

## Happiness-Enhancing Strategies

With permission from Sonja Lyubomirsky's

**"The How of Happiness: A Scientific Approach to Getting the Life You Want. New York: Penguin Press**

[www.thehowofhappiness.com](http://www.thehowofhappiness.com)

- (1) Counting your blessings: Expressing gratitude for what you have (either privately, through contemplation or journaling, or to a close other) or conveying your appreciation to one or more individuals whom you've never properly thanked.
- (2) Cultivating optimism: Keeping a journal in which you imagine and write about the best possible future for yourself, or practicing to look at the bright side of every situation.
- (3) Avoiding over thinking and social comparison: Using strategies (such as distraction) to cut down on how often you dwell on your problems and compare yourself to others.
- (4) Practicing acts of kindness: Doing good things for others, whether friends or strangers, either directly or anonymously, either spontaneously or planned.
- (5) Nurturing relationships: Picking a relationship in need of strengthening, and investing time and energy in healing, cultivating, affirming, and enjoying it.
- (6) Doing more activities that truly engage you: Increasing the number of experiences at home and work in which you "lose" yourself, which are challenging and absorbing.
- (7) Replaying and savoring life's joys: Paying close attention, taking delight, and going over life's momentary pleasures and wonders – through thinking, writing, drawing, or sharing with another.
- (8) Committing to your goals: Picking one, two, or three significant goals that are meaningful to you and devoting time and effort to pursuing them.
- (9) Developing strategies for coping: Practicing ways to endure or surmount a recent stress, hardship, or trauma.
- (10) Learning to forgive: Keeping a journal or writing a letter in which you work on letting go of anger and resentment towards one or more individuals who have hurt or wronged you.
- (11) Practicing religion and spirituality: Becoming more involved in your church, temple, or mosque, or reading and pondering spiritually-themed books.
- (12) Taking care of your body: Engaging in physical activity, meditating, and smiling and laughing.

