

45 Tips for a Happier, Simpler and More Productive Life



Life is like art. You have to work hard to keep it simple and still have meaning. – **Charles de Lint**

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Every now and then we need a nudge, a little extra help. Life can be challenging and sometimes it can test our resolve, determination and faith. When Life surprises us with a pop-quiz, it's good to know where we can find some of the answers.

The following 45 tips are by no means a comprehensive list, but rather a cheat-sheet of sorts to keep some of the most basic answers in front of us.

1. **Notice what's right in your life**

Some see the glass as being half-full while others see the glass as half-empty. This expression goes straight to the heart of the power of positive thinking and taking the time to notice what's working – and then doing more of it!

2. **Be grateful**

How many times do you say the words “thank you,” in a day? How many times do you hear these same words? If you are doing the first thing, saying “thank you”, the latter will naturally happen.

3. **Remember the kid you were**

As adults, we sometimes forget how to play, how to relax, or just how to be a kid again. We succumb to expectations we think are imposed on us. This keeps us from feeling the joy and happiness of just cutting loose and playing.

4. **Be kind**

There is no question by merely watching acts of kindness creates a significant elevation in our moods and increases the desire for us to perform good deeds as well. Kindness is indeed contagious and when we make a commitment to be kind to ourselves and to others we can experience new heights of joy, happiness and enthusiasm for our lives.

5. **Spend time with your friends**

Although an abundant social and romantic life does not itself guarantee happiness, it does have a huge impact on our happiness. Learn to make friendships a priority in your life.

6. **Savor every moment**

To be in the moment is to live in the moment. Too often we are thinking ahead or looking ahead to the next event or circumstance in our lives, not appreciating the “here and now.” When we savor every moment, we are savoring the happiness in our lives.

7. **Rest**

Take the time to unwind, decompress, or to put it simply, just “to chill.” Life comes at us hard and fast. Fatigue, stress and exhaustion may begin to settle in on us faster than we may think, or notice. The best remedy for this is rest.

8. **Put on a happy face**

Sometimes we have to fake it until we make it. I’m not suggesting we not be honest, real or authentic, but I’m suggesting, sometimes, we just need to put on a happy face and keep moving forward. Researchers claim that smiling and looking like we are happy will make us happier. Studies further show if we act like we are happy then we can experience greater joy and happiness in our lives.

9. **Move!**

The expression a “runner’s high” does not infer an addiction, but a feeling or a state of mind – a state of euphoria. There is no question exercise, or any physical exertion, elevates your mood and enhances a more positive attitude as well as fosters better personal self-esteem and confidence.

10. **Pursue your goals**

The absence of goals in our lives, or more specifically avoiding pursuing our goals, makes us feel like we are stuck and ineffective. The pursuit of goals in our personal lives, with our relationships, or at work, with our careers, is the difference between a mediocre life or a life full of passion and enthusiasm.

11. **Finding your calling**

Some find meaning in religion or spirituality while others find purpose in their work or relationships. Finding your calling may be much more than accomplishing one simple strategy for increasing your happiness, but having a sense of purpose – of feeling like you are here for a reason – can perhaps bring the greatest happiness of all.

12. **Get into the flow**

Flow is the form of joy, excitement and happiness that occurs when we are so absorbed in an activity we love that we can lose ourselves and time seems to stand still. What creates flow is unique to each one of us.

13. **Play to your strengths**

One way to achieve flow is by understanding and identifying our strengths and core values, and then begin to use these every day. Once we are aware of our strengths and we begin to play to our strengths, we can better incorporate them in all aspects of our lives.

14. **Don’t overdo it**

Know when to say when. What gives you joy and happiness the first time may not work the second time. Too much of a good thing may begin not to feel as good if the “thing” becomes more of a routine, or an expectation. Set healthy and reasonable boundaries for yourself and don’t overdo it.

15. **Forget regret**

Leave your mistakes and regret in the past. They don't define your value, then or now. When you stay in the past you become stuck and unable to move forward. We all have made mistakes with our job choices, friends and relationships. The consequences can hit us pretty hard. However, to begin learning how to put these experiences behind us – by letting them go, we can begin to live in the here and now.

16. **Learn from failure**

Learning from failure and having regret are two separate things. Regret is an emotion; a feeling of disappointment along with a modest amount of shame or guilt. But to look back at a circumstance and figure out what went wrong gives you some very important information.

17. **Ask for help**

You are not alone. It may feel that way sometimes, but there are many people who would extend their hand and lift you up if asked. All you have to do is ask. Often times we are afraid to ask because we don't believe we are worthy to receive the help. Think about this: we are surrounded by millions and millions of people by design – for a purpose.

18. **Believe you are worthy**

Whatever your goal, your dream, or your desire, you are worthy of achieving it. The closer you get to it is when the enemy of your soul will begin putting doubt in your mind. Replace doubt with the truth – you are worthy to have your heart's true desire.

19. **Take 100% responsibility**

Except in rare and unfortunate circumstances, you are responsible for the quality and condition of your life. Your career, your relationships and your happiness are all under your direct control. Avoid finger-pointing and embrace the control you have in your life.

20. **Know what you want**

Understanding what and where you want to go in life will provide you with a vision and an insatiable spirit for the journey. Here's a simple way to figure out what you want: Take a sheet a paper and write down all of the things you want in life. The one that jumps off the page and causes you to cry is what you want most. Honor this one and nurture it. And if you allow, it will take you to where you go.

21. **Trust**

There are no accidents without value. When you get hit hard and land on your back, look for the reasons and for the value in this. Open your heart and trust this happened for a reason.

22. **Keep the faith**

At the end of the day when you are weary from all of the effort and energy you have expended and you are sore and tired from being hit hard so many times, but the dream is not realized, the one thing that tells you to keep going; to get up tomorrow and to keep moving forward, is your faith.

23. **Get in touch with your life**

Get in touch with the areas in your life you would like to change and have more success. Don't try to boil the ocean

in a short period of time. Rather, consider three “quick wins” in the next several months that will help you with creating new habits and will build the foundation to support longer term success.

24. Make a list

Write down the three things you want to do differently in the next few months, things you are not doing now, but would like to begin to do that will give you a greater sense of success, accomplishment and purpose in your life.

25. Perform new actions

Performing new actions will lead to creating new habits. Be aware of the habits you want to learn to change. Also be aware that the bad habits may interfere with your progress. Acknowledge these bad habits and don't give them the power to keep you from moving forward.

26. Share

There seems to be a higher sense of accountability when things are shared. Tell your partner or best friend what you want accomplish and by when. Sharing also gives you a safer venue to discuss your fears and concerns.

27. Communicate in your marriage or relationship

Good marriages and relationships depend on expressing your thoughts and emotions to each other, of speaking and being heard. If not, everything else will live on shaky ground. In order to have a successful relationship you have to make yourself an expert in communicating with your partner.

28. Learn to resolve conflicts in your marriage or relationship

If your partner simply wants something different from you or does something differently from you, it doesn't mean that your partner is wrong – it just means your spouse has different preferences, life experiences and point of view. Celebrate these differences. Chances are very good it is these very differences that made you fall in love with this person in the first place.

29. Maintain a commitment to your marriage or relationship

This can be especially difficult today with all of the distractions of our daily lives, but it's important that you put your relationship first. If you're committed to making it a success, and you know that your partner shares your commitment, there's nothing the two of you can't accomplish.

30. Get healthy

We spend hundreds and thousands of dollars a year on things that make us sick and lead to all sorts of other costs. So kick that smoking habit, go out drinking two nights a week instead of four, or ride your bike to work.

31. Smarter Saving and Spending: Buy Homegrown

Local craftsmen, farmers, and retailers offer unique items at prices that don't include shipping and handling charges, which have increased exponentially of late due to the sky-rocketing cost of fuel.

32. Smarter Saving and Spending: Buy Used

Used clothes can be passed off as vintage, so why the stigma on other previously owned items? Most used items are perfectly functional and many have developed an endearing and priceless layer of character.

33. Smarter Saving and Spending: Don't Buy Extended Warranties

If you're buying that new laptop or plasma television, use your major credit card and it will likely lengthen the warranty just as far as the plan that will cost you hundreds of extra dollars at.

34. Stop doing what's not working in your life

Comfort can be your biggest obstacle to growth and happiness. Take an honest look at your own life. Are you doing things you know don't work; but you keep doing them nonetheless because either you are too scared to try something new or you don't know any other way?

35. Try on things you've never done before to see if they work

In order to find the success and happiness you are looking for in life, you must be willing to take risks. Perhaps the most challenging oxymoron in life is in order to build self-confidence, you must first take risks.

36. Exercise to help you discover your source of strength

Exercise is indeed a good venue to discover your source of strength and character. It builds confidence and instills a spirit that better connects your mind to your body. It helps you appreciate the value of goal setting and ultimately goal attainment. It creates better life balance. Simply put, exercise helps you feel better about yourself.

37. Listen to your body

There is a direct connection between our physical and mental health. When we are fatigued our thinking is not as sharp and our confidence wanes. But when we are rested and full of energy, our actions are more deliberate and our results are more significant. Listen to your body – it will tell you what you need.

38. Slow down and do nothing

Take about 15 minutes each day and grab a cup of coffee or tea and give yourself time to think about whatever it is you want to think about. You will be surprised at the inspiration that will come to you.

39. Complete one item of your "to do" list each day

Return the overdue telephone call, clean-up your email inbox, or get an oil change for your car. By accomplishing just one thing that has been gnawing at you, will give you a much-needed sense of relief and accomplishment.

40. Perform one act of random kindness daily

Hold the elevator door open for someone who is a few steps behind you or lift the bag and place it in the overhead bin on the airplane for someone who can't manage this task. Kindness breeds more kindness. The concept of "paying it forward" is real and effective.

41. Review your goals

If you have not put your goals in writing, do this today. There is a direct and proven correlation between people who have written, stated goals and their level of accomplishment compared to people who do not.

42. Listen, really listen, when someone is speaking to you

Listen without judgments or criticism. Try to avoid any self-referencing and be fully present for whoever needs it.

43. Say "I Love You..."

Tell the people who you truly love and cherish this every day. Do so with heart-felt sincerity. Love them as if this were their, and your, last day on earth. Don't wait; tell them today because there is no day but today.

44. **Practice forgiveness**

The purpose of giving forgiveness is not to let the other person off the hook, but to free you of the baggage associated with the event. When you refuse to forgive, you remain stuck in that place. With forgiveness you can begin the process of moving forward with your life.

45. **Give yourself grace and mercy**

We all make mistakes – always have and always will. Perhaps no one is harder on you, than you. Give yourself grace for your sins and mistakes. These don't define your value or purpose in life. Focus on what you can today, right now, to begin feeling more comfortable in your own skin. You are worthy to receive the good fortunes of life and you are more than enough.