

5 Secrets from a Life Coach for a Happy Life

By Jeannette Samanen, Ph.D.

In my work as a life coach, I find that there are five basic ingredients that lead to sustained happiness. Cultivate these deceptively simple behaviors and you will make your good life better.

1. Give and Receive Love

Your relationships are what nourish you the most, whether with family, friends or pets. Be kind to those around you. Be willing to give and receive support, encouragement, hugs. Make time for those you care about.

Research has shown that kindness to others provides more lasting satisfaction than having fun.

2. Do Meaningful Work

Meaningful work may be a job you care about, whether it's work you get paid for, or taking care of your family. Meaningful work might be volunteering at a local hospice or teaching Sunday school.

Meaningful work can also be a hobby or interest you pursue, such as singing in a choir, collecting rare coins or quilting.

Meaningful work gives purpose and joy to your life.

3. Nourish Your Body Properly

You need a healthy body to enjoy life. When you take the time to eat nutritious foods, you provide your body with what it needs to function properly.

You feel better when you eat with awareness. Stop eating when you are full. Listen to your body and choose the foods your body loves. These may be different from the foods you crave. Really notice how the foods you eat affect you and make your food choices accordingly.

Enjoy alcohol in moderation. Life is enhanced by a glass of wine with dinner or a couple of drinks with friends after work. If alcohol is creating problems in your life, it's time to modify your drinking behavior.

4. Exercise and Rest

Watch a young child or a pet and you will notice vigorous activity immediately followed by rest. They run around like crazy and then conk out. We are hard-wired to do this. Make sure you get enough of both.

Exercise provides your body with the activity it needs to remain healthy. It also produces endorphins, those hormones that create a natural high.

Ample rest is as important as exercise. People who get sufficient sleep do better on every measure of physical and psychological health.

Take brief relaxation breaks throughout the day. You will return to work refreshed and better able to handle whatever challenges you face.

5. Cultivate a Practice of Reflection

Provide yourself with regular opportunity to reflect on your life. Take a walk during your lunch hour or turn off the radio in your car on the way home. Keep a daily journal or spend

time in church focusing on the past week and the one ahead. Set up a regular appointment with a life coach.

This is time to take stock of what is working in your life and what you would like to see different and better. You will gain awareness that enables you to be more in control of your life.

Taking time for quiet reflection will also help you to calm and center yourself. This is a great way to manage the stress in your life.

You can think of these elements as a beautiful flower with five petals. When you practice all of them, you will definitely make your good life better!