love
- Pamper yourself
- Do a short meditation
- Spend time in nature
- Journaling
- Watch a funny YouTube clip
- Soak in a bubble bath
- Write down positive affirmations

An hour or more

- Binge watch a funny show
- Create a vision board
- Get a massage
- Listen to podcasts
- Unplug from technology
- Organise your wardrobe
- Paint a picture
- Spend time with friends
- Do an intense workout
- Read a book
- Go on a hike
- Try yoga
- Cook a new meal
- Go to the movies

The amazing health benefits of ginger

Ginger has been hailed as a super food, and can be taken in many forms.

- Add it to your cooking in fresh or powdered form.
- Steep a tablespoon of freshly grated ginger in two cups of boiling water, to make two servings of a healthy tea infusion (add a slice of lemon or honey to sweeten if you wish).
- Ginger tablets are available at pharmacies and supermarkets.
- Crystallised ginger that has been boiled in syrup and rolled in sugar can be eaten on its own or as an ingredient in many sweet treats.
- Ginger that has been pickled in vinegar is a common accompaniment to many Japanese dishes.

Accepted benefits

Ginger has been proven to have many medicinal benefits. It has anti-inflammatory and anti-viral properties and has been found to help in fighting both viral infections such as colds and flu, and bacterial infections such as gingivitis.

- Ginger helps fight nausea. It is used in treatments for travel sickness, can be taken post-surgery or post chemotherapy, and may assist with symptoms of morning sickness. The use of ginger for morning sickness is a contentious issue, as some experts believe

taking ginger during pregnancy may cause harm to the foetus.

- Ginger can be used to reduce joint and muscle pain. A study has found that when taken daily it may be effective in reducing the progression of muscle pain. Another way to use ginger for joint pain is to apply a mixture of ginger, mastic, cinnamon and sesame oil to the affected area. A study found that this treatment can reduce pain and stiffness in osteoarthritis patients.
- Ginger can aid digestion. Ease discomfort of indigestion by taking ginger, which promotes the elimination of excessive gas from the digestive tract. Ginger has also been found to be effective in alleviating menstrual pain.

Potential benefits

There are many health benefits which have been attributed to ginger, but which have not yet been proven by extensive testing. Research to determine the effectiveness of ginger to treat the following conditions is ongoing:

- helping to regulate blood sugar, reduce risk factors of heart disease, and lower cholesterol.
- assisting in boosting metabolism, burning fat, and preventing fatty liver disease.
- enhancing brain function and inhibiting inflammations that may lead to decline in brain function.

Disclaimer:

As with most things in life, when taking ginger for health reasons, moderation is the key. It is recommended that you consume no more than four grams of ginger per day. Be aware that ginger may have side-effects. For example it has been shown to lower blood pressure, which may cause light-headedness in people who already experience low blood pressure. If you experience a rash or discomfort in your mouth or stomach after consuming ginger, you may be allergic to it, and should cease taking it. Taking larger amounts of ginger is also not recommended for those who have experienced kidney stones.

References/resources

BBC Good Food www.bbcgoodfood.com

Healthline www.healthline.com



A photograph of two hikers with backpacks walking away on a dirt path through a forest. The path is surrounded by trees and foliage, and the lighting suggests a bright day. The hiker on the left is wearing a dark jacket and a backpack, while the hiker on the right is wearing a dark jacket and a backpack. The path leads into the distance, flanked by trees and bushes.

*Walking relaxes your mind,
releasing all the stress
incurred over the day.*

Get up and walk your way to greater health and happiness

Posted 12 October 2017 written by **Abigail Sabijon**

'Above all, do not lose your desire to walk. Every day I walk myself into a state of well-being and walk away from every illness; I have walked myself into my best thoughts, and I know of no thought so burdensome that one cannot walk away from it.' – Søren Kierkegaard

Walking more extends your life

Sitting is the new smoking. We're more compelled to sit for long periods because of the tons of paperwork and increasingly computer-based tasks of our jobs. Even our efforts to be active after work or on the weekends might prove futile, as experts are finding that even three-to-four hours of sitting is already cutting our lives shorter. However, those who fall into this lifestyle category shouldn't lose hope just yet. A recent study found that moving every 30 minutes

can lessen the health hazards. Thus, if we can at least walk during our "mini-breaks," we're extending our lives.

Walking is a form of meditation

Walking relaxes your mind, releasing all the stress incurred over the day. As I walk, the pressure diffuses and I begin to think about things more clearly. Chances are when I get home chores, problems and pending tasks would eat up my free time. But with walking, I have all the time to recall events, consider

options, come up with alternatives, solve problems, etc. By the time I get home, I've already unwound and am ready to take on other responsibilities.

You can appreciate nature more

I can still vividly recall a time when I was walking to my part-time job on a cool afternoon. Had I done otherwise; I wouldn't have savoured one of the most breathtaking sunsets I've ever seen. I was in an urban area, and scenes like that don't happen very often. Imagine the little surprises we can enjoy and relish when we make time to stroll. That wonderful tableau made me wish to see more every day, so ditching the car and public transportation whenever possible has become my new hobby.

Looking at the refreshingly green foliage I pass by reduces stress and relieves eye strain due to long hours of work facing the computer. There are plants at work that help to alleviate exhaustion, but they're still no match for the trees and other foliage we can feast our eyes on outdoors. When we're on the road, we're either focused on the road or see the trees disappear in just a matter of seconds.

You get to enjoy the power of sunlight

Nothing delights me more than a good dose of vitamin D in the morning. After basking in the early morning sun, I get energised. With the bright sunlight, I feel happy and content. Thankfully, it only takes a 20-minute walk to



get from my house to my workplace, so that's plenty of exposure to the precious sunshine. But even when I don't get to get up early, I drink coffee on the front porch, enjoying the sunny sensation only nature can give.

Researchers have seen a link between vitamin D deficiency and depression, due to the former's serotonin-inducing capability. It also boosts our immune system and strengthens our bones. Of course, those are just a few of the freebies the sun gives us, but if happiness is our daily goal, you should shower yourself with sunlight by walking to work or school whenever possible.

Join a walking community

There are communities that encourage people in their neighbourhoods to make walking at least 30 minutes a day a habit. With more and more people joining the craze, it won't be difficult to find a walking buddy in your neighbourhood. Walking with others can make you happier through socialisation and laughter.

Sweating detoxifies your body. After sitting for hours, we need to detoxify ourselves, and the easiest and most natural way is through sweating. Not only will it detoxify your body, it will detoxify your mood too.

References/ Resources:

[Goalcast Motivation and Inspiration](#)

www.goalcast.com



The Pursuit of Happiness

Posted 6 December 2017, written by **Darren Hardy**

Pursuing happiness is like chasing a rainbow. The faster we go, the harder we try, the farther off it becomes.

I have learned that happiness is not a pursuit — it's a choice. Happiness is a state of mind, obtainable at any time, in any moment of your choosing.

Licking a cone of creamy vanilla Häagen-Dazs makes me happy. But if someone knocks the cone out of my hand, I'm no longer happy. Happiness can be fleeting and unstable, like that ice cream cone. It's really just a temporary sensation of pleasure, like entertainment, shopping, eating or sex.

Our beliefs about what will make us happy are heavily influenced by other people, Hollywood or commercial media. We race along this 'hedonic treadmill', perpetually feeling like something is missing, like happiness is one toy, one trinket or one promotion away, but always just beyond our reach.

And still no rainbow. Disappointing career choices, heartbreaking relationships and midlife crises indicate that our assumptions about happiness and the pursuit of it often miss the mark.

It's not the pursuit of happiness we should concern ourselves with, but rather the pursuit of

fulfillment, purpose and significance.

If I have created a life of meaning in which I have a deep sense of purpose and value, that won't change because someone knocks my ice cream cone over. Fulfillment is a state of existence, not a fleeting emotion.

What, then, creates a fulfilling life?

That's the all-important question you have to answer for yourself. In fact, it's the subject of the classic tome *Man's Search for Meaning* (which I recommend!) by psychiatrist and concentration-camp survivor Viktor Frankl. Typically a life of meaning requires deep relationships, a connection to a community, a sense of wellbeing, contribution to others and continual challenge, growth, learning and progress.

Now those are some virtues worth pursuing. And once you start out on this pursuit, you will realise that crossing the finish line is not what's most rewarding; the journey itself and the anticipation of achieving your goal is what's so exhilarating and wonderful.

There are two ways you can choose to be happy at any moment...

1. Think about all you have to be grateful for. Some of the happiest people I have ever met are those who have comparatively few accoutrements to be happy about. When you



feel gratitude, you cannot feel fear or worry at the same time. Gratitude washes it all away. If you are reading this, you're breathing and above ground, so you have many blessings to be grateful for — just remind yourself at any moment you want to feel happy.

2. Choose happiness — the best way, in my opinion, is to do something to make someone else happy. The person who bestows happiness always gets much more of it in return.

My mentor Jim Rohn taught me, 'Giving starts the receiving process.' When I first heard Jim say this, I thought he meant giving created indebtedness on the part of the receiver — that you gave so you could get back. But I had it all wrong. Jim taught me that the real gift — the lasting benefit of giving — is what the act itself does for you. In essence, giving to others is the greatest gift you can give yourself — it, in fact, will make YOU happy.

Sure, giving feels good, but there's more to it than that. Helping others incites physical and emotional responses within us. When we direct our energy and focus on meeting others' needs, we push aside our brooding and negative emotions, especially those that contribute to stress-induced psychological and physical illnesses.

Studies reveal that when we help others, we release extra amounts of endorphins into our system, and we get what researchers call a 'helper's high'.

Giving has a direct impact on the body's neurological, hormonal and immune systems — it can even prolong your life. One study found that older individuals who are actively involved in helping others outlive those who aren't. The physical benefits of helping others have been shown to have a greater impact on longevity than exercising four times a week, if you can believe that!

The benefits extend beyond the physical, also fostering traits that undergird a successful life. As a result, our careers and relationships often improve when we purposefully seek to make a difference in others' lives. As Gandhi said, 'The fragrance always remains on the hand that gives the rose.' Go make someone happy this holiday season.

References/resources

Huffington Post www.huffpost.com

Some health benefits of Coffee

Coffee is one of the world's most popular beverages. Thanks to its high levels of antioxidants and beneficial nutrients, it also seems to be quite healthy. Studies show that coffee drinkers have a much lower risk of several serious diseases.

13 health benefits of coffee

1. Coffee can improve energy levels and make you smarter

That's because it contains a stimulant called caffeine — the most commonly consumed psychoactive substance in the world. After you drink coffee, the caffeine is absorbed into your bloodstream. From there, it travels to your brain. In the brain, caffeine blocks the inhibitory neurotransmitter adenosine.

2. It helps you burn fat

Caffeine is found in almost every commercial fat-burning supplement — and for good reason. It's one of the few natural substances proven to aid fat burning. However, it's possible that these effects diminish in long-term coffee drinkers.

3. It can improve physical performance

Caffeine stimulates your nervous system, signalling fat cells to break down body fat. But it also increases epinephrine (adrenaline) levels in your blood. This is the fight-or-flight hormone, which prepares your body for intense physical exertion. Caffeine breaks down bodyfat, making free fatty acids available as fuel.

4. It contains essential nutrients

Many of the nutrients in coffee beans make their way into the finished brewed coffee. A single cup of coffee contains:

- Riboflavin (vitamin B2)
- Pantothenic acid (vitamin B5)



- Manganese and potassium
- Magnesium and niacin

5. It may lower your risk of type-2 diabetes

Type-2 diabetes is a major health problem, currently affecting millions of people worldwide. It is characterised by elevated blood sugar levels caused by insulin resistance or a reduced ability to secrete insulin. Several observational studies show that coffee drinkers have a much lower risk of type-2 diabetes.

6. It may protect you from Alzheimer's disease and dementia

Alzheimer's disease is the most common neurodegenerative disease and the leading cause of dementia worldwide. This condition usually affects people over 65, and there is no known cure. However, there are several things you can do to prevent the disease from occurring in the first place. This includes the usual suspects like healthy and exercising – but drinking coffee may be effective as well.

7. It may lower your risk of Parkinson's disease

Parkinson's is the second most common neurodegenerative condition, right behind Alzheimer's. It's caused by the death of dopamine-generating neurons in your brain. As with Alzheimer's, there is no known cure, which makes it that much more important to focus on prevention. In this case, the caffeine itself appears to be beneficial, maybe providing a 60% lower risk of getting Parkinson's.

8. It may protect your liver

Your liver is an amazing organ that carries out hundreds of important functions. Several common diseases primarily affect the liver,

In a Harvard study published in 2011, women who drank four or more cups of coffee per day had a 20% lower risk of becoming depressed.

including hepatitis, fatty liver disease and many others. Many of these conditions can lead to cirrhosis, in which your liver is largely replaced by scar tissue.

Interestingly, coffee may protect against cirrhosis.

9. It can fight depression and make you happier

Depression is a serious mental disorder that causes a significantly reduced quality of life. In a Harvard study published in 2011, women who drank four or more cups of coffee per day had a 20% lower risk of becoming depressed.

10. It may lower risk of certain types of cancer

Cancer is one of the world's leading causes of death. It is characterised by uncontrolled cell growth in your body. Coffee appears to be protective against two types of cancer: liver and colorectal cancer.

11. It doesn't cause heart disease and may lower stroke risk

It is often claimed that caffeine can increase your blood pressure. This is true, but with a rise of only 3–4 mm/Hg, the effect is small and usually dissipates if you drink coffee regularly. However, it may persist in some people, so keep that in

mind if you have elevated blood pressure. On the contrary, there is some evidence that women who drink coffee have a reduced risk.

12. It may help you live longer

Given that coffee drinkers are less likely to get many diseases, it makes sense that coffee could help you live longer. Several observational studies indicate that coffee drinkers have a lower risk of death. In two very large studies, drinking coffee was associated with a 20% reduced risk of death in men and a 26% decreased risk of death in women, over 18–24 years. This effect appears particularly strong in people with type-2 diabetes.

13. The biggest source of antioxidants in the western diet

For people who eat a standard western diet, coffee may be one of the healthiest aspects of their diet. That's because coffee is quite high in antioxidants. Studies show that many people get more antioxidants from coffee than from fruits and vegetables combined. In fact, coffee may be one of the healthiest beverages on the planet.

The bottom line

Coffee is a highly popular beverage around the globe that boasts a number of impressive health benefits.

Not only can your daily cup of Joe help you feel more energised, burn fat and improve physical performance, it may also lower your risk of several conditions, such as type-2 diabetes, cancer and Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease.

In fact, coffee may even boost longevity.

References/resources

Riordan Clinic www.riordanclinic.org



Beetroots

have some amazing benefits for you

Benefits of Beetroots #1 — They Are Good for Your Heart

Beetroots, along with spinach, carrots, and cabbage, are a great source of nitrates. Nitrates are compounds that convert to nitric oxide in the body. Nitric oxide opens up your blood vessels, which helps lower blood pressure and heart rate.

Benefits of Beetroots #2 — They Can Make You a Better Athlete

The nitrates in beetroots improve blood flow, which helps move oxygen throughout your body. Drinking beetroot juice before exercise seems to prevent fatigue. Beetroot juice also prevents muscles from exhausting.

Benefit #3 — They Can Reduce Inflammation in Your Body

The betalain in beetroots can reduce inflammation, which researchers theorise is partially due to its ability to interfere with the inflammatory signalling process. Inflammation is a factor in many health problems, including heart disease, cancer, and obesity.

Benefit #4 — They Can Improve Your Digestive Health

Beetroots are high in fibre, which is good for your gut. The fibre in beetroots resists digestion in the stomach and small intestine and travels more or less intact into the colon, where your health-promoting gut bacteria ferment it and use it for food.

Benefit #5 — They Are Good for Your Brain

Many cognitive diseases appear to be triggered by an interruption in nitric oxide pathways. It makes sense then that nitrates in beetroots can help improve brain function by increasing oxygen flow.

Benefit #6 — They Have Cancer-Fighting Properties

Beetroots are known to have antioxidant properties, which protect cells from free radicals.

Most specifically, the betanin in beetroots has been studied for its ability to protect against cancer. Some researchers even see the potential for beet extracts for use in chemotherapy.

Benefit #7 — They Boost Your Immunity

Beetroots are high in zinc, copper, and vitamins A and C — all nutrients known to boost immunity. Vitamin A increases antibody production and stimulates your white blood cells, which help ward off infections.

Beetroots also contain iron, which is needed to carry oxygen throughout your body, keep your cells strong, and enhance immune defence.

Benefit #8 — They Can Boost Your Libido

The use of beets as an aphrodisiac dates back to the time of the Romans. Beetroots are rich in the mineral boron, which plays a role in sex hormone production. The effectiveness of dietary nitrates in beetroots to enhance blood flow can benefit sexual health as well.

Benefit #9 — They Are Good for Your Eyes

It's no surprise that eating fruits and vegetables is good for your eyes — especially those with rich pigments. Beetroot contains lutein and zeaxanthin, which are well-studied for their positive impact on vision of age-related macular degeneration, the leading cause of adult vision loss in America.

Benefit #10 — They Are Good for Your Liver

Beetroots have an abundance of nutrients that keep your liver healthy — such as iron, antioxidants, betaine, and vitamin B.

Beetroot helps protect the liver from oxidative damage and inflammation. The betalains in beetroots help the liver eliminate toxins. And betalains encourage the detoxification process. Also, pectin, a water-soluble fibre in these root vegetables, helps flush out toxins from the liver.

References/ Resources:

[The Food Revolution Network
www.foodrevolution.org](http://www.foodrevolution.org)



Looking after yourself as a carer

When caring for a loved one with a life-limiting illness, it is important to look after your own health and wellbeing. This helps you to have the energy and strength required for your role as carer.

It is important for you to keep doing the activities you enjoy outside of your caring role. Taking regular breaks from caring will help you avoid becoming worn out. Take the time to do something for yourself everyday.

Don't feel guilty about caring for yourself. Many people receiving care feel better if they know their carers are taking time for enjoyment and rest. It may not be possible to take away all the stress but taking some steps to look after yourself will help.

It can be easy to put your own needs last, but it is important if you are feeling tired or stressed to look after yourself so you are still able to care for the person that needs you the most.

Get some exercise. Do something physical like a walk or stretching. Try and do an exercise you enjoy. It will help you maintain your energy.

Get enough sleep. Carers often have trouble sleeping. Limit coffee and alcohol especially in the latter part of the day. Try relaxing with a warm bath or herbal tea or soothing music before bedtime. If you can't fall asleep after 20 minutes,

get up and do something else then try again. Try a brief rest in the daytime if your night's sleep is disturbed. If you find sleeping difficult on a regular basis, see your nurse or doctor.

Maintain a healthy diet. Sometimes this can be hard, especially if your appetite is not so good. But you need your strength so eat a balanced diet and remember to 'treat' yourself sometimes with food you enjoy.

Do something for yourself every day. List ten things you enjoy that would give you a short break and renew your energy. Do one of these each day.

Be social. Try to maintain social contact with friends and keep up your usual activities as much as possible.

Practise your own spirituality or religion. Whether it be meditation, yoga, prayer or discussion with a pastoral worker, maintaining religious or spiritual practice will help you look after yourself.

Emotional health and wellbeing

The emotional demands of caring for someone with a life-limiting illness can be high. As a carer, it is important to look after your own emotional needs. This is important so you can continue your caring role and maintain your own emotional resilience.

If the situation seems hopeless, some people find it helpful having hope for small things. For example, you may not be able to hope for a cure, but you can hope your loved one has a good day today.

Friends and family can offer significant support, but you may find it helpful to speak with a healthcare professional such as a counsellor. Often someone without an emotional connection to you or the person you care for will help you see things clearly.

More suggestions

Other ideas that may help you, and that you may not have thought of, include the following:

- Take one day at a time. While thinking about the future is normal, try and focus on the challenges of caring just one day at a time.
- Keep a diary of issues. This can help you keep track of issues and serve as a reminder when family meetings with the palliative team occur, or others ask for information.
- Discuss flexible work options with your employer. Many employers offer flexible working arrangements. Talk to them about possible options.
- Give yourself regular rewards. Take a break, do something special that lifts your spirits and makes you feel good.

Carers often have trouble sleeping ... try relaxing with a warm bath or herbal tea or soothing music before bedtime.



When in need – call a friend

WHO DO I CONTACT....	
...to find out where the nearest support group operates?	KINSHIP CARERS VICTORIA (03) 93722422 www.kinshipcarersvictoria.org
...to speak with the DHHS Kinship Engagement teams call?	South DHHS Division 1800 319 503 North DHHS Division 1800 319 507 West DHHS Division 1800 319 510 East DHHS Division: 1800 931 757
...to find out what financial and child care assistance is available?	GRANDPARENT ADVISOR CENTRELINK 1800 245 965
...for five free parenting counselling sessions on the telephone?	GATEWAY HEALTH 1800 880 660 www.gatewayhealth.org.au
...to find out what training is available for kinship carers?	CARER KAFÉ (03) 9416 4292 www.carerkafe.org.au
...to find out about bereavement assistance?	BEREAVEMENT ASSISTANCE (03) 9564 7778 www.bereavementassistance.org.au
...to find out about help for problem gambling?	GAMBLING HELP LINE 1800 858 858 www.gamblinghelpline.org.au
...to find out about family mental health and wellbeing?	DRUMMOND STREET (03) 9663 6733 www.ds.org.au
...to find after hours medical advice?	AFTER HOURS GP HELPLINE 1800 022 222 Nurse on call 1300 606 024



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