

Before reading this entire worksheet, take a moment to complete the first section called “Your Challenge.”

YOUR CHALLENGE

Think about a time when you did something for yourself. This could be buying something for yourself, like a new video game or pair of shoes, or taking yourself out for your favorite meal. It could be an activity like going to the movies, getting a massage, or playing a game/sport. Think about this experience and how this made you feel in the moment, after a week, after a month, and then after six months.

Activity	Initial Feelings	After a Week	After a Month	After Six Months

Did the emotions from the experience remain the same or fade over time? Researchers suggest these positive emotions generally fade over time. Continue reading to learn how to increase happiness.

FINDING HAPPINESS

A particular field in psychology has studied how people move beyond feeling average to a more extraordinary sense of satisfaction and accomplishment. What they found was money, material goods, and fun experiences create an initial burst of happiness, but that happiness isn’t lasting. Certainly, having enough money to pay the bills and even work in some fun activities is important for happiness. However, once those basic needs are met, more money does not translate to more happiness or life satisfaction.

Positive psychology posits that people who are happy are often those who express gratitude to others in their lives. This could be someone who helped you through a difficult time, a teacher who made an impact in your life, or even someone who you just met, like a barista at a coffee house. These expressions of thanks and gratitude have been shown to improve our overall satisfaction and happiness in life.

Another way to increase happiness is through the performance of good deeds. Research shows seeing other people perform good deeds or altruistic actions toward others leads to an emotion called ‘elevation.’ This elevation, in turn, encourages people to perform their own good deeds and experience their own positive effects from these altruistic acts.

THE NEXT STEP

Consider a time when you did something for someone else, like writing a letter of thanks to someone who made a difference in your life or making dinner for your mom, dad, or other family members. The task should be something that wasn’t expected of you and something you did because you wanted to do something kind for someone else. As above, rate how this experience made you feel at first, after a week, after a month, and then after six months.

Activity	Initial Feelings	After a Week	After a Month	After Six Months

Most share that this experience of giving back to others and expressing gratitude often generates a longer lasting positive impact in their lives. What was your experience with this?