Board of Education
Diocese of Chelmsford

How to be happy

Understanding our brains pre-installed software

The brain is formed to protect us, (fight or flight,) so the brain, to protect the body, learns from bad experiences very quickly, but from good experiences very slowly!

The brain remembers negative experiences more readily than happy ones, as this is part of the survival mode. It means the body is better at survival than it is at being happy, as it states, 'Survival of the fittest, not survival of the happiest!' To rewire your brain to think positively and to be happy, you need to be proactive and repeat positive thoughts or actions daily (and still stay safe!)

Happiness is a choice

Happiness is a choice, that you can make, and a skill that you can develop. This skill consists of a set of numerous actions and steps that can have immediate effect or be a lifelong journey. Somatic therapy is now being used alongside Talk Therapy, because the body and mind are connected and you need to find the things that release, process and heal pain. Trauma is trapped in the body and often shows itself in physical symptoms; headaches, asthma attacks, aches and pains, sleeplessness, for example. Over thinking can also drain the body and mind of happiness. It is proactive to write down your thoughts and say, 'over thinking,' out loud to stop the process.

Negative thoughts can also make one unhappy, always challenge these thoughts and check if there is evidence to prove these thoughts are real. If the thoughts are not based on real events, contradict them to help you to stay positive and happy.

Know when your body needs help

If you are tired try to nap, especially at weekends if you work full-time. Short naps have beneficial results, improving alertness, cognitive function, memory and overall performance, and this has been proven in a variety of studies world-wide. Anxiety can sap you of happy feelings.

Anxiety strongly dislikes the unknown, so this leads to worry and panic as your mind tries to make sense of these feelings and thoughts. Meditation, or breathing exercises, either box breathing, the Wim Hof method or Buteyko Breathing are very beneficial to eliminating stress and anxiety. These breathing methods are covered widely on YouTube.

What actions to take to make yourself happy

Many people keep gratitude journals. Writing down what you appreciate and are grateful for, is an important exercise. Spending time alone to walk or meditate can help restore peaceful thoughts and calm the nervous system. Spending time in nature has been proven to have great long-term effects on people's happiness. As well as seeing daylight, and nature around you, plants release antimicrobial chemicals called phytoncides which may also contribute to health benefits.

It is important to take care of what you eat and aim for well-balanced meals throughout the day. Sleep can be difficult at certain times in our lives, but 6 to 7 hours is recommended for good health. It is important to stay away from people who drain your energy or at least reduce the amount of time that you spend with them! It is also recommended for your own happiness, to make sure you avoid comparing yourself to others. Butterfly Tapping is an instant relief, if you feel panicky.

The book 'Tapping the Healer Within' is written by Roger Callahan, who explains this groundbreaking technique. The NHS advises everyone to stay in contact with people and the MIND charity reminds people to get some daylight every day.

Contact the Education Team or your School Adviser for more information or help.
The diocese main number is 01245 294400