

HOW TO BE HAPPY

10 PRINCIPLES OF HAPPINESS

THE FOUNDATION
OF YOUR HAPPIEST LIFE

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Taken from her
NZ Herald column
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Hi! Louise is my name and wellbeing is my game! I'm Louise Thompson, Life Coach, Author and Wellbeing Columnist for the **New Zealand Herald**, and I'm thrilled you have my free e-book in your hands. It's a collection of one of my most popular series of columns of all time –

I hope you really enjoy having the whole series available to read in one beautiful book. It's going to give you real food for thought around enhancing your wellbeing and living life with increased sense of purpose and clarity – starting today!

I love to work with smart, busy women (and some very smart and forward thinking men!) and rewrite patterns of thought and action that sabotage their success or happiness – this e-book will help you make some decisive changes and perspective shifts on what's been holding you back or kept you stuck. I have a number of ways you can work with me to take your life to the next level – they are detailed at the end of the book so you can continue moving forwards and upwards to your most fulfilled future. Do come chat on Facebook and let me know which of these tips makes the biggest impact on you and in your life.

You will also get my free weekly inspirational newsletter ~ **Wellbeing Wednesday** ~ into your inbox each week with insanely practical tips to live happy on purpose – please enjoy with my compliments. This book has been made with much love and thought, I do hope you enjoy!

#shinebright

Louise

PS – If you have a friend who would benefit from the happiness lessons here please do forward this to them and share the love!



1. HONOUR YOUR OWN HEALTH AND ENERGY LEVELS AS IF YOUR LIFE DEPENDS ON IT



“The body is the moving temple of the soul.”

Hands up who has a New Year's resolution to exercise more, weigh less and reduce stress? Join the gym. Join yoga. Actually GO to the gym. Actually GO to yoga. Hands up who has had this on their New Year's resolution list for many years in a row? I know, start with good intentions in January and then by mid-February run out of steam with just occasional visits and by March, well, the gym membership is just a thing you see on your monthly bank statement.

We have all been there. We **intend** to prioritise our wellbeing. Our health. Our energy levels. Our body. We are full of good intentions. But then, somehow, well, we don't. Life just sort of gets in the way. We just get “too busy” and good intentions slide.

Okay so here's the thing, and I can say all this woowoo stuff with confidence because I am also a yoga teacher: The Body is a Moving Temple of the Soul.

That makes it pretttttttty important. Now I know getting the marketing report to the CEO by COB is also important, as is making an elaborate birthday cake for the birthday party, but, is it more important than the Temple of your Soul?

I learnt this one the hard way: I put everything before the needs of my body. My work, my bosses' work, making sure the house was tidy, making sure all my staff were happy and productive, keeping on top of all my email, going out and socialising even when I was dog-tired because I didn't want to let anyone down, and so on. Stuff just kept cropping up and the yoga class would get dropped “just for this week”. The pre-body to do list was mighty long. Down there somewhere at item 342 was “exercise” right after items 341 and 340 “look after self” and “rest”. The upshot of this madness was that I eventually ended up with severe adrenal fatigue and was bedridden for a number of months and sick for well over a year.

While I was bedridden I had a lot of time to ponder the error of my ways. In my “too busyness” I had clearly neglected my Moving Temple of the Soul and it was letting me know in the clearest possible terms.

I realised looking after my body needed to be Number One on my to do list, because without it I had nothing. I can see quite clearly that all the millions of tiny choices I had made the years before to prioritise everything else before, my body, had led me to that place of fatigue. The great irony being of course that now I couldn't do anything for anyone, including myself. I had nothing to give because I had neglected to give to myself first.

This was a big error. And the bottom line is that EVERYTHING else can wait. It's the classic scenario of putting on your own oxygen mask before you help your children: if you don't take care of you first then you may not be in any condition to later take care of the people and things you care about.

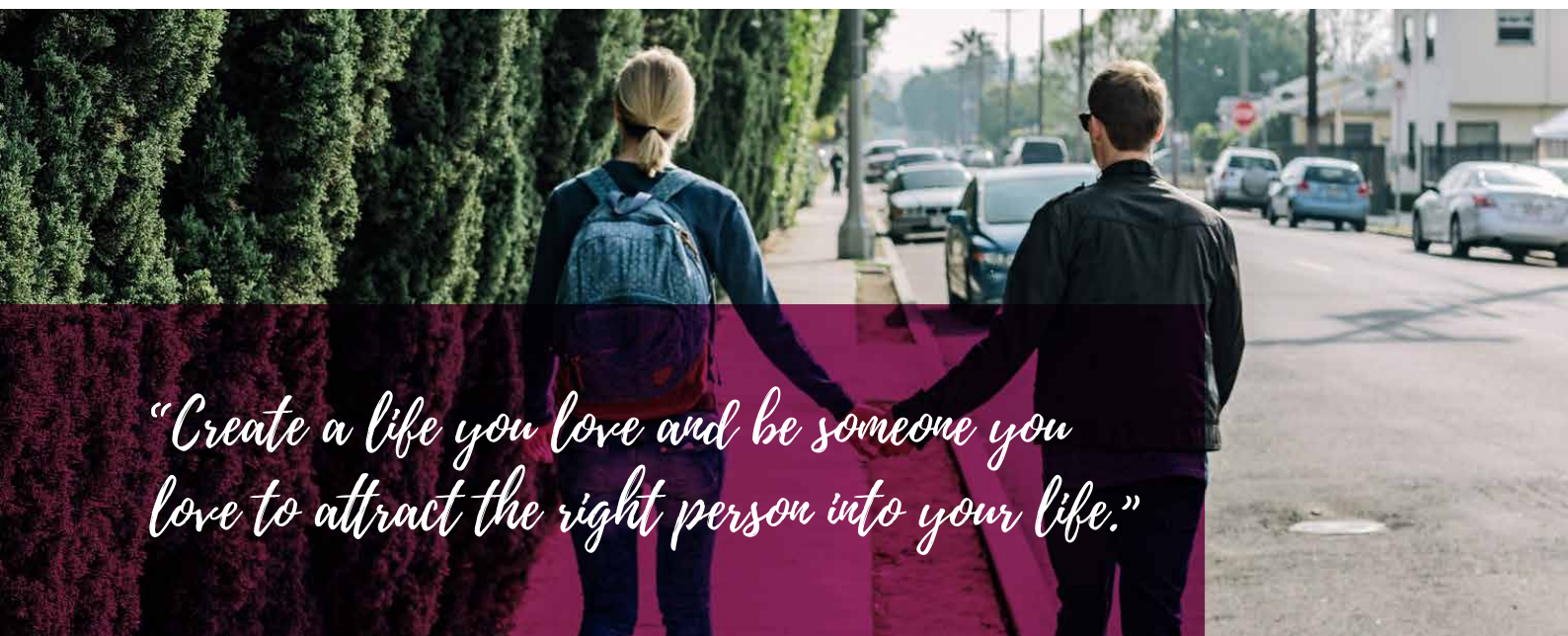
Learning that President Barack Obama exercises every day (45 minutes minimum) was a real penny dropping moment for me. How on earth could I think I was too busy to look after my body and find time to exercise? Sure I had a demanding senior level executive job and my own business to run but was I actually saying I was busier than the Leader of the Western World? Kind of embarrassing right?! So right there you have it: the next time you think you are too busy to commit to that weekly spin class, go for that swim or play ball with the kids, ask yourself: Am I busier than Barack Obama? If you are not then, let's face it, you have the time to go to class or the game. You owe it to yourself, your family and to your Moving Temple of the Soul.

Action Step

Are you busier than Barack Obama? Yes/No?

Okay then, get your trainers on and make it happen in 2016.
Make your wellbeing the priority it should be.

2. HOW TO KNOW IF HE/SHE IS THE ONE



“Create a life you love and be someone you love to attract the right person into your life.”

Bam. Right there. It's a biggie and it needs more explanation. It's not essential for happiness but it surely helps a great deal. It can be a lifelong quest . . . finding The One. How do you DO that? How do you KNOW? Does he/she even exist?

Personally, I wrestled with this for almost the entirety of my teenage and adult life like it was this giant rubix cube where I just couldn't get the rows to line up no matter how hard I tried! It seemed a big, complex and incomprehensible riddle, which some people seemed to solve with irritating simplicity and ease. I believe Bridget Jones called them the “Smug Marrieds”. Grrrr. “Oh,” they would trill, “you just know when you know!” Is there anything more unhelpful and irritating for someone searching for clarity on the issue of The One? I think not.

The thing is that damn rubix cube is nowhere near as hard to solve as many make it. It's just a case of having the formula. Once you know the shortcut to get the top line colour on six sides of the cube, and then make a cross on one side, you can solve it. Some of us know this intuitively, some of us blunder around from maybe to maybe, frog to frog, in trial and error for a long time. These are the shortcuts to look for:

1. Either you are a fit or you are not. You shouldn't be wanting the other person to change into someone they are not (“He'll be perfect when he..”) or vice versa, they want you to change into someone you are not to suit (“She'll be happy when..”) If you are not a fit, that's okay. Don't try and make it a fit when it isn't. Or it looks like it should be a fit but it isn't. If it isn't a fit, it just isn't a fit. That's OKAY! Say goodbye with compassion - sooner rather than later.

2. You will inspire each other to be the best version of yourself you can be. Not the version you are trying to change someone into to suit you. The first is love and growth. The second is manipulation. Learn to tell the difference.

3. Love is not hard. It's easy. Life might be hard, circumstances might be hard, dealing with other people's opinions might be hard, but the relationship itself? If it's right, then it's easy most of the time.

4. Create a life you love and be someone you love to attract the right person into your life. Don't rely on the right person to love you and therefore create a life you love. Do it for yourself first. Get it the right way round.

5. Your body will tell you if they are The One or not. Yes yes, obviously in “that” way, but also in terms of the day-to-day: are you relaxed wearing your PJ's with no makeup? Are you tense or relaxed as you potter round the supermarket together? When you are out with friends? Your body is a super-wise guide that will tell you if it's right. Learn to listen.

6. Once you have found it, consistently choose in favour of your relationship. Treat it like the rare and precious thing it is. Time, energy and attention to be sprinkled liberally and frequently.

Of course, you will also “know when you know”, but having a few other things to look out for is most helpful. Wishing you much love and luck this week.

3. MAKE AND OWN YOUR CHOICES

“It really doesn't matter what “everybody” thinks, in fact, what's important is what YOU think.”



I hear a lot of this sort of thing:

- “I’d love to quit being a graphic designer and work with animals, but I’m 42 now, everybody would think that was ridiculous.”
- “If I marry/divorce him then everyone will think I am crazy and it’s a big mistake.”
- “I actually find a lot of aspects of childcare really boring but everyone will think I am a bad mum if I don’t cook from scratch every night.”
- “I’d love to sell the bach and be mortgage-free but everybody says it’s a bad time to sell.”
- “Nobody thinks I am smart enough to run my own business.”
- “I can’t leave this job; people will think I just can’t cut it.”

Notice how the individual’s power has been given away to the collective “everybody”.

“Everybody” is overruling the individual’s natural inclination to make the choice he or she feels called to make, leaving them fearful of making a decision because of what “everybody” might think.

It may seem obvious when you see it written down here in black and white. “Duh! Who would be stupid enough to be influenced by that?” but I can assure you it is easy to end up doing what “everybody” expects or thinks is a sensible choice. I guarantee, on some level, it’s a factor in your life too. Inside it’s eating us up but we stay in a situation because it’s what “everyone” wants.

Listen Up! Some truth coming your way:

- “Everybody” may have our best interests at heart but that does not mean they are right.
- “Everybody” can have a vested interest or hidden agenda on you making a particular choice. Yes really.
- “Everybody” can be completely totally and utterly wrong about what is the right choice for you.
- Getting the approval of “everybody” is technically impossible. When you think about it it’s actually ridiculous.
- Pleasing “everybody” is not, in fact, your job.

If you have a decision to make ask a few key people. Ask their opinions. Understand that they have their opinion, they are entitled to it, and you can agree with it.

Or not. All it is, is an opinion, and your opinion is just as valid. Especially when it comes to the choices you make for your life!

Take it on board, but then listen to yourself. Disregard the opinion of the nameless, faceless “everybody”. Do not let it take your power. It really doesn’t matter what “everybody” thinks, in fact, what’s important is what YOU think about the choices you make in your life.

Create a life full of choices that honour your truth.

Action step

What area of life are you trapped by the need to gain the approval of “everybody”?
Make a choice in favour of YOU in 2016. Honour your own truth and make a wise choice based on your true needs and desires.

4. THE THING ABOUT LIFE IS IT'S NOT ABOUT THINGS

"Making intentional decisions will allow you to create a treasure trove of memories."

"The thing about life is it's not about things." We all know this of course. That's the thing about these 10 Happiness Principles. Because they are all truths we can intuitively feel they are right on some deep level. But again we can get so caught up in the busyness of life that we can just get swept away in a tsunami of doing and buying.

Over the Christmas break I was sorting out hundreds of photos from 2002 to 2003 when I had a grown-up OE and traveled the world for a year. I am getting the pix digitised for easier storage and the fact that I may actually look at them if they are on my Mac and not in a dusty box in the garage. It was so hard to choose the best 400. Why? Because I DID so many things that year... here's me riding an elephant through a river; here I am on a jewelry design course; oh, here I am teaching yoga to some local kids on the beach.

And that's all in the same day! So many memorable experiences crammed into each day because that was the point of the trip.

And real life? Well real life is a trip too, if we deliberately make it one. This year I have resolved to do more things where I would take photos. Taking a photo means there is something new or connected or special or fun happening, even if it's just cooking a new recipe for dinner. "Can I take a photo of this?" is a good reminder and an easy way to build a treasure chest of shared experiences, joy and learning. It's a good way to open your brain to think about how you can put more fun into everyday life, introduce something novel or different. It was interesting to me as I reflected that **this was the year in my life that I owned the least amount of stuff**. All I had was what was in the rucksack on my back - 16kg of essentials and that was it. Because I couldn't carry any more, all the things I focused on were not physical things to buy, they were things to do, learn and be.

They were feelings, sensations, sights, knowledge, laughter and connection.

Below are some questions for you to work through that will help you to live more deliberately in 2016, take more

pictures and build a treasure chest of memories in a year to remember. The more of this we have the less stuff we need.

Three things I enjoyed doing as a child:
(Great inspiration for things for the following categories)

Things I want to learn this year:
(Water skiing? Crochet? Italian?)

Things I want to be:
(eg. I want to be a marathon runner, or I want to be a calm person who meditates)

Three words I want to characterise 2016:
(eg. Mine are Adventure, Abundance and Authenticity. Pick three. Matchy, matchy first letters are optional)

Things I want to do:
(Have more sex, make new friends, get a new job?)

Places I want to go:
(One of NZ's Great Walks, every beach in Auckland, the Rio Carnival?)

Things I want to share:
(What are your unique gifts and aptitudes? How can you use these to help or train others? How can you share and bring joy to others?)

My most important people to spend time with in 2016:
(Good to know so there is no taking for granted!)

Something big I have never done before that I am going to be brave and try in 2016:
(Go on, challenge yourself. 2016 is the year I finally...)

Choosing to make 2016 about living deliberately is a great intention. Making intentional decisions will allow you to create a treasure trove of memories and experiences you and your loved ones will look back on forever.

Go weave the fabric of a year rich in experience.

5. GET OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE REGULARLY



“You are braver, better, smarter, more creative, than you give yourself credit for.”

I love this one. I come up against it with many of my fabulous coaching clients. Clients come because they want change in one or many areas of their life. However, in order for life to FEEL different we need to learn to THINK different and we actually have to DO different. And that's when a fear of getting outside the comfort zone can start to kick in.

Here's the thing. If you want to leave your crappy marriage, your soul-sucking job, your disconnected bunch of friends, take that scary looking promotion or whatever, then at some point You Need To Be Brave. Yes, you need to make wise preparations and all those good sensible things, but, you can only plan and organise so much. At some point you need to be brave and take a step out of your comfort zone.

It's like learning to swim. Sure, you can watch DVD's on how to swim, you can read a book on technique, you can go see how it's done at the pool or the beach, but at some point if you want the new feel-good sensation of being able to swim you just gotta get wet.

Many people often make a very misleading assumption. That if something is the right thing to do when they come to do it there will be no fear. Not always true my friend, I am sorry to tell you. And it's this waiting for the moment of No Fear to come that kills thousands of splendid plans and life-enhancing moves forward.

What's important is to separate “this is right for me”/“this is wrong for me” as a decision from the sensation “this feels scary”/“this feels comfortable”. We can often get them confused in our minds and think they are the same question. They are not. Answer the first question first.

Is this right for me or wrong for me? Take the emotional sensation out of the equation just for a moment. Assess whether it's the right choice for you in your life to set up

your own business or break up with your partner or join the Territorial Army or whatever. You will feel a “rightness” or a lightness in your body and the way you hold yourself.

Wrongness will feel restricting, tense, heavy. Rightness will feel like relief, or excitement. Attend to this feeling first.

Once you know if this is a decision that is right or wrong then you can figure out the fear thing. Remember that right decisions will not necessarily come without fear and that fear does not make them wrong. As a handy equation to remember it looks like this:

Sensation of “wrongness”, heaviness, tightness + fear = don't do it.

Sensation of “rightness”, relief, lightness + fear = put a wise plan in place and jump.

It's like shoes (I am a statement shoe fiend so you can never have too many shoe metaphors in my opinion). We all have a crappy old pair of shoes that we know we should really just put in the bin, but, oh my they are moulded to the shape of our foot, they are just so damn comfy. That comfort factor makes them hard to let go of. But, sometimes it's just time to upgrade. Buy some new pretty shoes and wear them in. Look at them and feel that “I got new shoes” feeling. It's just time. You have to let go of the old comfortable feeling to have the new and the shiny.

So, that big promotion that scares you but feels exciting and right? Put a plan in place, get a support crew, do some research or reading on what you can do to increase your comfort level but don't wait for “no fear”. Get out of your comfort zone. The best discoveries in life are usually found out there. You are braver, better, smarter, more creative, than you give yourself credit for.

6. PROGRESS NOT PERFECTION



“Trying to reach the mirage of Perfect and Good Enough is an exhausting and guaranteed fruitless mission.”

Newsflash! You are not, repeat, NOT, perfect! I know darling, crushing isn't it? The good news is, neither is anyone else. However true you may know that to be intellectually I bet that at certain times through the day/night/week there is a little voice quietly whispering in your ear that you are in some way falling short, not doing enough, being enough, good enough.

There is no belief as limiting, ubiquitous or insidious, as “I'm not good enough”. If I had a dollar for every time I heard that come out of a client's mouth I would be writing this from my private yacht somewhere in the Bahamas. It's pretty much single handedly responsible for stopping most people from living their happiest, most fulfilled and connected right life.

“I'd love to be a personal trainer/property developer/actress but I'm not good enough to make money from it.”

“I get bored sometimes looking after all the children, it's not what a good mother would do, I'm not good enough for them, they deserve more.”

“I'm excited about this promotion/project/job - but what if I can't do it? What if they find out I'm not good enough?”

So, let me say right here Good Enough is a myth. It's a mirage. An oasis in the desert, tantalisingly glimmering before us in perpetuity. If only we could actually reach it.

We never reach it! It's not real. IT DOESN'T EXIST! Trying to reach the mirage of Perfect and Good Enough is an exhausting and guaranteed fruitless mission that can dominate a lifetime.

Write the names here of 10 people you think are perfect..... tricky right? What about this: define what you would need to do/have/be in order to be Good Enough. I can guarantee it's an impossible benchmark with ever moving goal posts.

Here's the thing: we are all works in progress. Happy, contented, energetic people with a lust for life know this. Relaxing the grip on perfection and Good Enough allow us to risk more, try more, play more, rest more, laugh more. Happy people drop the struggle and accept themselves as fabulous imperfect beings who are absolutely good enough. Imperfect rocks. Imperfect is reality. Imperfect is what makes us special and unique.

99% of us believe we are “not good enough” on some level. The truth is that 100% of us are absolutely good enough. There is no such thing as perfect; there is only progress. Dare yourself to release the quest for perfection and embrace the relaxed reality of being a work in progress.

So gorgeous, let me whisper this truth in your ear: You do enough. You have enough. You are enough.

7. PLAY TO YOUR STRENGTHS



“You are a fabulous human being.”

A common trait that all happy, energetic people have in common is that they know their strengths and they play to them. They are also honest about their weaknesses and they delegate, hire or just plain cut out of life the stuff they are not so good at.

One of the questions on my client intake forms is “What are you ridiculously good at?” It fascinates me that this is the only question that often comes back a “sorry but I can’t think of anything” response. “What is your greatest fear?” or “What are areas where you need improvement” on the other hand will have a whole long list! So many people struggle with being able to objectively see their strengths but have no problem listing a whole heap of perceived weaknesses. It’s a shame because when we tap into our superpowers we truly live our best life.

Here’s the thing. We all have natural aptitudes, skills and abilities: superpowers if you like. We also have other things we are less good at. Life is easier, more energetic, more fun and usually a lot more lucrative if we are firmly playing to our strengths. It’s our job to identify our own strengths and play to them. In my opinion life is way too short to be working on our weaknesses; when you play a life according to your strengths and delegate your weaknesses they become less and less important anyway.

The reason many people find it so hard to identify their strengths is because when we find something easy and effortless we assume everyone else does too. We assume that everyone finds it that easy to navigate, or fix that PC, to put people instantly at ease, or organise with such ruthless efficiency. Because it comes so naturally we tend to underestimate how special that skill is. We routinely underestimate our own abilities and overestimate other people’s.

Here are a few questions to get you started on identifying your strengths. If you find this exercise hard I want you to persist until you have at least three things in each category.

You can list as many as you like but no less than three. Feel free to ask those closest to you for inspiration; they will often have a much truer picture of your strengths and superpowers than you do.

What are you brilliant at?

- a) Physically?
- b) Intellectually?
- c) Social/Relationships?
- d) Business /Financial?

What else is fabulous about you?

What is your greatest accomplishment?

What are your greatest strengths?

What is your superpower?

A final note here on modesty. Modesty and humility are fantastic qualities. Doing yourself down and playing small in this world are not. False modesty is such a waste of time. If you are good at something, state it. Own it. Big it up. If you are a kick-ass guitar player then own it. If you are a super-organised declutterer, say so! Happy people don’t apologise for who and what they are, they maximise it. They know their own strengths, in a very deep way, and love and accept them and play to them unapologetically.

You are a fabulous human being with amazing and unique skills, qualities and characteristics that make you uniquely you. What are they? Go celebrate them today.

8. HAPPINESS IS AN INSIDE JOB



“No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.”

When we give our power away to someone else to “make us” feel a certain way it leaves us powerless. It works the other way too, if others have the power to “make us” feel angry, upset or guilty, then we also give them the power and the expectation that they should be the source of our happiness. That they should “make us happy”.

Well, here is the truth y'all. Expecting someone else to make you happy will not make you happy. IT'S NOT THEIR JOB TO MAKE YOU HAPPY. IT'S YOUR JOB TO MAKE YOU HAPPY.

Taking responsibility for your own happiness and emotional reality means stepping up to see that no one can “make you” feel a certain emotion without you buying into that process. You choose what thoughts you put in your head and you therefore control how you feel. You can choose to come from a place of happiness and empowerment, or not.

It sounds so easy, but it requires a big shift in thinking. It's about making a deep transition - to look for happiness to come from connection within ourselves, rather than looking for someone else to provide it with the way they behave towards us.

We have a choice about how we think about what they say, how we respond, whether we choose to change or stay in the situation.

When we put the whole weight of our happiness on to another person to deliver it's very heavy indeed and can

suffocate happiness. If happiness comes from within (that's where we feel it, after all) then our attempts to find it outside ourselves are always going to be thwarted.

Happy people choose to be happy. This does not mean they have no problems. It means they are connected to their own source of empowered thoughts within, and consequently are more resilient to the inevitable ups and downs of life. They do not get as easily thrown off-course by events or emotional drama or other people's behaviour. They may be handling a difficult situation but they are not being consumed by it. They take responsibility for their own happiness rather than delegating it to someone else.

What would make you happier? Speaking up? Voicing your needs? Leaving? Staying? What can you affect? What would move you towards feeling contentment or resolution? You can choose to feel angry and deal with it. You can choose to feel sad and walk away. Even by changing the language you use you take back some of your power.

Believing that your happiness is at the mercy of other people's behaviour is a hard way to live. One of my favourite quotes of all time, from Eleanor Roosevelt, is: **“No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.”**

To paraphrase the great Mrs Roosevelt, know that **no-one can make you feel unhappy or guilty without your consent.** Your happiness comes from you. It lives within you. Happiness is an inside job.

Action step

Increase your empowerment in owning your own happiness. Take one small step forward today in favour of what makes you happy. Voice a need. Change something that's broken. Buy that item. Ask for help. Stop doing the thing that drives you mad. Say no to something. Say yes to something else. Start small and build up your empowerment muscles.

Remember: it's your job, not someone else's, to move towards what makes you happy.

9. LIVE IN THE MOMENT

Learning to live more of our life in the moment is a life-changing secret of happiness. I think many people avoid it as it implies meditation and hours spent in silent contemplation to access. Who has the time and space for that? Meditation is one way, sure, but it's not the only way to connect with the present.

Living in the moment is a skill and one you can learn. Ready? Let's do it:

One of the greatest sources of unhappiness there is comes when we are stuck (either mentally and emotionally) in the past, or in the future. What I mean by this is that our mind is where our body is not. So, for example, we can be in a meeting but feeling guilty we are not home with our child. Or we can be out for dinner with someone but wishing we were someplace else with someone else. Or we can be doing the laundry but thinking about the old job we used to have way back when. In each of these cases **our mind is where our body is not**. In each of these examples our mind is either in the future or in the past, and therefore we are emotionally unavailable to connect to any of the happiness, calm or contentment that might be available to us if we were truly experiencing that situation in the present moment.

Happiness is found in the present moment. That's where it lives, that's its home. If we want to be happy we need to be connecting with "now".

In this increasingly busy and connected life in which we live it's really easy to think "I'm just not a live-in-the-moment kind of person". That's actually a pretty lazy answer, I'm afraid! Those who have that aspirational kind of peace, calm and connection to the present moment are rarely born that way. It's a lifetime of discipline and commitment to noticing and returning to the present moment.

Being present and radiating a sense of calm is not an

innate attribute, it's actually a skill. With a little patience and commitment it can be learned. Remember, you have a handy tool to remind you how to be present, and it's always with you. **It's called your body, and wherever it is and whatever it is doing is your present, and your place to connect to happiness from!**

Here's an easy way to be more present and increase happiness and connection immediately. Turn your phone on to silent and do not have it visible on the table when you are having coffee with someone. Yes yes, I know, you are dreadfully important and there might be an emergency etc. but really, unless you are a neurosurgeon or the President of the United States, there really are very few calls that cannot wait 30 minutes to be returned. You have chosen to have coffee with that person, so, be fully present and **HAVE COFFEE WITH THAT PERSON!** Be fully engaged with what they are saying. Ask them reflective and intelligent questions. Connect with what they are saying. Express what you need to. Truly taste the temperature and blend of your coffee. Observe the sights and smells and sounds in the cafe.

Being present means connecting to what you are doing **RIGHT NOW**, with all five senses, giving it your fullest attention. Not listening with one ear, with one eye on Facebook, or texting (mmmm . . . yeah, yeah, sounds . . . er . . . good . . . mmmm) while thinking about the three things you need to do when you leave. The connection, calm or joy that is open to you in that interaction will increase exponentially when you allow yourself to be present in this way.

Don't get me wrong. Goals to aspire to in the future are good. Reflection and learning from the past are good. But we should be wary of spending too much of our time in the future or the past, and, to increase the feel good factor in life, choose to spend more time experiencing all the present has to offer.

Action step

Allow your mind to meet your body where it's at. Wherever your body is now is your present moment. If it's having coffee with someone, be fully present having the coffee and engage all of your senses in that experience. If it's writing that briefing document, focus fully on the sound of your fingers as you type and the page filling before you. If you are doing the gardening feel the soil moving through your fingers and the sounds of the wind. If you are playing with the kids, play with the kids. There is much more peace, contentment, fun and joy available to us than we realise once we start to consciously reconnect with the moment.

10. PRACTICE EMOTIONAL HONESTY



“The chips or the wine won't actually make us feel better.”

Oh, how to cover THIS in a few hundred words?! Practicing emotional honesty is a real biggie, and one of the most common barriers to happiness there is. There is just too much to discuss here so I am plotting a future series for you on emotion where we can go into more depth!

For today let me touch on the covering up of emotion. This happens because, as humans, we are programmed to **try to avoid pain**. We will work really hard to escape experiencing any kind of pain in our lives. This makes a lot of sense. However, here's the thing with emotions: we are meant to feel them (that's why they are called “feelings”, right?). It is the act of feeling them that allows us to start processing them and to come out the other side of grief, loss, anger, sadness and so on.

When we are trying to avoid feeling what we really feel because it will be painful a clever strategy many of us employ is to block feeling our true emotion with a substitute. I call it “Using An Over”. We overeat and get fat, we overwork for months on end, we drink too much. We use these “overs” to block what's real for us.

When we come home from work and dive headfirst into a bottle of wine “to unwind” we can be blocking feeling angry about our job, or our fear about making a hard call that needs to be made. When we eat chip after chip and then move on to the cheese and biccies we are hardly tasting it, but the act of overeating squashes down the emotion of loneliness at being home alone, or fear at having upset a

friend. When we are busy hating ourselves for overeating/drinking/working we can easily turn our mind to beating ourselves up about being fat, or our dreadful lack of willpower, neatly avoiding confronting and feeling our true emotional reality (fear about making the hard call at work, or the loneliness of coming home to an empty house or poor marriage).

The chips or the wine won't actually make us feel better if the reality is we are blocking feeling lonely or angry or whatever the emotion we are trying to avoid is.

For example if we are honest we could admit we feel lonely. We could choose to allow ourselves to feel sadness and experience that emotion. Have a good cry! It's very healing. We could then start to change our reality to increase connection in our lives and deal with the loneliness. In this case what we want is not more biscuits but more connection.

Know this: **there is no emotion so bad you can't bear it.** You can, and you should.

Because when we are brave and **feel what we feel** with honesty the emotion moves **through** us, and we start to come out the other side. Trying to go “over” the emotion just stores it inside us and it takes increasing amounts of wine, chips and late nights working ourselves to the bone to be able to avoid it. The way forward to having more happiness in our lives is not “over”, it is through.

Action step

This week short-circuit your go-to “over” activity by asking yourself “What is it I am trying to avoid feeling? What is true for me right now”.

Am I sad/angry/fearful or happy? Allow yourself to feel it, whatever it is. You will come out of it stronger with an increased capacity for happiness.

10 PRINCIPLES OF HAPPINESS YOUR FOUNDATION TO YOUR HAPPIEST LIFE

“Align with a life of health, happiness and purpose.”



Here is your recap of the 10 Principles Of Happiness series, and a handy checklist so you can check in personally and see where you are with a score out of five for each principle. Where are you feeling great, and where can you focus and make change for the better?

1. Honour your own health and energy levels as if your life depends on it. Oh - it does! How about that? Happy people take full responsibility for their health and wellbeing and treat self care as the priority it is. My whole column is devoted to this juicy one next week. /5

2. Be with the right person. Do not settle when it comes to your partner. Forever is a reeeeeeeeeeeeeeally long time, so, you know, get it right.

But, how do you know? Really know? The. One. Does he/she even exist? /5

3. Make your own choices. Do what feels right for your soul (especially in terms of career choice) not what “everybody” says would be a good/stable/respectable choice for you. No one knows this truth for you better than you do. /5

4. The thing about life is it’s not about things. Invest in experiences, memories, good times, silly times. Travel more, buy less. Experience more, buy less. Laugh more. Try more. Play more. Friends, family, fun. /5

5. Get out of your comfort zone regularly. The best discoveries in life are usually found there. You are braver, better, smarter, more creative, than you give yourself credit for. Be brave and push the boundaries. /5

6. Know that no one is perfect. Also that you are “good enough”. Whatever the hell that means! Almost all of us beat ourselves up for not being “good enough” in some

way but then cannot define what that magical benchmark actually is! It’s a ludicrous struggle.

Happy people drop this struggle and accept themselves as fabulous, imperfect beings who are absolutely good enough. /5

7. Play to your strengths. Life is way too short to be mitigating and working on your weaknesses. Happy people know their own strengths, in a very deep way, and love and accept them and play to them. They don’t apologise for who and what they are, they maximise it. /5

8. Take personal responsibility for your emotional health. Own your own emotional health and know that someone else can’t make you feel guilt/upset/angry. /5

9. Live in the moment. It’s a skill, it can be learned. Being more present, experiencing more joy inherent in the present moment is a sure fire route to happiness. Don’t worry, you don’t have to meditate (unless you want to). /5

10. Practice emotional honesty. Oh, this is a biggie. Happy people feel their feelings. Which sounds simple but so many of us don’t do it, so clearly this is somewhere unhappy people need help. Happy people own their feelings, whatever they might be. They don’t cover them up with booze, obsessive exercise, overeating, overworking or any other kind of “over” activity. /5

I would love to help you further on your journey to your most aligned life of health, happiness and purpose and I’d love you to check out my **group coaching programme ~ Wellbeing Warriors ~** on the next page so you can take what you have learned here to a whole new level of integration so these principles can work seamlessly within your busy life.

Action step

Turn over to read more about my **group coaching programme ~ Wellbeing Warriors ~** and **how I can help you live your happiest life on purpose in 2016.**



www.louisethompson.com
**WELLBEING
WARRIORS**
SMART BUSY WOMEN IMPROVING THEIR
WELLBEING ONE BITE AT A TIME

STRONG BODY * KIND HEART * FIERCE MIND * BRAVE SPIRIT

I so hope you have enjoyed reflecting on and using the tips and techniques for a happy life that I've covered in this free e-book, taken from one of my most popular series of columns in the New Zealand Herald. I'd love to help you further - life gets busy and so having quality support in bite sized and easy to integrate chunks is what makes the biggest difference to our wellbeing...it's all about consistency of focus, and I have a number of ways to help you do that!

1. ~ Wellbeing Wednesday ~ is my weekly e-newsletter of tips and tricks to live happy on purpose. It's an inspiration injection for your inbox - at 6am every Wednesday to get you gliding over "Hump Day" with grace and goodness. By opting in for this free e-book you will receive your copy next Wednesday - I hope you love it!

2. ~ Wellbeing Warriors ~ is my low-cost high-impact group coaching programme. Every month you get coaching from me on a particular theme that will enhance your wellbeing - emotional resilience, mental focus, physical strength or spiritual bravery - it's 4-dimensional wellbeing and it's super powerful. You will be part of an incredibly community of women just like you - smart busy women who are juggling it all but want to improve their wellbeing in a way that supports and doesn't overwhelm. Improving their wellbeing with true deep lasting change can only come from powerful coaching. It's deeply transformational, and incredible community and will absolutely rock your world with the aha moments and deep change and joy it opens up for you! If you want to worry less, stress less, feel less guilt and overwhelm and embrace more joy, ease, flow and purpose in your life then I have created this unique programme for you. It's just \$297 for 12 whole months of incredible learning and support. You can find out more here:

www.louisethompson.com/wellbeing-warriors

3. ~ Happiness Hacking ~ is my signature VIP one-on-one coaching programme - I take a limited number of private clients each year - you can apply right here:

www.louisethompson.com/happiness-hacking

4. My book "The Busy Woman's Guide to High Energy Happiness" is proudly published by Penguin and I'd love to send you a signed copy - you can order your copy right here: www.louisethompson.com/highenergyhappiness

Of course you can catch me every week in the New Zealand Herald, and various other media - and I'd love you to come say Hi on Facebook, www.facebook.com/louiseThompsonlifehappinessenergycoach

Thank you for reading! I wish you much health and happiness - I hope to see you as one of my amazing ~ **Wellbeing Warriors** ~ and to support you to your best year yet in my community of smart busy women just like you, enhancing their wellbeing one bite at a time. See you on the inside!

Go well,

#shinebright

