

## Insights Into Lifelong Happiness by Tina Anderson

<http://tinaandersonOC.com>

Research indicates that only *10-percent of our happiness* is correlated with the life circumstances.

What?! Are you telling me that if I had been born four inches taller and without the adult acne gene, I wouldn't be happier? C'mon. I call BS.

Research also shows that we are born with a happiness set point, sort of like with weight loss. It doesn't mean we have to accept it as a lifelong condition, however. It takes determination and dedication to switch patterns but it can be done.

Here's the deal. Things like getting out of debt, finding your soulmate, landing your dream job or buying your dream house would add to your happiness but none are the cure all, and you can be happier right now without them. I used to dream about getting to my ideal weight and imagine how all of my other issues would literally dissolve. Delusional thinking, I soon found out.

Your perspective can get skewed by what you perceive to be a *lack of* or *less than* in an instant by doing this one thing. What is that? Comparing. Comparing to others, exaggerating benefits and conjuring up scenarios that are not realistic. We'll talk about this and several other areas in a few moments.

You have the ability to feel true inner peace and happiness despite what you think you might need. Some of the happiest folks live the simplest of lives. But, you already know that. And, before we get into the tips I do want to acknowledge clinical depression and anxiety and their devastating effects. Please get professional help if you are suffering from either of them.

Here are your happiness quotient (HQ) tips. Take note of the interesting research I share at the end.

1. **Decide to be happy.** In other words, set your intention and make it a goal. Work at it like anything else you value and that is important to you.
2. **Focus on what you have rather than what is missing.** Law of attraction tells us that we get more of what we think about. Steer your thoughts and self-talk on the fullness and abundance in your life. Make a list of each and every element and start your morning acknowledging them.

3. **Look for happiness in all the right places.** In nature, surrounded by art, music and creativity; by moving your body in way that is natural for you, by hanging out with positive and strong people and those with a spiritual or religious practice and belief system. Do more of what makes you happy. Be with family and friends that love and adore you. Laugh more. Be around people that are full of levity. Engage in activities that are fun with fun people.
4. **Forgive.** Happiness is connected to forgiveness, especially for yourself. You forgive to release the power someone (or some thing) has over you and your thoughts. It doesn't excuse the person or act but that's not your job. Your job is to take care of your well-being. How someone affects you is **your** responsibility. Forgive the illness, the lack of perspective, the immaturity, the fear, the anger, the deception, the betrayal; the "wrongdoing" that holds you hostage. You are forgiving a weakness. Being super hard on yourself will rob you of happiness, too. Get help if you are extremely critical and judgmental. It's like living in a prison of constant self-sabotage. I know this on a personal level. I endured it for years.
5. **Keep a gratitude journal** and write down something that was positive and joyful – every night before bed. Reflect back on your entries as much as possible. Tired of hearing about gratitude and gratitude journals? Too bad. They work. Your cynicism is one reason your HQ is low.
6. **Be kind. Be helpful.** Even better, surprise someone with an unexpected act of kindness. We once surprised a friend on his birthday with what we thought was a nice gesture but nothing out of the ordinary. He and his wife were so unaccustomed to generosity that they both started crying. I'll never forget it. What a gift we received. This tip is one of the most effective on this list. Acts of kindness take you away from your self-centeredness and your don't-have's.
7. **Examine your perspectives** and how you perceive yourself and those around you. What does success mean to you? How do your expectations affect your joy and are they realistic? How much emphasis do you place on how your life is "supposed" to be/feel/look at this point? And, how much energy do you spend on what you don't have instead of what you do have.
8. **Get out of fantasyland.** Of course your life can feel easier, less stressful and happier if you fill a void. But, there is always something to be chased and coveted if you allow it. I love the phrase "the grass is always greener on the other side" because it's so true. It's the nature of our human existence and part of our spiritual evolvment. (For more on my personal journey and philosophy, this is the link to the We Are Just Passing Through article.)
9. **Tragedies, tough times and stress are still there.** I can only imagine how difficult this can be if you are currently struggling with a lot of obstacles. Don't think I haven't been very down myself. Black hole. Been there. I've also witnessed firsthand my (very) poor family in Peru

rejoicing in their “blessed” lives. A distant relative that was nearly on the street with a young child finding more moments of happiness than not. A friend that lost everything in a divorce and saw his debt climb to over \$100,000 after being laid off from several jobs. Happy. I saw it from them and not just on occasion. Being happy means you cope with life and all that it brings. Coping mechanisms and managing stress are key ingredients to lifelong happiness.

10. **Replace your thoughts.** You only have room for one type of thought at a time. Think about what IS working right and well in your life right now. This means you absolutely, unequivocally must focus on *you and no one else*. (Here we go back to that comparing thing.) This is super important. It takes repetition to create a habit and the habit of being happy is no different. Spending hours trolling Facebook profiles reading exaggerated posts that do not reflect the entire reality of someone’s life is a low vibing activity. Replace that activity immediately.
11. **Act As If Not As What If.** Act as if you are blessed beyond your wildest expectations and know in your heart that you are - at this very moment - and, in all the other exact moments. You are right where you are meant to be. You just need to recognize the good fortune and blessings all around you. Law of attraction at work again.
12. **Discover your passion and purpose.** When you know “why you are here” and what you are “meant to do” in the world, happiness comes naturally and in abundance. When you engage in your purpose, happiness flows in by the bucket fulls. And, it’s endless.

Back to the research. From *The Neuroscience of Happiness* by Michael Bergeisen we find out some tough news. Better to know now, right? Apparently, our brains have what he calls a negativity bias. He explains it this way.

The mind is like Velcro for negative experiences and Teflon for positive ones. In other words, we keep and magnify the negative stuff and forget about and discard the positive. After a while, the sides become out of balance. Way out of balance. What to do?

Pay attention to each and every positive experience you have and go over them several times in your thoughts. Experience them on a visceral level. Integrate them into your essence and being instead of shrugging them off like we often do. For example, you look really nice for a work-related party and you handle your nerves with all the influentials. Then, you get one of their name’s wrong later as you’re leaving the party. What would you probably obsess over? What would you re-live over and over again? What would be imprinted on your brain and stored? Most likely the negative experience.

These negative experiences are instantly registered and intensely focused on, according to Bergeisen. In fact, a negative interaction in an important relationship is five times more powerful than a positive interaction. I could go in depth on this study but having this awareness alone could easily elevate your happiness.

Lifelong joy is awaiting. Go get it.

Side note. *In my personal philosophy*, we do not have positive or negative experiences if you use the terms in a literal sense. We just have experiences. They are all part of our growth, our journey and our evolvment. It's how you react and use them. My opinion, of course.

So, overall and as we wrap this up, remember to focus on the positive aspects in your life. You will draw more of the same. The rest will either show up or become obsolete.

And as the saying goes, *“Some people cause happiness wherever they go, others whenever they go.”* Easy inspiration and motivation for the former.

Need help with your HQ? I'm here, I'm ready. I'm on your happy team. [Please reach out.](#)

*Copyright, Tina Anderson, ta7productions inc., tinaandersonOC.com, July 1, 2016.*