

Increase Happiness

Carl Mays, a good friend and motivational speaker from Gatlinburg, Tennessee, who has addressed a number of Life Care functions, often talks about a happiness quotient. Most people, he says, are familiar with the term IQ (Intelligence Quotient), but may not be aware of the HQ (Happiness Quotient). "Studies show that just as we are born with certain IQ ranges we are also born with certain HQ ranges," he explains. "As a result, about 50 percent of the happiness we experience is based upon genetics, while about 50 percent can be modified to some degree by our environments and habits." Carl lists some things we can concentrate upon to increase happiness:

- Appreciate what you have rather than complain about what you don't have. Don't compare your situation to others' situations. It has been proven that people who appreciate what they have are twice as likely to be happy as those who have more but don't really appreciate it.
- Live in the present rather than always focusing on tomorrow. It is important to have goals and plan for the future, yet don't sacrifice the simple but exquisite day-to-day experiences and feelings that comprise your life.
- Establish strong family relationships. Develop solid friendships. Enjoy and appreciate your co-workers on the job and in the community. Research reveals that one of the core factors of happiness is a bond we have with other people.
- Find a soul mate with whom you can share your joys and sorrows. Facing challenges and problems alone can lead to unhappiness and depression. Your soul mate will support you rather than attack you and blame you when times are rough. Your soul mate will enhance the good times.
- Spend your time on outcomes rather than on blaming yourself or others for bad situations. Plan and work on ways out of the situation rather than criticizing negatively, holding grudges, showing aggression or pouting over something that can be changed for the better if you put your thoughts and energy toward it.
- Praise God for the good things in your life and call upon Him for support and guidance when challenges and difficulties come along. Regardless of the situation, try to make your relationship and closeness to God as consistent as possible.
- When you start thinking of negative situations, focus on positive experiences and memories. Research reveals that over 75 percent of happy people, even those with traumatic backgrounds, do this in order to sustain happiness.
- Listen to music and turn off the TV. Interestingly, studies tell us that watching TV reduces life satisfaction by up to 50 percent, while listening to your favorite music can increase life satisfaction by up to 90 percent.

--Beecher Hunter