

Choosing to be Happy Now!

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We'll be happy when we land that dream job, find the perfect partner, move into our dream house, have enough money to retire... Many people place conditions on being happy, but the reality is that happiness is not about having, achieving, acquiring, or arriving. Happiness is a choice. And we can choose to be happy here and now!

In her best-selling book, *The Top 5 Regrets of the Dying*, author and palliative care nurse Bronnie Ware reports that the dying: “wish they'd let themselves be happier.” Why is it that we place so many conditions on our happiness? And why are we content to postpone being happy?

The truth is, it wasn't always this way. When we were children, we greeted each day with a sense of adventure and excitement. We lived in the moment, fully alive and awake in the present. As anyone who spends time around young children will tell you, having a good time is always on the agenda!

But over time, we began to take on the opinions and expectations of others. As our circles expanded and we learned and grew, we gained much, but most of us lost that ability to engage and enjoy the small moments of our lives. Somewhere along the way, we lose this sense of happiness as an integral part of everyday life. By the time we reach adulthood, we have goals and plans. We become used to working and striving for the life we desire. We're a hard-driving lot. More often than not, we're exhausted and over-extended at the end of each day. We unconsciously negotiate a new deal with ourselves to postpone our happiness. We tell ourselves that we will be happy when we achieve the goals we set for ourselves. In doing so, we deny ourselves the chance to enjoy life in the moment.

Happiness postponed

Happiness postponed is happiness lost. Life becomes a series of missed opportunities for happiness in the here and now. We spend a

great deal of time in our heads, reliving and reviewing memories and regrets, and imagining our future, forecasting and dreading worst-case scenarios, or envisioning being happy in the perfect home, career, relationship, or conditions. We do this because we fear what might happen, and relive past life lessons and regrets, and imagine catastrophic possibilities as a means of avoiding or preparing ourselves for possible struggles in the future.

When we ruminate, worry, and postpone our happiness, we put ourselves in a less-than-optimal holding pattern. We're like passengers on an aircraft, disconnected from the world, waiting to land.

The case for living in the moment

When we start to live in the present, in the moment, we open ourselves up to many possibilities for happiness. We might occasionally stop and smell the roses, and enjoy the many pleasant moments when they show up in the course of a day. Instead of waiting for the perfect conditions for happiness, we begin to take advantage and appreciate the people and the many good things we have in our lives in the present. Rather than ruminating over possible worst-case scenarios, we show up for ourselves in the present, and begin to think more positively about our prospects and goals.

When we live in the moment, we also become more aware and in tune with the people around us. We've all felt the difference between talking to someone who is giving us their full attention, rather than someone whose mind seems to be a million miles

away! When we are fully present, we are kinder to others and to ourselves. We feel more connected to ourselves, and allow ourselves time for pursuits we enjoy. In short, we show up, not only for others but for ourselves.

Showing up for yourself

Showing up for yourself means just that — taking care of yourself, standing up for yourself when life's demands overwhelm and derail you. It means making healthy choices for yourself, knowing when you need a break, or to slow down, refresh, or regroup. Showing up for yourself means learning to say no to a request that will drain you of your limited resources of time and energy. It means taking care of yourself, knowing when you need help, and seeking out help when you need it. Showing up for yourself means making a conscious choice to be happy, not at some point in the future, but now.

No time like the present

There's no time like the present. The past is nothing but memories and the future is just our imagination. Our lives take place in the present, the here and now. It is in the present

that we connect with ourselves. In the present, we learn to trust and love ourselves, and to make choices that will positively impact our lives.

Here and now, you can begin living your best life. Give yourself permission to be happy. Happiness is a choice. Choosing to be happy now means that you realize that you do not need to wait for your ideal life to be happy. Happiness is something you can have every day, starting right here, and right now.

Be happy now

You don't have to wait to be happy! Here are five steps you can take today to factor happiness into the equation of your life.

Think positively and enthusiastically about your prospects, no matter how distant your goals

Remove the conditions you place on yourself to be happy

Be kind, not only to others but to yourself

Let go of the negative opinions of other people, and learn to trust yourself

Connect with yourself every day by spending time doing something you love and enjoy



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About the author

Dr. Monica Vermani is a Clinical Psychologist specializing in treating trauma, stress and mood & anxiety disorders, and the founder of Start Living Corporate Wellness. She is a well-known speaker, columnist and advocate in the field of mental health and wellness. Her upcoming book, A Deeper Wellness, will be available for pre-sales in February, 2022, and her in-depth online self-help program, A Deeper Wellness, offers powerful mental health guidance, life skills, knowledge and healing, anywhere, anytime. <https://www.adeeperwellness.com/> <https://www.drmonicavermani.com/>

