

# Spontaneous Happiness

*It is normal, healthy and productive to experience a variable range of moods and emotions, both positive and negative. Instead of trying to achieve constant happiness, cultivate contentment, comfort, serenity, and resilience.*

**Socialize.** Humans are social animals. Join social and activity groups, and find communities with similar interests to yours.

**Breathe.** Practice putting your attention on your breath when you find you are stuck on troubling thoughts, making your breathing deeper, slower, quieter, and more regular.

**Laugh.** Laughter can increase immune response, lower blood sugar level and improve relaxation and sleep. And, laughing is simply one of life's greatest pleasures.

**Exercise.** Exercise can be as simple as doing house and yard work. Gym time and classes are beneficial, but walking outdoors with friends provides physical activity, a connection to nature, and social interaction.

**Sleep.** Mood disorders are strongly linked to abnormal patterns of dreaming, and healthy sleep is vital. Common problems with sleep can often be remedied without the use of medication.

**Meditate.** Meditation can be as simple as sitting still while keeping your attention on your breath. Do it even for ten minutes a day, every day, and you will begin the process of restructuring your mind.

**Visualize.** Practice shifting attention from negative thoughts to mental images that evoke positive feelings. Select an image that makes you happy and focus on it frequently.

**Empathize.** Perform acts of altruism in your daily activities. Kindness, generosity and service are learnable skills that allow you to identify with others on a deep level, lessening isolation and loneliness.

**Forgive.** It calms the mind and spirit and neutralizes resentment. Resentment fuels one of the most toxic forms of depressive rumination. Running thought loops over and over about past hurts is a major driver of depressive states.

**Go green.** Visit natural settings such as parks, beaches or mountain trails as often as you can. Get prudent, daily sunlight exposure, which has been proven to elevate mood.

**Edit.** Info spread via television, computers, and mobile phones is drowning us, and a great deal of it is irrelevant or suspect. Place firm limits on how much of it you let into your life, and take care with your choices of media.

**Mute.** Making an effort to experience silence regularly, even if briefly, supports our physical, mental, and spiritual well-being and brings full conscious awareness to the present moment.

Courtesy of Spontaneous Happiness by Andrew Weil, MD, and [SpontaneousHappiness.com](http://SpontaneousHappiness.com).  
For additional tips on the 4-7-8 Relaxing Breath, healthy sleep, and more, visit [www.azcim.org/resources](http://www.azcim.org/resources).



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This is for information purposes only, and not intended as professional medical advice. If you are experiencing depression, speak with a health professional and get a complete medical check-up to rule out any underlying physical causes. If patients are socially or emotionally impaired or suicidal, an antidepressant and/or therapy is advised.