

Benefits of Happiness



By The American Institute of Health Care Professionals, Inc.

Table Of Content

2	The Benefits Of Joy And Happiness For Health
4	The Science Of Happiness
6	Quantifying Happiness 101
8	Purpose Brings Happiness
10	Happy People Enjoy Personal Control
12	Identifying The Causes Of Your Unhappiness
14	4 Key Steps To Living A Happy Life
16	10 Characteristics Of Happy People

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The Benefits Of Joy And Happiness For Health

Many of us spend our lives searching for or holding onto joy and happiness, but aside from the aesthetics of merely feeling good, there is a positive impact on our health that can accompany these two emotions.

Happiness is a product of a single thing or event. Our joy is what we decide it to be. Research demonstrates that more than half of our happiness depends on those things that are within our scope of control.

We often equate happiness with material possessions, but it's mostly about what is transpiring in our minds. Your mindset dictates what defines your happiness.

Once you achieve and sustain happiness, this can translate to a multitude of advantages including:

- Positive relationships
- Successful career
- Achievement of goals

Another asset of happiness is your health. Without happiness and joy, your health can take a turn for the worse.

Joy, Happiness, and Your Health

Joy and happiness are a contributing factor in the equation that defines your health. Scientific research (<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/magazine/happiness-stress-heart-disease/>) demonstrates that negative emotions can harm the human body.

For example, when the body is left to endure a continuous cycle of stress or fear, it can alter the way in which our body functions contributing to conditions such as diabetes, stroke, hypertension, and heart disease.

According to a 2007 study, (<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/magazine/happiness-stress-heart-disease/>) which examined 6,000 men and women between the ages of 25 and 74 for approximately 20 years, found that those who with emotional balance and who have a sense of hopefulness, active lifestyle/engagement, enthusiasm and the capacity to face life challenges are less likely to develop coronary heart disease.

In essence, the ability to remove toxic people, places or things that block your happiness is vital to your state of health.

How to Find Happiness and Joy

How can you boost your level of happiness and joy? You may have to consider adopting new behaviors and a new outlook on life in general. Adopt these habits to start and adjust as necessary to fit your needs.

Find Meaning and Purpose in Life. For now, you may be feeling a bit mired by work, family or life in general and it is difficult to decipher your purpose. Finding your purpose can prove life-changing. Each of us has a purpose in life. If you do not know or recognize what that is, you must set aside the time to figure it out.

Practice Being Mindful. Self-awareness is your map to finding happiness. Self-awareness allows us to be in tune with our feelings, beliefs, thoughts, weaknesses, strengths, internal drivers and character. Once you develop self-awareness, you can begin to take control of your happiness. You get to choose what does or does not affect you.

Become a Positivity Expert. Positivity is not just a buzzword. It is a way of life and requires commitment and consistency from its practitioners to bask in its benefits. Positivity or the practice of being positive or optimistic is not for the faint at heart. It is at the core of leading a happy life and therefore challenges you to find the positive in even the most problematic moments.

These are just a few benefits of joy and happiness for health. If you are not living a life that is full of joy and happiness, take the necessary steps now to move into this highly desirable state of mind and existence.

Changes will not happen overnight and will require a commitment of consistency on your end. It will also be necessary for you to move with the change and be comfortable with modifying your approach. However, do not be afraid to take big actions. Your body will thank you for taking charge of your emotional well-being and physical health.

The Science Of Happiness

Sometimes, human emotions seem unpredictable and beyond the understanding of cold science. However, all of our emotions, including happiness, are actually largely controlled by chemical messengers and receptors.

Some aspects of how these chemical chains of events are set off by the world around us are still not entirely understood. The processes themselves, however, are fairly well explained in a science of happiness.

What Causes Happiness?

While there are things that scientists have trouble with when studying emotion, the basic mechanics of emotion are fairly well understood.

Chemical messengers called neurotransmitters are produced in various parts of the body. Once released, these neurotransmitters travel to and through the brain until they are taken up by receptors on the ends of nerve cells.

Once the receptors are activated, the activities of the nerve cell are changed. Depending on the function and location of the nerve cell and the neurotransmitter involved, this can mean a number of different things. In the case of the neurotransmitters that deal with emotion, neurotransmitters can change the ways in which we think and feel.

Neurotransmitters don't just control emotion, however. They also allow us to carry out physical activities. We'll get more into the details of that in a little bit but for now it's important to understand that that may be part of why some situations or physical actions can have an emotional impact on us.

By experiencing or preparing our bodies for a given situation, we also get all of the emotional effects of the required neurotransmitter.

The Neurotransmitters That Make You Happy

There are a lot of neurotransmitters. We may not have identified them all, and we may not completely understand all of those that we have identified. However, we do know that there are a few key neurotransmitters that influence happiness.

Oxytocin is one well known neurotransmitter responsible for happiness, specifically feelings of closeness. This neurotransmitter is released when you are close to people. It's often thought of romantically, but it is also important and parental bonds with children and even to some extent in platonic and non-familial bonds like those that we share with friends. If you're feeling down, spending some time with people that you are close too may help to put this happiness chemical to work.

Endorphins are another neurotransmitter involved in happiness, specifically feelings of excitement and satisfaction. What is most interesting about endorphins is that their release is caused by physical activities like working out and even laughing. Going for a run may help you to feel happier, even if you don't particularly enjoy exercising.

Serotonin is another neurotransmitter involved in happiness, and another one that can be boosted by physical activity. It also goes up when you spend time in the sun. Like the other neurotransmitters discussed here, serotonin doesn't only makes you happy. It also regulates your body's internal clock. If your internal clock is disrupted, it can also throw off your serotonin levels. This is often the case for night owls or people who work night shifts in 24-hour industries.

What Causes Unhappiness?

Because emotions are caused – at least in part – by the production, release, and uptake of neurotransmitters, any issue in this system can lead to emotional disturbances. Some scientists believe that problems with the production of the neurotransmitters responsible for happiness or problems with their receivers, could cause depression.

Also, because neurotransmitters are responsible for emotions and physical actions, some medications can have emotional side effects. Similarly, many drugs impact the way that various neurotransmitters are released and received in the brain. While they may make a person feel good at the time, they can interfere with the natural process, making the person reliant on the drug.

The science of happiness may help to make you happier. Doing things that you enjoy is important too, however, even if this article didn't mention one of your favorite things. If you don't find joy in anything and reading this article didn't help you boost your mood, consider talking to your doctor.

Be sure to mention any medications that you're taking. Mood disorders like depression can happen for a number of reasons but if it's happening to you because of a medication that you are taking it might be a simple fix.

Quantifying Happiness 101

What determines your happiness? Is it a moment in time? An event? Are you able to replicate time and time again? When you think about happiness, it is highly unlikely that you measure your degree of joy in the world. You are instead quantifying your happiness by life experiences and overall fulfillment.

What is Happiness?

What defines your happiness may be the result of multiple factors and core values. Happiness occurs as the result of needs that are met. It is an individualized state of positive emotions including satisfaction, pride, joy, and well-being. Things are just the way they should be.

Psychologists indicate that our personal outlook drives at least 40 percent of our happiness. It is what we say it is. Only 10 percent is due to life circumstances, and our genetics predetermines the remaining 50 percent.

If you are happy, the frequency in which you encounter negative emotions such as anger, fear, sadness or frustration is low. Your happiness is what you determine it to be but it may require you to create a plan of action.

You have to identify what it is that brings you joy and look for ways to incorporate these experiences more often into your life. Additionally, you must choose to be a happy person consciously.

Quantifying Happiness: How Do We Measure It?

Quantifying your happiness should be the result of an entirely personal set of metrics. Daring to compare your happiness with what produces happiness for someone else is dangerous. When it comes to happiness, there is no standard for this metric. Yes, there is a standard of living that we might consider, and quality of life but what equates to quality for one person may not be the same for someone else.

Experts say that it is hard to quantify happiness. Unlike diabetes or high blood pressure where you are able to identify a core set of measurable values to assign a diagnosis, happiness is subjective.

According to Psychology Today, there are a few methods you can utilize to measure your happiness.

Physical Health. Some people have biological markers, including neurotransmitters and hormones that indicate happiness. People with lower levels of serotonin may be at risk or actively experiencing depression.

Behavioral Health. How we respond in a variety of situations may be another sign of how happy we are or are not. Happy people are likely to laugh, smile and indulge in helping others more frequently than those who are not full of joy.

Positivity over Negativity. Happy people are also more likely to avoid negative behaviors and activities than those who are not. They will purposefully surround themselves with happy people and keep those with negative energy out of their circle.

Freedom of Choices. Happy people often have a unique degree of freedom to make decisions that favor themselves or others in their lives.

Visible to Others. Happy people are not hiding their happiness. It is apparent to others, and for those who might be susceptible, this emotion can be contagious.

Self-Reported Happiness. Finally, happy people are quick to share their happiness. Studies show that happy people frequently talk about their happiness.

Happiness is what you determine it to be. It is a lifelong commitment that requires a consistent investment of your energy and focus. Your satisfaction should not be driven by the things that make other people happy. Instead, your happiness should be a product of those things that trigger positive emotions for you.

This positive emotion is subjective by many standards, but there are multiple key indicators that we can assess to determine if happiness exists and we have the power to make a real change to acquire happiness where it current may not live.

Purpose Brings Happiness

They say money can't buy it – but you can get prescriptions for it. Where does happiness really come from, naturally, that is?

Happiness can come from a lot of places, including spending time with people who are important to you, eating the right foods, and working out.

Still, you probably don't want to be constantly thinking about doing things that make you happy, you just want to be happy. Fortunately, there's one thing that you can do that makes you happy for its own sake and that can help you to cover other happiness-bringing bases.

Purpose Brings Happiness

One reason that you should start your quest for happiness with finding purpose is that purpose brings happiness. Studies have shown for years that people who live with purpose report fewer unpleasant emotions like anxiety and depression, and even report less physical pain.

Here we are talking about life in general, but this is also true in individual aspects of life. People are more likely to be happy at their jobs when they feel that their jobs are important to them and to society. People also enjoy experiences more than they enjoy, say, things. This further suggests that living with purpose is makes us happier.

Purpose Encourages Activity

Purpose makes us happier in its own right, but it also encourages us to live happier and healthier lives on a number of ways.

As mentioned above, exercise is one great way to stay happy, partially because it contributes to positive self-image and partially because it causes your body to release endorphins -- one of several chemical messengers that cause feelings of happiness.

So, where does purpose come in? Living with purpose encourages a more active lifestyle. A more active lifestyle is all that one needs to incorporate more exercise. When most of us think of exercise, we think of exercise as running or going to the gym.

However, many health agencies and organizations call "exercise" anything that raises your heartrate. This can include activities like brisk walking, light lifting, even things like gardening. While many of us may have a hard time making time to dedicate to exercise, finding activities that we consider meaningful that require physical activity may be easier.

Purpose Encourages Social Interaction

Living with purpose also encourages us to spend time with others. Spending time with other people is healthy for you in a number of ways. It helps you deal with stress, and some believe that it is good for your immune system.

Similar to exercising, finding time to spend with others socially can be difficult. It can be easier if this time is spent doing something that is important to you.

How To Live With Purpose

If you already have something in your life that is important to you, like a job that you are passionate about or a volunteer organization, consider spending more time working with that group. It's good for your emotional health and for your mental health.

If you haven't found something like this, consider looking for something. Having a job that is important to you can help. If you ask around, there are often opportunities in the workplace to be more involved in aspects of the business that are important to you.

If your job is just a job, you don't have to quite – at least not right away – in order to follow your dreams. Look for an organization in your area that does something that you consider meaningful.

While joining one of these organizations can help you stay aware of opportunities to help, many organizations will let you volunteer at events without joining them. This is a good option for people who are wary of committing to things. It can also mean that you can avoid sometimes overwhelming communications.

No matter how you go about it, finding purpose in your life can help to keep you active, healthy and happy.

Happy People Enjoy Personal Control

Happy people just might have the key to living a powerful life. The word powerful does not mean that they have the authority to rule over other people's happiness, but instead, they enjoy the unique ability to control their fate. These people in effect create their own happiness. They do not allow people or events to rule over their joy. Instead, they have a core set of values that they practice each day.

Think of this practice as being a ritual of sorts or an investment in securing happiness each day. Happiness does not just come to them. They have a set of habits they must consistently follow or modify to reap the benefits of this lifestyle.

Here are a few reasons happy people enjoy personal control.

Happy People Embrace Optimism

Happy people regularly embrace optimism. They purposefully seek out the good in every bad scenario. They are not born with a higher level of cheerfulness than the average being roaming this earth. These people work hard at the practice of positivity, and they are consistent.

Self-aware

Happy people are extremely self-aware which may explain how well they can control their happiness. They have found the key to living in the moment and understand better than anyone how important it is to recognize those triggers that might derail them from leading a happy life.

Flexibility to Change

Happy people may be consistent practitioners in securing their happiness, but they also know when its time to change or adopt new habits as necessary to achieve greater things.

Great Communicators

Happy people are great communicators. They are clear about what they want or need and possess the skill set to communicate those needs to others. Happy people are great listeners. They empathize and make each interaction meaningful for all parties.

Pay It Forward

Happy people look for ways to pay it forward. They will do small things for other people to improve the quality of that person's life. They are very aware of what makes another person happy and thus, can individualize their approach to paying it forward.

Also, these folks are supportive. They are more than willing to help other people achieve their personal goals. They are careful not to overcommit themselves because they are experts at life balance, but if the time is available, they will support others because it makes them feel good to do so.

Circle of Happy Friends

Negative energy does not have a place in a Happy individual's circle of friends. They prefer to surround themselves with happy people. This circle of happy friends is a wealth of energy, fun, and creative power.

These people are not about negativity, and they don't want it anywhere around them. They will go above and beyond to distance themselves from pessimism.

Protect their Physical Wellness. These individuals advocate for their health and wellness. They follow a regular exercise routine, and they manage their health by keeping up with regular health checkups.

Follow a Bedtime Schedule. Happy people do not cheat themselves out of hours of sleep. They stick with a consistent sleep schedule which helps them to maintain a clear mind, steady focus, and a healthy energy level.

Happy people enjoy personal control because of their commitment and consistency in the practice of habits that promote happiness. While they are not immune to experiencing disappointments or sad moments like the average person, they are mindful of what it takes to lead a happy life.

They invest every day in their happiness and take the time to avoid compromising that happiness in any way. They are not afraid to adopt new habits if necessary, and therefore, they are innovators who work hard to control their fate and happiness.

Identifying The Causes Of Your Unhappiness

We tend to develop certain habits in life due to many factors like experiences (Good or bad), interactions with others, lifestyle etc.

Well, these habits can really affect us to the point where we develop genuine unhappiness. Now, you might be thinking that not all negative habits result in unhappiness. However, we are talking long-term unhappiness which absolutely results from bad thinking habits.

We tend to let negative experiences affect us and we hold onto our feelings and cannot seem to let them go.

Well, this needs to be changed so you can be happy again but first, you must identify the causes of your unhappiness.

How Can You Identify the Causes of Your Unhappiness?

It can be difficult to effectively identify the behaviors which negatively affect you. However, it can be done and it's very necessary for your wellbeing.

So, here are some ways you can do this:

- Honestly answer the question of "where do you want to be in life right now"?
- Are you doing what it takes to change your situation?
- Write down your short-term goals and pursue them immediately.
- Understand that everything requires a process, which starts with a decision by you.

You obviously want to be in a different situation which is why you are unhappy. Maybe you've even told yourself that you've tried everything... but if you did, you would be less unhappy because there is an answer.

You have the answer, you just need to ask yourself if you're really giving life your everything, and for most people the answer is NO!

Many people are in denial when it comes to what they could be doing. It's a defeatist mentality. This is why majority of people fail at finding happiness.

You should set goals and set out to achieve them because giving up should never be an option.

What is the most important thing to know about seeking happiness?

The most important thing to know is that you are in complete control of your happiness. People come and go but the people who contribute something meaningful to your life will contribute to your happiness.

It's important to find good people to surround yourself with. It makes a big difference and ultimately you'll desire to have a lot in common with certain people. So choose carefully.

Past experiences will cause the worst of unhappiness but too many people don't correct this when they have the chance. Instead it lingers on and creates problems in your life and the life of everyone around you.

This is why therapy and other methods of mindfulness are so popular these days. The issue of depression, anxiety etc. is seen far too often and something major must be done especially since society gets even more complicated and more unsatisfactory for us at time goes on.

The answer is always within us and people often forget this as the focus has shifted recently to an external solution (Not the case).

Leave Your Feelings of Unhappiness Behind

Happiness is a choice and don't let anyone tell you any different. The decisions you make everyday will greatly contribute to your happiness. You have to first understand what you want out of life and where you desire to ultimately be.

Have you tried hard and long enough to make your life happier? If not, then you know change starts with you.

Make short-term goals and as you progress, you will gain the confidence to do more. Set realistic goals but don't sell yourself short. We must make a choice to dig up the root causes of our unhappiness so we can achieve our dreams and goals.

4 Key Steps To Living A Happy Life

We all want to live our happiest and best life, but many of us have no clue how to do that. We scoured the internet, asking many professionals and experts the steps they recommend to ensure you're living a full, rich, and happy life.

Without further ado, here are the four key steps you can take to ensure you're living a happy life.

1. Care for Others

One of the most rewarding things you can do in your lifetime is caring for others and showing them that they matter. Caring about other people is essential to your overall happiness. Helping others and giving to others can build stronger connections, improve our overall mood, and even improve our health.

You can start practicing caring for others by doing at least one kind thing for someone around you a day. That kind thing can be paying them a compliment, helping them reach something on a higher shelf, holding the door for them, offering to carry something for someone with their hands full, etc.

Caring for others, supporting them emotionally, physically, or even financially, is a great foundation for a lifetime of happiness. You'll build better connections, grow spiritually, improve your empathy, and feel like you're doing something worthy of qualifying you as a good person.

2. Connecting with Others

Whether we like to admit it or not, humans are naturally social creatures. We all need at least a small group of people we can trust with whom we can share our lives. Connecting with people is crucial to our happiness.

The stronger your relationships are, the happier and healthier you will be. Studies even show that those with stronger relationships tend to live longer. These strong relationships help to provide us with love, support, meaning, and improve your self-worth. These relationships also provide a place in which you can belong. This is so important for you psychologically, as we all want a group with whom we belong.

You can improve your connections with others by making a diligent effort to make more time for others. Schedule get-togethers and meals, give them a call every once in a while, and stop skipping family events.

You should also try to make new connections to try to further your group. Try chatting with someone new every day, be it a neighbor, someone at the store, or just the person pumping gas next to you; try to make some connections.

3. Don't Neglect Your Health

Your body and mind are connected; you're with your body for a very long time and it's the only one you get, so you need to take care of it. Regularly exercising not only improves our bodies and physical stamina but also makes us happier overall.

Exercise releases endorphins, which make you feel happier and more energized. As your body gets healthier and you start feeling better, you'll also notice an improvement in your mood.

There are a few things you can do to start taking better care of your body. You can start by eating healthier foods, spending more time outside, going to bed at reasonable times, instilling a technology curfew, maintaining a regular workout routine, and drinking more water.

4. Live More in the Moment

With all the distractions we have nowadays, it's no wonder we struggle to live in the moment. Take time to notice the world around you, the people around you, the things happening right in that very moment.

Being more mindful and aware of your surroundings can truly help to improve your life. It will allow you to appreciate the present, miss out on less, and be more observant. It will also help to decrease your stress.

Take some time to relax and focus on your surroundings, the moment you are in right that very second. You'd be amazed how doing that at least once a day can dramatically improve your happiness and overall outlook on life.

10 Characteristics Of Happy People

We tend to notice a happy person from a mile away because it is so rare to find someone who exudes genuine and lasting happiness. It's just something they give off that makes you think they never let the struggles of life get to them.

Is there a secret to happiness? Not likely, however, people who are happier seem to understand that life is what you make it.

We want to share with you "10 characteristics of happy people"

1. Appreciation

Happy people have more of an appreciation for where they are in life. You seldom see a miserable person who is grateful and joyful too.

Appreciation will allow you to become happier because your expectations are reasonable.

2. Understanding

Someone who understands why life doesn't always go their way is more likely to be happier. These types of people show resilience and understand the processes of everything in life.

When an expectation isn't met, we all sometimes wonder, "why"? but understanding will bring peace to a situation.

3. Love

This is a big one... when you have a heart full of love for life, you are very likely to be a happy person. Love makes us happier with ourselves and it allows us to see the good in people while seeing a need to serve in some way.

4. Patience

This may be the toughest part of life. Patience is a true test of mental strength but it pays off tremendously (Eventually). No successful person has been able to get through life without a lot of patience.

We spend more time waiting than we do receiving, so it's important for us to "appreciate" the wait. A happy life comes from being patient through the toughest situations.

5. A Good Attitude

This one's obvious. Have you ever met someone who was extremely rude and negative all the time? Well, these people are not happy. The chances of them being optimistic are less likely.

A good attitude can go a very long way in life and people take notice.

6. Meaning

Nothing can zap a person's happiness more than a meaningless lifestyle. We are meant to progress and strive and if we are wasting time by being complacent we won't experience happiness.

Live a meaningful life by setting goals, and look forward to what's to come in your optimistic future.

7. Curiosity

Most people who become complacent lack curiosity. A bigger meaning in life requires you to be curious and have the drive to act on those thoughts of "what if".

Don't be afraid to make the effort to learn more and the possibilities can be endless.

8. Kind

It's important to be kind to other people. When you show kindness you are telling the world that you are grateful for your existence alongside the existence of others.

9. Ambitious

An unhappy person would be sulking in their sadness, while an ambitious person will go out of their way to accomplish something that means a lot to them.

10. Optimistic

Do you have hope? Optimism will give you hope even when it doesn't seem within reach. Positivity can actually lead to happier moments being you're more open-minded.

Happy people have a happier outlook on life which is very apparent.

Don't Worry, Just Be Happy

We all have the ability within us to create happiness. It's a choice which needs to be made every day when we wake up in the morning.

Understand that life is not against you and perspective will mean the different between being happy and unhappy.

Be more open to developing characteristics which will make your life a lot easier and happier.

True Happiness Is Gained From Loving Yourself

People think they'll find happiness in myriad things, like possessions, their careers, the approval of others, etc. But, the truth is true happiness is gained from within yourself; you have to love yourself in order to be truly happy.

In this article, we're going to discuss why this is, ways to spot that you need to do some work on how much you love yourself, and how you can love yourself more.

True Happiness Starts with a Strong Sense of Self-Worth and Self-Love

You've likely heard the old adage, "You can't love someone else until you love yourself." While that's true, it actually goes deeper than that. You won't find a sense of true happiness until you love yourself.

Why is this?

You may think that certain possessions or accomplishments will help you to be truly happy. Sure, they'll make you happy at that moment, but once that fades, you'll be back where you started, searching for something to make you happy.

The reason that doesn't work is because the root cause of your unhappiness is an unhappiness with yourself. Without self-love, you look to other things to make you happy and fill that void. When you're comfortable and happy with yourself, you'll find true happiness that won't fade.

How to Spot a Lack of Self-Love

It can sometimes be challenging to spot a lack of self-love, but there are a few tell-tale signs in your behavior that you can observe.

● A Compulsion to Fix Your Imperfections

If you find yourself feeling overly critical of yourself, you might need to address your self-love. While being critical occasionally is good and healthy, being overly critical is highly destructive to your self-esteem and confidence. You are beautiful and perfectly you just as you are; your "imperfections" make you uniquely you.

● Holding a Grudge Against Yourself

If you find it difficult to let past transgressions you've committed go, you're guilty of holding a grudge against yourself. You need to forgive yourself and move on. You forgive others, you can forgive yourself too.

● Poor Self-Image

If everytime you see yourself in the mirror, you're hypercritical of your appearance, it's time to love yourself more. Self-image, self-esteem, self-worth, and self-confidence all run hand-in-hand. Once you start loving yourself more, you'll be more accepting and loving of everything that makes you who you are as a person.

● Practicing Self-Love

If you need to love yourself more, there are a few practices you can start immediately that will get you well on your way down the right path.

● Force Out the Negative Thoughts

Whenever you feel those negative thoughts about yourself cropping up, force them out by replacing them with positive ones encouraging self-love. For example, if you find yourself thinking you're ugly or mean, consciously make the effort to think "you are beautiful just as you are; you are kind and you matter."

Another good practice to help replace those negative thoughts with positive ones is writing yourself positive notes around the house. You can write them on whiteboards, mirrors, or sticky notes; just place them where you'll see them when you most need them.

● Consciously Forgive Yourself

Holding onto transgressions can eat you up inside and destroy your confidence and self-esteem, even holding onto the ones you committed. You have to forgive yourself for the mistake and remember the lesson, letting go of the self-hatred and grudge you harboring against yourself.

● Quiet Your Inner Critic

Your ability to love and value yourself all starts with how you think about and view yourself. Don't allow yourself to be overly critical. Perfection is impossible to achieve as a human and you're doing the best you can; cut yourself some slack.



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