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“WHAT HAPPY PEOPLE DO:

DEVOTE A GREAT AMOUNT OF TIME TO NURTURING & ENJOYING RELATIONSHIPS

ARE COMFORTABLE EXPRESSING GRATITUDE

ARE OFTEN THE FIRST TO HELP OTHERS

ARE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THEIR FUTURES

SAVOR LIFE’S PLEASURES & TRY TO LIVE IN THE PRESENT MOMENT

MAKE PHYSICAL EXERCISE A WEEKLY & DAILY HABIT

ARE DEEPLY COMMITTED TO LIFELONG GOALS & AMBITIONS

HAVE STRESSES & EVEN TRAGEDIES, BUT ARE ABLE TO COPE IN THE FACE OF CHALLENGES.” (1), (2)

Source: Lyubomirsky 2007

“DON’T WORRY, BE HAPPY”

Bobby McFerrin’s 1988, completely a cappella, song was number one on Billboard’s Hot 100 for two straight weeks, but the lyric mandate sent me to the “off” button every time it aired.

I’m not a fan of Alfred B. Smith’s children’s tune either, “*If You’re Happy And You Know It*”, inspired by a Latvian folk song. Why? Well, what is happy anyway?

“Positive psychologists are often reluctant to use the universally understood (but overused and vague) word *happiness*.

People instinctively know what the term means, making it useful for general discussion, but scientifically measuring happiness requires more specificity [e.g. brain images, hormone levels]. Many academic researchers prefer the term *subjective well being*, denoting a broader range of positive perceptions and more engagement with the world. Other related and overlapping terms commonly used in the positive psychology field include *positive well-being*, *life satisfaction*, *emotional vitality*, *positive emotions*, *positive health*, *positivity*, *flourish* and *thrive*.” (2)

Call it what you will, “...there is a growing body of evidence that happiness is beneficial for morbidity (risk of illness), survival of illness and longevity (Diener & Chan 2011).” (2), (3)

“Sustained stress or fear can contribute to heart disease, stroke, diabetes. Chronic anger and anxiety can hasten atherosclerosis and increase systemic inflammation.” (2)

“And, early-childhood ‘toxic stress’ from neglect or abuse has harmful effects on the brain and other systems (Rimer & Drexler, Harvard Public Health Review 2012).” (2), (4)

More reasons to be in pursuit of: “compared to low-subjective well being, high subjective well being may add 4 to 10 years to a person’s life. One study showed that older people who were happy had 35% lower risk of dying over a 5-year period. In one Martin Seligman

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_Seligman study, severely depressed people who recalled and wrote down three good things that happened each day experienced relief from depression in 15 days!” (2)

EXERCISE & HAPPINESS
 “In her book, *The How of Happiness: A Scientific Approach To Getting The Life You Want* (Penguin ©) 2007), Sonja Lyubomirsky notes, “Exercise may well be the most effective instant happiness booster of all activities.” (5)

You might recall “the landmark study that first reshaped how we think about the exercise/well being connection (Blumenthal et al. 1999

<http://today.duke.edu/2000/09/exercise922.html>). A group program of aerobic exercise – three, supervised 45-minute sessions per week of cycling or walking/jogging at a moderate to high intensity for 4 months – was just as effective at treating depression as Zoloft®, or even a combination of exercise and Zoloft®.” (5)

“Research on mind-body exercise also shows mood-enhancing benefits. Yeh et al. 2011

<http://archinte.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=227164> evaluated 100 outpatients with systolic heart failure, who participated in a group-based 12-week tai chi program. Results showed that patients experienced improvements in mood, exercise self-efficacy and quality of life.” (5)

“Streeter et al. 2012 <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3111147/>

indicated that a 12-week yoga intervention program was associated with greater improvements in mood and anxiety than metabolically matched walking exercise.” (5)

“Barton & Pretty 2010 <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/05/100502080414.htm> affirmed the value of ‘green exercise’, or exercise done outdoors, to mental health. Authors reviewed 10 studies in which more than 1,200 participants in activities such as gardening, sailing, and country walking rated their mood reaping a significant boost in as little as 5 minutes of outdoor exercise.” (5)

(1) <http://www.faculty.ucr.edu/~sonja/>

(2) *The Happiness Factor, The Role It Plays in Overall Wellness* by Mary Monroe, IDEA Fitness Journal, June 2102

(3) <http://internal.psychology.illinois.edu/~ediener/>

(4) <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/magazine/chronic-disease-prevention/happiness-stress-heart-disease/>

(5) *The Happiness Factor, Part Two* by Mary Monroe, IDEA Fitness Journal, September 2012