

Happiness at work and in life starts within

HEALTH

Happiness at work and in life starts within

 Editor • January 16, 2018



By *Mélanie Renaud, PSP Ottawa Physical Exercise Specialist*

Well, didn't I have it all wrong! I always thought that to be happy in life, and I know I am not the only one, I needed to be successful first. After participating in a PSP Ottawa Health Promotion workshop led by Paul Krismer from Happiness Experts, I understood that I had it all backwards!

Common thinking is that if you work really hard today to achieve success you will, eventually and hopefully, be happy in the future. In fact, research shows that happiness is the best predictor of success and not the other way around. Happier people are:

- healthier;
- smarter;
- more creative;
- have better relationships;
- better logic and memory;
- more energy;
- better sleep; and
- literally see more (no tunnel vision).

Paul Krismer explains that the reason why we all have negative biases is because negativity is a primal "cave man" connection to potential dangers that we needed for survival. We learn very quickly that things are bad for us so we do not repeat them or put ourselves in the same life-threatening situations again. That being said, in our modern daily lives, where we don't have bears chasing after us, we can offset the negativity we are feeling by balancing it out with more positive interactions and thoughts. Research has demonstrated that a minimum ratio of three positive experiences to one negative experience is needed to reach a positive balance. Here are a few tips to fill life's vase with positivity:

- Practice gratitude daily. Make a personal commitment to yourself to think about, or even better, write down three things you are grateful for that occurred in the last 24 hours. The benefits of gratitude include: Increased likability, better relationships, better sleep, more energy, improved health and reaching more goals.
- Practice altruism. Doing good things for others is also a primal instinct that makes us feel positive. To feel good, go do something good for someone else!
- Avoid "negative Nellies". It is important to be aware that we are constantly in emotional exchanges as we were designed to instantly share our emotions. We can be profoundly affected by others' negative emotions without knowing it.
- Send appreciation to your staff, coworkers and/or family members everyday! Happy organizations, leaders, employees, etc. are the most successful. Though a positive emotional environment is everyone's responsibility, managers can set the context and help facilitate a positive work atmosphere.

On this note, I wish you all happiness in 2018, as everything else will then follow.