

NOURISHING PRACTICES

To Strengthen Your Peace & Happiness

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Peace & Happiness is a choice. It is a choice that needs to be nourished to expand and deepen. Most people I work with initially feel hopeless and helpless when faced with challenges and obstacles. Unknowingly they are “feeding” a habit pattern of thought and behavior that nourishes worry, anxiety, fear, disappointment and stress in its’ many physical and emotional manifestations.

If you are reading this, I am assuming you have made the choice or are exploring making the choice for greater peace & happiness in your life. The practices listed below can be considered your bag of tricks, your tool box, the nourishment that will “feed” and support you as live your life through an ever deepening and expanding experience of peace & happiness.

1. Consciously Choose Peace & Happiness. This is a choice that has to be made daily and sometimes many times throughout the day. When you wake up; before you go to sleep; when you’re in your car; when you’re walking down the street; when you are faced with a challenging situation. Say: “I choose peace & happiness,” or “I intend to experience peace & happiness,” or “I choose to see the gifts in each and every person I meet & circumstance I am in.”

2. Make a pleasure list. A pleasure list is a list of the people, places and things that give you pleasure when you focus your attention on them. Actually write a list and then when you are knocked off center, feeling frustrated, angry, out of sorts, focus on an item on your pleasure list as a way to expand your experience of peace & happiness so you can consciously move through the situation facing you. Some items on your pleasure list may include: a beach you love, the sound of your child’s laughter, your dog, a dessert you love, a bubble bath...

3. Have a new thought. When you notice that your thinking is taking you down the road of misery and anxiety have a new thought: if you’re stuck in traffic and you are obsessively thinking, ‘I’m going to be late, I’m going to be late, etc...’ change your thinking and have a new thought: ‘I’ll arrive at the most perfect time,’ or ‘This is a good chance for me to practice patience!’ or ‘Isn’t the sky a beautiful blue today.’ Make up a thought that supports you in feeling a greater sense of peace & happiness. Has your worrying actually every made traffic move faster?

4. Breathe. When you notice any signs of stress: raised voice, headache, lower back pain, shoulder pain – as though you are carrying the weight of the world on your shoulders – take a deep breath. Yes, you are breathing anyway, this is consciously taking a deep breath. One way to play with this is to: As you inhale through your nose focus on the word peace and as you exhale through your mouth focus on the word happiness. Do this five times whenever you’re knocked off center and notice the change in you.

5. Be the world’s greatest lover. Start your day by choosing to be the world’s greatest lover and see all the ways you can express your love throughout the day. Some simple ways are: giving a hug, smiling, helping someone with their packages, sending a thank-you note or an I’m thinking of you note to someone in your life. Give a sandwich to a homeless person you see. Pay for the toll of the car behind you. See all the ways you can express your love.

6. Make a gratitude list. Focus your attention on what you are grateful for. Actually write down five things, each day, you are grateful for. Include one item each day that you have never consciously expressed your gratitude for: your toenails, the sheets on your bed, the light in your refrigerator that helps you to see the food inside. Play with this!

7. Wear your favorite outfit. Dress yourself in clothes you love. Notice what you have been saving for a special occasion. Decide that today is a special occasion – it is a day in your life, and wear your favorite outfit.

8. Use virtual reality. When you notice you are off center use the resources of your imagination to see the result you desire accomplished. Don’t focus on the problem or how you are going to accomplish it, focus on it being accomplished. As I drive into town on summer days when my resort town is crowded with people, I use my imagination and see myself getting out of my parked car saying: ‘This is a great parking space and I got it so easily. Yippy.’

9. Meditate. Take some time each day 5 – 20 minutes to sit silently and focus your attention on your in-breath and out-breath. This quiet time give your mind and body time to refresh and re-new. Many people are not used to sitting quietly and it may take time to quiet your mind. That’s fine. When you notice your mind wander, simply bring your attention back to your breath.

10. Acknowledge your accomplishments. Focus your attention on what you have accomplished. Brushing your teeth, making the bed, completing the budget report, buying the groceries. This will give you the opportunity to see yourself through the eyes of accomplishment and expand and deepen your experience of peace & happiness.

Susyn Reeve, M.Ed. is the author of the award winning book, Choose Peace & Happiness. She coaches individuals in experiencing greater peace and happiness and is also a corporate consultant.