

5 Cool Ideas for Being Happier

By Michael Angelo Caruso

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In trying times, you may notice our national mood shift from compassion and patriotism to anger and resentment. We need to focus on being happy, in spite of our challenges. Here are **5 Cool Ideas** for being happier.

1. Accept yourself.

My friend, Dr. Steve Fabick, is a psychologist. He says that being self-conscious can spoil almost any occasion. A man, for example, may not enjoy a fast dance with a woman because he can’t stop thinking about how he looks. Many women are unable to relax if they are underdressed (or overdressed) for a dinner party. The key to accepting yourself is finding a way to be comfortable in any given situation without being held hostage by the need for improvement.

2. Make each day a “perfect” day.

List the things that make you happy. Be sure to include work stuff and not just fun stuff. Your ultimate goal is to make sure that the activities on your list show up in your day-to-day routines. When you can routinize these types of activities, every day will be a perfect day.

3. Do something for others.

Grievance counselors say that helping others is a terrific way to be happier. Create a tandem act of kindness when you distract yourself from problems by helping someone else. Years ago, I made a long-term commitment to Optimist International, Big Brothers/Big Sisters and Rotary International, organizations that help people help people.

4. Try using the “reversal.”

Wrestling fans know about a move called the reversal. It’s what happens when the victim on the bottom becomes the victor on the top. When you catch yourself being the victim ask the question, “How long am I willing to be unhappy?” The truth is that you alone determine your happiness and the answer to the above question will help you be proactive about being happier.

5. Remember that happiness is a process, not a place.

I once facilitated a meeting for a company whose leadership preached the famous business model “management by objective” or MBO. As I spent time with the employees, it became clear that the rank-and-file were disenchanted with the MBO process. One employee actually told me, “This management by objective thing must not be working. This is the fifth year that we’re doing it!” Well, management by objective is a process, not a place. Similarly, happiness is a process, not a place.

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