

John McGrail, Ph.D.
2001 S. Barrington Avenue, Suite 308
Los Angeles, CA, 90025

About 1100 words
Second Online Serial Rights
©2013 John McGrail

From Zero to Happy
5 “Quick” Tips for Living Happier
by
John McGrail, PhD

There are certain common denominators that define nearly all our endeavors. For instance when shopping for a new car we look at common denominators like “mpg” and “zero to sixty.” In my work as a personal empowerment specialist and spiritual teacher there are also some common denominators I see in all my clinical clients and workshop students, what we might call the “mpg” and “zero to sixty” of self-improvement and personal development.

Regardless of the core issue or issues that clients or students feel are holding them back in their lives—be it low self-confidence or self-esteem, an unwanted or unhealthy habit or behavior, a fear, phobia, chronic stress and or anxiety, to name a few of some of the more common problems I work with—when I ask them what they’d like to accomplish, the universal

response is “I want to *change* insert personal issue here and I want something to make me *happy* or *happier*.”

And my reply to that entreaty is *always* the same and always very simple: “Happiness is a state of mind that you can choose any time you wish, even while we’re in the process of resolving your issue and creating your better life— in fact it will happen much faster that way.”

Notice two key points to that statement around happiness— choice and process. So with that in mind—pun intended— here are 5 easy and important tips to help you consciously choose, achieve and maintain what may seem like an elusive and evanescent state of being— happiness.

1) Happiness is a choice.

In fact *everything* we think, do, say and feel is the product of choice. Granted, most of our choices arise automatically through subconscious programming, and if you grew up in an “unhappy” environment then it’s quite possible you aren’t programmed to automatically choose happiness. That doesn’t mean you cannot consciously choose it though, does it?

2) Happiness *must* arise from within you; it does not come to you from the outside.

So many of us inadvertently learn to seek and expect happiness from outside ourselves, usually through attaining things or through other people. The thinking is, “Just give me the stuff and or the lover, partner, husband, wife, friends, etc, that I want and then I’ll be happy.” That thinking is exactly backwards. “Choose happiness and you will find that the stuff and people you want in your life are much easier to attain. Another way I’ve heard this stated is, Happiness is the precursor to success, not the other way around.” (source unknown) And... if for some reason it (whatever you want) does not come right away? Who cares? You’ve chosen to be happy anyway.

- 3) Life is not a static state of being; it is a process, always and forever a process.

This is so important to understand and accept; we never finish the process until we leave our bodies and move on to whatever awaits us at the end of this earthly life. We are always in process, and as soon as you attain whatever it is you want (maybe something that you thought would make you happy) you will find it a very fleeting moment; you will begin to want something else, something more, and start all over again. So, doesn't it make sense to choose to be happy while you are in the process?

- 4) Real happiness is not just pleasure; there must also be a sense of meaningfulness and engagement.

Engagement suggests process, doesn't it? So take pleasure in the process of producing, achieving and attracting what and who you want in life, take the time to strive for things that are truly meaningful, that help you to be a better member of this club we call humanity; enjoy the moment of achieving those aims and then *stay* happy as you excitedly engage in the next adventure, the next stage of creation and evolution. Cool beans!

- 5) Lasting happiness is easiest to maintain three-dimensionally.

Once we choose happiness as our state of mind while we engage in our process, then maintaining it— a process in and of itself— is easiest when we consciously live three-dimensionally, that is we tend to and nurture all three streams of what I call the Human Energy System— physical, emotional and spiritual.

- Physical: simply put, take care of your body; feed it well, move it regularly and with vigor, don't put too much poison in it, learn to process and release stress, get enough sleep, and viola, it will take very good care of you.
- Emotional: keep your ego in the playpen. The ego is like a three-year-old child. It always wants its way and will happily find ways to get into mischief and trouble; one of the more frequent ways is to let it believe that happiness is the result of getting things and pure pleasure. Be mindful of your desires and their source, of your choices—what you do, think, say, and how you behave. Consciously choose choices that serve your growth, your well being *and the greater good*, and you'll find yourself in very good emotional shape.
- Spiritual: Our spiritual energy, the energy of pure consciousness, our soul, is the biggest part of our being and the part we most neglect in modern “Western” culture. It is vitally important to engage and nurture our spiritual energy on a daily basis. The easiest way is through a daily period of quiet, inner reflection, dare I say it— meditation. With a little practice and a little consistency, you will feel incredible, your emotional energy will also tend to stay nicely balanced and the choice to take care of your physical body becomes compelling. You're living in 3 energetic dimensions!

There you have it, 5 quick keys to get from zero to happy and enjoy some great mileage in your life! You have no doubt noticed that all five of these tips relate and are interdependent— it's the old “chicken and eggness” dynamic I so often reference in my teachings and wrote about in my book, *The Synthesis Effect*. What that means is that you need to put all five of these tips in play

for consistent results. No worries, they are simple and you have the ability and freedom to also make using them easy; it's your mind, it's your life, so it's your choice. Choose happy.