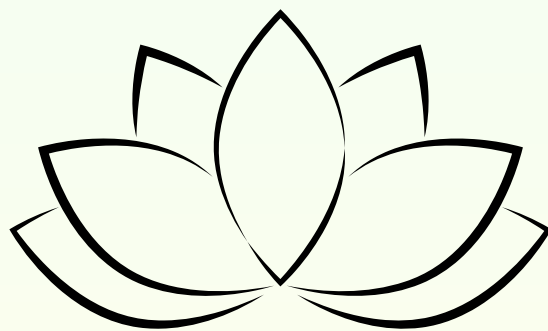




# *The Happiness Checklist*

A STARTER GUIDE TO OPTIMIZING OUR LIFE FOR HAPPINESS IN THE MODERN WORLD



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# The purpose of the happiness checklist



## A CHECKLIST TO SELF-ASSESS AND BUILD A STRONG FOUNDATION FOR HAPPINESS

The purpose of this checklist is to provide an easy way to self-evaluate your life. It is not expected that you have checked off every item on the list.

Use this as a **tool to self-evaluate yourself** and as a starting point to assess areas of your life that you can improve on and grow in. The items added to the list are based on not only research into what leads to a happier life but also principles from the wisdom of Buddhism and Stoicism as well as from my own personal experience. Everything on here has improved the quality of my life. Using this as a foundation for the happiness of your life can help improve the quality of your life as well.

To get the most out of this, be honest with yourself. This is just for your own reference and to expand your own awareness. This is purely for the sake of introspection and finding ways to improve your life. I recommend coming back to this from time to time to re-assess yourself and your progress throughout the year. Use this as a guide to check-in with yourself and **audit your life**.

There are three main components to the foundation of our happiness. These are: **Mentality, habits, and lifestyle**. I will go through the list one item at a time and provide a brief explanation on each item of the list. At the end of the document I will provide the complete check-list for your reference and for you to print off if desired. This is just meant to get you started. For further information on many of the items in the list, check out my other content as I go through them in more detail.

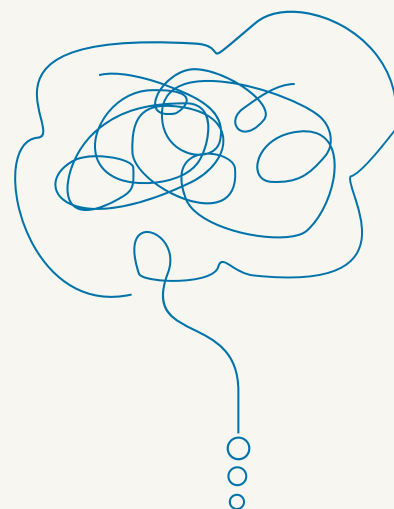
# Mentality

MENTALITY SETS THE TONE OF OUR LIFE AND OUR ABILITY TO NAVIGATE THROUGH UNFORSEEN CIRCUMSTANCES

One of the key components to the foundation of our happiness is our mentality. Mentality represents our overarching approach to handling what life throws at us. With the right mentality life becomes much easier. While the wrong mentality can cause us suffering.

What constitutes a good mentality? A **good mentality** is one that biases us towards positivity and seeing things in a way that empowers us. With a good mentality, there is always something to be appreciative of and **happiness comes naturally** into our life. There are a variety of staple approaches to a good mentality based on principles found in Buddhism and Stoicism. We will go through these more in detail in my newsletter and other content. For now, use the items on the checklist to start building a strong mentality that is backed by both science and wisdom dating back centuries.

A **bad mentality** on the other hand is one that biases us towards negativity. A negative mentality simply **makes your life harder than it has to be** and makes finding happiness an uphill battle. With a negative mentality, one will need things to be overwhelmingly positive before their mentality allows them to be happy and enjoy their life. Only when everything is right do people with a negative mentality find happiness.





## Not stuck in the past or living in the future

- This means that you do not frequently dwell on things that went wrong or things that could go wrong. Instead your daily experience is focused on what you are doing right now in this moment. Happiness is only found when our attention is on the present moment.



## Accepting life for what it is

- Accepting does not mean being passive, it means acknowledging life for what it is without judgment or labeling it. When we resist the circumstances of our life we experience suffering. Also remember, what we resist persists. Resistance leads to suffering. Acceptance leads to peace.



## Able to let go of expectations

- Expectations are one of our greatest sources of suffering. Expectations do nothing but set ourselves up for failure. When we place expectations on things in our life we are placing our happiness in the hands of others and chance. Without expectations we are able to experience things more fully and unbiased. Anything we experience becomes a bonus.



## Do not crave for more. Able to be satisfied and appreciative of current life for what it is

- Until we learn to be happy with our life right now we will never be able to find lasting peace. Seeking happiness through means of obtaining something leads us on an endless quest. There will always be something else on the horizon to be craved. Its okay to be ambitious but not making happiness dependent on it.



## Avoid judgment and labeling

- Judging and labeling of situations, experiences, and people clouds our mind from seeing things clearly. It often biases us towards negativity and poisons our own mood and experience.



## Do not allow yourself to be the victim

- Being a victim disempowers ourself and keeps us stuck. We lose our ability to be in control of our life when we choose to be a victim. Always finding a way to take accountability for a life is how we actually change it for the better.



## Find the silver lining and choose positivity by default

- There is always a silver lining and positive way to see any situation. Choosing to see life this way will allow you to handle unexpected and unwanted situations without losing your peace



## Grateful for the blessings in your life on a daily basis

- Gratitude is the foundation for happiness. When we are grateful we become able to accept the gifts of our life and enjoy them. So long as we are not grateful, we will be unable to access or benefit from our blessings. Entitlement is the opposite of gratitude and leads one to being unable to enjoy the blessings of their life. There are countless blessings in each of our life that are often overlooked or underappreciated. When we have a grateful mentality we become able to access all of the immense happiness to be found from all of these countless blessings. Each blessing becomes another little thing to bring us joy.



Exercise: What things are you most grateful for? Make a list of at least 10 things the universe gives you each day that you are grateful for.

Check out a list of things to be grateful for on my website!  
Feel free to send in your list of gratitudes to me! I would love to hear them.

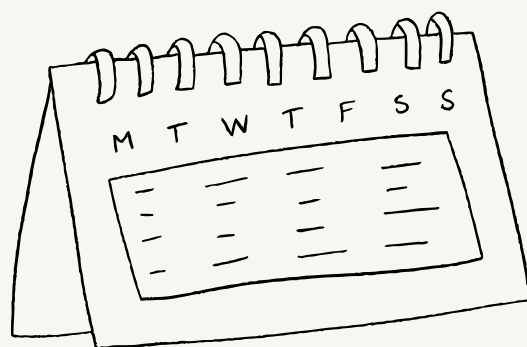
Take a moment and reflect on your own mentality. How would you rate it? Do you think in ways that benefit you? How does your mentality affect your happiness?

The items on this checklist will help support you in your quest to the happiest life you can. They take time to develop. And the practice of these is a lifelong quest. We can always continue to grow and develop our mentality to be better. Just like with anything, the more we do something the easier it gets. Do not get discouraged if you didn't check an item off the list or any of them. This checklist is to be a goal to strive to.

# Habits

THE DAILY ACTIONS AND ROUTINES YOU TAKE, THAT OVERTIME BUILD THE SKILLS AND MENTAL PATTERNS FOR SUSTAINED HAPPINESS AND INNER PEACE

Habits are essential to us actually building a strong foundation for our mind. Think of habits as the gym for our mind. Just as you cannot go the gym once and have big strong muscles, you cannot simply just meditate once and get all of its benefits. To stay healthy we must also maintain a consistent healthy routine of healthy habits. In the case of developing inner peace and happiness, the habits listed in this section are essential. Habits are the actions necessary to create the lives that we want. It is through the continued practice of these habits that we create true progress towards our goal of improved quality of life. The process of neuroplasticity, the brain's ability to change, takes time. Each day we stay consistent to our routines, the stronger we make our mind. The more it becomes shaped and optimized for happiness.



The way I like to think about these habits is not that they are things I have to do but rather just parts of my life. Parts of my life that are pushing me forward to becoming the person I want to be. At some point we don't think of brushing our teeth as something we have to do every day, its just a natural part of our day. Let us treat these habits also as natural parts of our days too. If you stick to these habits, or even just one of them, for as little as month you will see your life begin to change in ways you never expect. One last thing, progress is truly only seen and appreciated on the timescale of months and years, not days or weeks! Stay patient and keep consistent.



## Daily affirmations

- Gratitude is one of the foundations for happiness. When we are grateful we become able to accept the gifts of our life and enjoy them. So long as we are not grateful, we will be unable to access or benefit from our blessings. Entitlement is the opposite of gratitude and leads one to being unable to enjoy the blessings of their life. There are countless blessings in each of our life that are often overlooked or underappreciated. When we have a grateful mentality we become able to access all of the immense happiness to be found from all of these countless blessings. Each blessing becomes another little thing to bring us joy.



A great place to start with affirmations is based on what you want to improve in yourself the most. If you don't know where to start, check out my free list of daily affirmations on my website!



## Reading

- Regular reading is essential for our continued growth. Ideally daily, but reading self-improvement books on a weekly minimum basis will change your life. Reading daily will continue to open your mind up in ways you never imagined. Every single idea that you gain from reading opens your perspective and has the ability to change your life. Each of these ideas can have a butterfly effect on the trajectory of your life. The compounding effect on your life with reading is very powerful.



## Journaling

- Journaling is a critical part of understanding ourself more deeply. It allows us a chance to be introspective and reflect on our own lives. Journaling can include daily or weekly entries about your life. It also includes just writing down ideas that come to you through out the day. I keep a note on my phone for random thoughts and ideas and can quickly jot down ideas in there!



## Meditation

- Meditation is an essential exercise to learn and practice regularly. It is one of the best tools we have for training our mind to be calm, focus better, and naturally be in a state of peace. There is plenty of scientific evidence supporting the mental health benefits. Meditating as little as only 10-15 minutes a day can have a life-changing impact on your wellness if you stay consistent with it. For more information on meditation, I teach about it on my website.



## Exercise

- Exercise is also essential for our happiness. Building strong muscles and improving your cardiovascular health also builds your happiness. The mind-body connection allows us to improve our mental health by improving our physical health. The whole body is one and completely interconnected. How often do you see unhappy and depressed fit people? Exercise also builds discipline and self-confidence which helps with our ability to implement the other items in the list. I recommend exercising atleast 3 days a week.

Habits are our daily and weekly chances to vote for the kind of person we want to be. If we look at some of the healthiest and happiest people, we will see that they implement many if not all of these habits into their life. By implementing these habits into your life we are able to target improving our happiness from multiple different angles. It will take time to become consistent in all of these habits. It takes time to build a healthy lifestyle! I recommend adding one at a time until it becomes consistent for you. After you feel you have integrated one new habit into your life successfully, then move on to the next one. It is not a race. Take joy in each step of this journey.



# Lifestyle

## COMPONENTS OF YOUR NORMAL REGULAR LIFE THAT CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS YOUR HAPPINESS AND WELL-BEING

Lifestyle represents the components of our regular normal life that contribute to our overall experience of life. It forms the essence of our how we interact with the world and spend our time. For the context of this document, lifestyle includes things things we do, how we behave, or things we own. What we choose to do with our time becomes our “lifestyle”. Whether we are someone who likes to spend their time watching tv-shows, going on walks in nature, going to the gym, etc.

We should strive for having a balanced lifestyle that includes things we enjoy and things that are shown to be good for us. Ideally overtime the two will overlap and we enjoy doing things that are healthiest for us. If you are feeling stuck in life, changing your environment by doing something different and new with your lifestyle can be an excellent way of finding more joy!

Think about your own lifestyle. What are some things that you do regularly that bring your life happiness and joy? What are somethings you do that don't contribute to improving your well-being? Use the list below not as a comprehensive list, but a guide to get started. Don't feel overwhelmed or stressed, but rather see it as opportunities for growth! That is part of the joy in the journey of life.





## Eating healthy

- So much of our wellbeing comes from what we eat. Just like with the mind-body connection that comes with exercise, there is an equally powerful mind-gut connection. Science has shown that what eat plays a crucial role in our happiness. Healthy eating comprises of reducing processed foods and sugar and inreasing the amount of vegetables, fruit, and fish in your diet. Experiment and find what works for you. Start by implementing one new healthy food into your diet each week and removing one unhealthy food you eat every other week. Overtime you will be glad you did! Building a healthy diet takes time and is best done in slow steps.



## Spending time in nature

- Whether that is going for a walk outside or taking on a hike. Science has shown the more time we spend outside the happier our lives become. In Japan there is a concept known as “Shinrin-yoku”, which translates to forest bathing. Doctors will recommend this treatment option to improve their patients health because of it’s numerous benefits. Make sure you are getting outdoors in a meaningful way atleast a few times a month.



## Quality time with friends and family

- The relationships in our life are a key component to our happiness. Even if you are busy, find a way to make time for the people you love and care about. When scientists studied the “blue zones”, areas on Earth where people live the longest, they find that a commonality they all share is that they spend quality time with loved ones. This can be done in many ways from having dinner together to game night together.



## Social media moderation and curation

- Social media is a tool that needs to be used carefully. It easily has the potential to take over your life and cause serious damage to it. Have you moderated the amount of time you spend? Have you curated what you allow onto your feed? Are you following any pages or people that make you upset? If so, unfollow them. Start following ONLY people and pages that bring you joy and improve your life. We need to use social media to our advantage when we do use it. Check this box only if you follow pages and people that bring you joy and if you only use it sparingly.



## One or two passions to devote time into

- Having a passion (hobby) that you can devote yourself into is critical for having a life of depth. Our passions give our lives purpose and something to get excited about. Its okay to have many interests, but having no more than one or two passions that you really put your time into is better. These should be things that you would do if no one was to watch you and could spend hours on end doing. Examples include anything from cooking, yoga, drawing, etc.



## Practice intentional mindfulness everyday

- Mindfulness is connecting to the world around you. It is truly feeling your senses fully and being one with the moment. Slowing down and taking the world around you is a great place to start. I recommend everyday try to be mindful in every activity you do. Do you often find yourself distracted or fully taking in every moment?



## Practice kindness and compassion

- Do you live your life in a way that makes other people lives better. Living with love in our heart is essential for us being happy. Do you do things intentionally to bring other people joy? Or do you often find yourself engaging in gossip and arguments whether online or in person? Even if everyone around you is negative, be the change you want to see in the world. Daily acts of kindness is one of the most sure signs of a happy person.



## Smile and laugh often

- How often do you smile or laugh? Are you someone who is always seen as being serious? Or are you someone who's presence can bring joy to other people? Smiling often not only makes us feel better but those around us. Even if you don't feel like it, the act of smiling will make you feel happier. Just smile and laugh more! Life doesn't need to always be so serious.



## Own a pet and/or plants

- Having a something to love for and take care of can bring us great joy. The feeling of responsibility and love we have for our pets or even our plants can fill our hearts with great happiness. Owning a pet has been shown to reduce ones risk of hypertension and cardiovascular disease. Similar benefits are seen with those who regularly involved with gardens and caring of plants. Easy way to improve your life!

# Self-reflection



After going through the happiness checklist, self-reflect on your own life. How would you rate how well you are doing with prioritizing your happiness and well-being? What areas do you feel you have to improve on? Going forward what will you do different to improve your life?

Some tips for how to implement these items into your life are:

- **Start slowly.** Focus on one item on the checklist at a time that you felt you were unable to check off at that time. Come up with a strategy for how to implement it and then slowly but consistently add it into your life.
- **Revisit the list and reassess your progress.** It's important to continue to check in on how we are doing. I recommend revisiting this list, or to even make your own list too, every few months and at the end of the year. This keeps the ideas fresh in your mind and can serve as a source of motivation for how to improve your life.
- **Be kind to yourself.** The checklist is not meant to stress you out but serve as a guide to help you live a happier better life. You are deserving of happiness just for existing. These items are just ways to help you live the best life you can.

I want to thank you for taking the time to download and read through my Happiness Checklist. All of the things listed here have improved my happiness in meaningful ways and helped me during rough times of my life and I hope that it does the same for you. I have a lot more content focused on these topics to help you reach happiness at an even greater depth. I also write about a variety of topics to improving ones life. My goal is to help share ideas that help us live the best lives we can and reach our potential. If you are interested in these, please feel free to follow me on social media on subscribe to the **Joyful Journey newsletter**! I wish you happiness on this joyful journey of life!

# The Happiness checklist



## Mentality:

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- ☐ Not stuck living in the past or future
- ☐ Accepting life for what it is
- ☐ Able to let go of expectations
- ☐ Do not crave for more. Able to be satisfied and appreciative of current life for what it is
- ☐ Accept life for what it is
- ☐ Avoid judgment and labeling
- ☐ Do not allow yourself to be the victim
- ☐ Find the silver lining and choose positivity by default
- ☐ Grateful for the blessings in your life on a daily basis

## Habits

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- ☐ Daily affirmations
- ☐ Read self-improvement books regularly
- ☐ Journal regularly
- ☐ Meditate regularly
- ☐ Exercise regularly

## Lifestyle

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- ☐ Eat healthy
- ☐ Spend time in nature
- ☐ Quality time with friends and family
- ☐ Social media moderation and curation
- ☐ 1-2 passions to devote time to
- ☐ Practice mindfulness throughout day
- ☐ Act with kindness and compassion
- ☐ Smile and laugh often
- ☐ Own a pet and/or plants

# Way of Wil



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