



Psyche Matters

The Newsletter of the Sullivan Center for Children

Twelve Things Happy People Do Differently

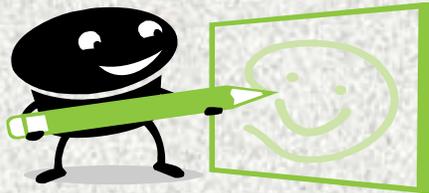
By: Mark Barnes, Ph.D.

As the holiday season approaches I had hoped to provide some suggestions for keeping a positive mood. I undertook an exhaustive search on the internet. I "googled" happiness and I came upon a work that I found helpful and wanted to share with the Sullivan Center families and friends. Sonja Lyubomirsky, a psychologist who emphasizes the study of positivity has published a book that relays her scientific work on happiness. She found in her studies 12 things happy people do differently to increase their levels of happiness. These are things that we can start doing today to feel the effects of more happiness in our lives. (Please check out Dr. Lyubomirsky's book [The How of Happiness: A Scientific Approach to Getting the Life You Want](#) and her website at www.thehowofhappiness.com)

I want to present each one of the twelve points Dr. Lyubomirsky discusses in her work and discuss a little about each one. It seems to

me particularly pertinent as the holidays approach but these tips can be helpful no matter what the time of year or circumstance we find ourselves in.

1. Express gratitude.



- When you appreciate what you have, what you have appreciates in value. When you are grateful for the goodness that is already evident in your life it will bring you a deeper sense of happiness. This means you do not have to go out and buy anything. It makes sense. It is extremely difficult to be happy about things in the future if we aren't thankful for what we presently have.

2. Cultivate optimism.

- Winners have the ability to manufacture

their own optimism. No matter what the situation, the successful person is the one who will always find a way to put an optimistic spin on it. She knows and understands that failure is an opportunity to grow and learn a new lesson from life. People who think optimistically tend to see the world as a place packed with endless opportunities, especially in trying times.

3. Avoid over-thinking and social comparison.

- Comparing yourself to someone else can be poisonous. There are two problems with this form of analysis: If we are somehow 'better' than the person we compare ourselves to, it can tend to give us an unhealthy sense of superiority. The other problem is that if we are 'worse' than the person with whom we compare ourselves we usually discredit or

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minimize the hard work that we have put in and dismiss all the progress that we may have made. The majority of the time this type of social comparison doesn't stem from a healthy place. If you cannot help but to compare yourself to something or someone, it is best to compare yourself to an earlier version of yourself.

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Staff Changes:

by Elizabeth Poulsen, Ph.D.

There have been some exciting additions/changes to the Sullivan Center's treatment staff! You may have noticed some new faces over the past few months and here is our opportunity to introduce you.

Former predoctoral interns Jason Christopherson, Psy.D. and Ashley Davenport, Psy. D., have advanced to postdoctoral fellows and are currently working towards licensure. Congratulations to them!

Nancy Hand-Ronga, Psy. D., is a licensed clinical psychologist who joined the Sullivan Center team in January of 2013. She has been trained and worked with many world-renowned psychiatrists and psychologists. Dr. Hand-Ronga has worked many years with various populations including children, adolescents, adults, the elderly, and incarcerated individuals. Her current specialty focuses on children, adolescents, and their families.

Emon Abdolsalehi-Najafi, Ph.D. joined the Center's team in March of 2013. She is currently a psychological assistant working towards licensure. Her previous experience includes working with children diagnosed with life threatening illnesses at Childrens Hospital Los Angeles and severely emotionally disturbed children and their families.

Elizabeth Poulsen, Ph.D., began her Postdoctoral Fellowship with the Center in July of 2013 and has

experience in working with teens and providing family counseling. Her previous experience includes treating at-risk youth at a local correctional facility and providing individual and group therapy to adults on probation. She currently works with children, teens, and their families.

We are very excited to have these new members on our treatment team. At this point, the Sullivan Center for Children has sixteen clinicians providing psychotherapy to children and their families. We are the largest practice treating children, teens, and their families. We are excited for the Center's future and our ability to continue providing the highest quality of care for our clients.

Here's a summary of our staff at the Sullivan Center:

Senior Staff

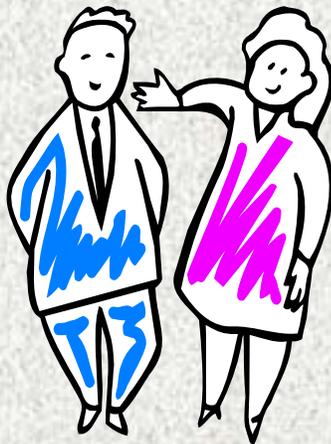
Kathy Sullivan, Ph.D., ABPP
(Clinical Director)
Mark Barnes, Ph.D.
(Assistant Director;
Director of Training)
David Fox, M.D. (Child
Psychiatrist)
Laurie Rabens, Ph.D.

(Special Programs)

Treon Hinmon, Psy.D.
Lisa Ganiron, Psy.D. (Continuing Ed.)
David Wolter, M.Div., M.A., LMFT

Junior Staff

Nancy Hand-Ronga, Psy.D.
Melinda Appleby, Psy.D.
(Psychological Assistant)
Steve Castro, Psy.D.
(Psychological Assistant)
Jennifer Fanzo, Psy.D.
(Psychological Assistant)
Emon Abdolsalehi-Najafi, Ph.D.
(Psychological Assistant)



Special Announcements:

CALENDAR: The Sullivan Center will be closed for Thanksgiving and the day after (11/28 & 11/29), Christmas day (12/25) and New Year's day (1/1). Groups will be cancelled on Saturday 11/30. Please check with your therapist to verify appointments for the holidays and to let us know of upcoming vacation dates.

GROUPS: We currently offer 5 different groups:
Wednesday nights—high schoolers
Friday afternoons - young adults
Saturday mornings 10am - 13-16yr. olds
Saturday mornings 11am - 9-12yr. olds
Saturday afternoons 12pm—7-10yr. olds

PARENTING SEMINARS: The Sullivan Center is proud to offer two seminars to help parents succeed. Both are based on the popular books by Elaine Mazlish and Adele Faber and will be led by David Wolter, M.Div., M.A., LMFT:

How to Talk So Kids Will Listen

(six 2-hour sessions; cost \$25 each session (\$40 per couple);

Dates and times: October 16, 23, 30; November 6, 13, 20; 7pm—9pm)

Siblings Without Rivalry

(six 2-hour sessions; cost \$25 each session (\$40 per couple);

Dates and times: January 22, 29; February 5, 12, 19, 26; 7 pm—9pm)

Watch for flyers in our lobbies (and on our newsletter page of our website) for more details on these important group seminars. You can also sign up now by calling our office at 271-1186 x115.

Post-Doctoral Fellows

Miriam Fishman, Psy.D.
Ashley Davenport, Psy.D.
Jason Christopherson, Psy.D.
Elizabeth Poulsen, Ph.D.

Other Staff

Errol Leifer, Ph.D., ABPP
(Consulting Psychologist)

Understanding How Sugar Affects Our Bodies and Mood Our Moods, Part 1

By: Ashley Davenport, Psy.D.

Helping family members and ourselves stay healthy involves a whole-person approach. This includes understanding not only our behavioral and mental health, but the ways in which our bodies and minds are connected. One aspect of this mind-body connection is how our mood is affected by what we consume. This connection, in turn, affects our behavior and the quality of our interactions with others. For millions of individuals around the world, mood and behavior are altered multiple times a day through how their bodies appropriately use their carbohydrate intake. When carbohydrates (which turn into sugar) are not adequately used by the body, a condition known as diabetes may occur. Thousands of people have this disease and fail to seek out adequate medical attention until the symptoms have increased and the individual experiences unbearable conditions.

What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a chronic disease that occurs either when the pancreas does not produce enough insulin or when the body cannot effectively use the insulin it produces. Insulin is a hormone that regulates blood sugar. Hyperglycemia, or raised blood sugar, is a common effect of uncontrolled diabetes and over time leads to serious damage to many of the body's systems, especially the nerves and blood vessels.

347 million people worldwide have diabetes. In 2004, an estimated 3.4 million people died from consequences of fasting high blood sugar. A similar number of deaths has been estimated for 2010. More than 80% of diabetes deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries.

Type 1 diabetes

Type 1 diabetes (previously known as insulin-dependent, juvenile or childhood-onset) is characterized by deficient insulin production and requires daily administration of insulin. The cause of type 1 diabetes is not known and it is not preventable with current knowledge.

Symptoms include excessive excretion of urine, thirst, constant hunger, weight loss, vision changes and fatigue. These symptoms may occur suddenly.

Type 2 diabetes

Type 2 diabetes (formerly called non-insulin-dependent or adult-onset) results from the body's ineffective use of insulin. Type 2 diabetes comprises 90% of people with diabetes around the world (5), and is largely the result of excess body weight and physical inactivity.

Symptoms may be similar to those of Type 1 diabetes, but are often less marked. As a result, the disease may be diagnosed several years after onset, once complications have already arose.

Until recently, this type of diabetes was seen only in adults

but it is now also occurring in children. *To Be Continued in Next Issue*

Resources:

<http://www.health.usnews.com>

Consultation with endocrinology teams from Loma Linda Children's Hospital and Children's Hospital Central CA

Upcoming Parenting Classes

by David Wolter, LMFT

There are no manuals for parenting. Most of us parent by trial-and-error, doing the best that we can, and then live with the consequences. But that one time that has us shoving our teenager against the wall or screaming at the top of our lungs or even curling up in a fetal-position in the corner of our bedroom is enough to get our attention that THERE MUST BE A BETTER WAY! Most of us have very good intentions and want the best for our children and yet lack the resources, the variety of ideas in our toolbox as it were, to get the job done well. Then we end our days with shrugged shoulders and frustration that we are turning into our parents. We wanted better. Can't it be possible?

The answer is a resounding "YES", though it comes at a price. The biggest price is our willingness to choke down our pride and admit that we could use some help, some new ideas. That is probably already the case for you if you've read this far. But beyond that, we need to shell out some serious time and maybe even a few bucks to invest in the process a little more. Good things don't come free. Really good things are worth it. That's what I've heard time-and-again from those who've attended our "How to Talk so Kids Will Listen" and "Siblings Without Rivalry" seminars.

These two seminars, being offered again this Fall and Winter, are group seminars with plenty of time for interaction, questions and simple homework for you to apply in the here-and-now with your children. Our "How to Talk" seminar will begin on Wednesday night, October 16th, and will run for 6 consecutive weeks from 7-9pm. Our "Siblings Without Rivalry" seminar will start on January 22nd, and will also run for 6 consecutive weeks. Both seminars will feature audio-visual presentations, group interaction, food and even some laughs and will be led by myself and other staff from the Sullivan Center for Children as they are able. We have brochures in each of our waiting rooms for you to take and fill out (the backside) in order to save your spot for the seminar. Be sure to invite your other parent friends as we could all use a refresher for our parenting skills. See you soon!



Twelve Things Happy People Do Differently, Continued

4. **Practice acts of kindness.** - Doing a nice thing or performing an act of kindness releases serotonin in your brain. (Serotonin is a neurotransmitter that has wonderful health benefits, which include making us feel more blissful.) Selflessly helping someone is a powerful way to feel good inside. What is even better about this act of kindness is that, not only will you feel better, but so will people watching the act of kindness. Others who see you engage in these acts of kindness will be also have a release of serotonin just by watching what is happening. Just so you know, most antidepressants is to help increase serotonin so watch out drug companies acts of kindness may render you bankrupt.
5. **Nurture social relationships.** - The happiest people on the planet are the ones who have deep, meaningful relationships. Some studies have shown that an individual's mortality rates are doubled when they are lonely? There is a warm fuzzy feeling that gets generated when one has an active circle of good friends who you can share your experiences with. We feel connected and a part of something more meaningful than when we are lonely or live a less social life.
6. **Develop strategies for coping.** - How you respond to the more stressful times is what can shape your character. It can be difficult to develop creative solutions in the moment when defecation is hitting the rotary oscillator. Happier people tend to have well developed coping strategies and can readily access and make use of ways to reduce and manage situational stress. It helps to have healthy strategies for coping pre-rehearsed, on-call, and in your arsenal at your disposal.
7. **Learn to forgive.** - Harboring negative emotions, especially feelings of anger, animosity and hatred is horrible for your well-being. Our mind does not know the difference between current and past emotion. When you harbor 'hatred' for someone, and you tend to think continuously thinking about it, and the result is that those negative emotions eat away at your immune system. This pattern of holding negative emotions tends to put you into a state of susceptibility one is vulnerable to physical illness and stays in a less emotionally available mood throughout your day.
8. **Increase flow experiences.** - Flow is a state in which it feels like time stands still. It is when one is so focused on what the task that you become one with the task. This is essentially where action and awareness are merged. The individual does not feel, hungry, sleepy or even emotional rather you are fully absorbed in the task you are doing. Nothing can distract you or can compete for your focus when you are passionately engaged in something.
9. **Savor life's joys.** - Deep and meaningful happiness cannot exist without slowing down to experience the joy. In a world filled with wild stimuli and omnipresent movement to forgo the experience of life's enjoyable moments. When we neglect to appreciate these times, we rob the moment of its magic. These simple things in life that can often be the most rewarding but only if we allow ourselves the time to fully experience them.
10. **Commit to your goals.** - Work to become wholeheartedly dedicated to doing something. It is as if magical things happen when we commit ourselves to doing whatever it takes to get somewhere. It is easier to have a flow experience when one is fully committed to doing something. This commitment translates into having no choice but to do that thing. This commitment is counter intuitive but the reality is when one has no option - where you cannot change your mind - makes one happier because they know part of their purpose.
11. **Practice spirituality.** - When humans practice spirituality or religion, we can see that life is bigger than just us. We can more easily give up the self-serving notion that we are the mightiest thing ever. Seeing the bigger picture allows us to connect to a source of all creation and embrace a connectedness with everything that exists.
12. **Take care of your body.** - Taking good care of your body is essential to being the happiest person you can be. If one does not physical energy and in good shape, then our mental energy (your focus), your emotional energy (your feelings), and your spiritual energy (your purpose) will all be negatively affected. Studies conducted with individual who were diagnoses as clinically depressed showed that consistent exercise raises happiness levels just as much as an antidepressant medication. Follow up studies of those subjects showed that six months later, those individuals who exercised were less likely to relapse because they had a higher sense of self-accomplishment and self-worth.

So there you have it, everything you need to know to be and stay happy. Well not really, but these twelve ideas are a solid start to moving your mood to a happier place and when practiced regularly can help to keep you feeling happy and whole.

I want to thank Dr. Lyubomirsky for permission to reproduce these twelve suggestions and encourage our readers to visit her web page and enjoy her book.



The Sullivan Center for Children

*"Understanding
the World Through
a Child's Eyes."*

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