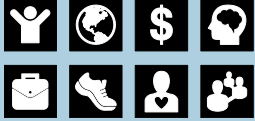


UR Well EMPLOYEE



Employee Wellness Newsletter

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University of Richmond Employee Wellness

Happiness Week: September 18-23

Join Recreation and Wellness, Human Resources, Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) and the Student Health Center for the 2nd Annual Happiness Week from September 18 through September 23! Several activities have been scheduled throughout the week to help us engage with each other, stay active, and embrace experiences that elevate our mood. We hope you can join us for one or many of the events listed below:

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Mindful Monday's

Wilton Center: Interfaith Prayer Room

Monday's from 12-1pm

Open to UR Community

Happiness Week 2017

September 18-23

Visit: [employeewell-](http://employeewellness.richmond.edu)

ness.richmond.edu for event details

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**Monday
September 18**

**Hula Hoop
Dance Class**

12:15 p.m. & 5:15 p.m.
University Forum

**Tuesday
September 19**

Ice Cream Truck

1 p.m.-3 p.m.
Around Campus

**Wednesday
September 20**

**Richmond Animal
League**

11 a.m.-1 p.m.
Weinstein Center for Recreation
and Wellness Courtyard

**Thursday
September 21**

Craft Day

11 a.m.-2 p.m.
University Forum
#PlayDayRVA

**Friday
September 22**

**Cigna EAP, Secrets of
Happiness**

10 a.m.-11 a.m.
Whitehurst Living Room
(full-time employees only)

**Saturday
September 23**

Employee Party Tent

UR vs. Elon Football Game (full-time faculty and permanent staff only)

UR

HAPPINESS WEEK

September 18 - September 23

Happiness Week is designed to help employees and students engage with each other, stay active, and embrace every day experiences that elevate their mood.

**#findURhappy
Campaign**

The campaign winners will be announced Friday September 22

UR Well

**UR Well
EMPLOYEE**



Educational Corner: The Art of Happiness

Ah, happiness, that elusive state. Philosophers, theologians, psychologists, even economists, have long sought to define it, and since the 1990s, a whole branch of psychology—positive psychology—has been dedicated to pinning it down and propagating it. More than simply positive mood, happiness is a state of well-being that encompasses living a good life—that is, with a sense of meaning and deep satisfaction.

Research shows that happiness is not the result of

bouncing from one joy to the next; achieving happiness typically involves times of considerable discomfort. Money is important to happiness, but only to a certain point. Money buys freedom from worry about the basics in life—housing, food, clothing. Genetic makeup, life circumstances, achievements, marital status, social relationships, even your neighbors—all influence how happy you are. Or can be.

So do individual ways of thinking and expressing feeling. Researchers estimate that much of happiness is under personal

control. Regularly indulging in small pleasures (such as warm baths!), getting absorbed in challenging activities, setting and meeting goals, maintaining close social ties, and finding purpose beyond oneself are all actions that increase life satisfaction.

Source: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/happiness>

Healthy Cooking: Greek Avocado Toast with Cheery Tomatoes

Ingredients:

- 3 avocados, peeled, pitted, & diced
- Juice from 1 lime
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 6 slices bread, toasted
- 1 cup fresh cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese

Directions:

1. Place avocado, lime juice, and garlic in a small bowl. Mash with a fork until smooth. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
2. Spread mashed avocado over toasted bread and top with cherry tomatoes and feta cheese.



Eight Ways Gratitude Boosts Happiness

By: Sonja Lyubomirsky, From her book, *The How of Happiness: A New Approach to Getting the Life You Want*

It may sound corny, but the research clearly demonstrates that you would be happier if you cultivated an “attitude of gratitude.” However, instead of your following this advice blindly, it’s important to understand why and how expressing gratitude works to make you happier. Indeed, there are no fewer than eight reasons for why I advise people to practice it.

First, grateful thinking promotes the savoring of positive life experiences. By relishing and taking pleasure in some of the gifts of your life, you will be able to extract the maximum possible satisfaction and enjoyment from your current circumstances. When my first child was only a few months old, an older woman approached me while I was struggling with the stroller. “Your baby is so beautiful,” she said. “Appreciate this age; it goes by so fast!” At the time I was feeling overwhelmed and sleep-deprived and, to be honest, didn’t much appreciate her glib intrusion, but it had a powerful effect. Taking time to feel grateful for this small child allowed me to step outside the dreariness of my long days caring for her and to savor the magic of the small moment I shared with my daughter.

Second, expressing gratitude bolsters self-worth and self-esteem. When you realize how much people have done for you or how much you have accomplished, you feel more confident and efficacious. Unfortunately, for many people, it comes more naturally to focus on failures and disappointments or on other people’s slights and hurts. Gratefulness can help you unlearn this habit. Instead of automatically thinking, “Woe is me,” in response to any setback, the practice of gratitude encourages you instead to consider what you value about your current life or how you are thankful that things aren’t worse.

Third, gratitude helps people cope with stress and trauma. That is, the ability to appreciate your life circumstances may be an adaptive coping method by which you positively reinterpret stressful or negative life experiences. Indeed, traumatic memories are less likely to surface – and are less intense when they do – in those who are regularly grateful.⁽⁶⁾ Interestingly, people instinctively express gratitude when confronted with adversity. For example, in the days immediately after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States, gratitude was found to be the second most commonly experienced emotion (after sympathy).⁽⁷⁾

When you can hear the minutes ticking and you know the buzzer is going to go off in any minute and your time will be up, you see things so clearly. You just know without a doubt where your values are and why you’re alive, and you’re so grateful for each moment.

Expressing gratefulness during personal adversity like loss or chronic illness – as hard as that might be – can help you adjust, move on, and perhaps begin anew. Although it may be challenging to celebrate your blessings at moments when they seem least apparent to you, it may be the most important thing that you can do. In one of my recent courses, I had a severely disabled older student named Brian. He has some mobility – but not much – in his hands and is able to control a wheelchair by pressing on a lever located near his shoulder with his bent right hand. One day the class was going around the room and talking about their happiest moments in life. This is what Brian said: “My happiest moment is kind of a perverse one. It was the day that I came home from the hospital, after my accident. I felt defiant. I said, ‘Ha! I’m still alive! I beat you!’ I don’t know who exactly I beat. But I felt grateful that I was home. It seemed like a little thing, but being home from the hospital after four months was so good.” Echoing this perspective, sixty-seven-year-old Inger, who had been given a short time to live, described her illness this way: “When you can hear the minutes ticking and you know the buzzer is going to go off in any minute and your time will be up, you see things so clearly. You just know without a doubt where your values are and why you’re alive, and you’re so grateful for each moment.”⁽⁸⁾ Inger and Brian have a remarkable capacity for gratitude, a capacity that undoubtedly serves them well in both sickness and health.

Fourth, the expression of gratitude encourages moral behavior. As I mentioned earlier, grateful people are more likely to help others (e.g., you become aware of kind and caring acts and feel compelled to reciprocate) and less likely to be materialistic (e.g., you appreciate what you have and become less fixated on acquiring more stuff). To wit, an Auschwitz survivor was once described this way: “His life was rooted in gratitude. He was generous, because the memory of having nothing was never far from his mind.” In one study, people induced to be grateful for a specific kind act were more likely to be helpful toward their benefactor, as well as toward a stranger, even when the helping involved doing an unpleasant, tedious chore.

Fifth, gratitude can help build social bonds, strengthening existing relationships and nurturing new ones. Keeping a gratitude journal, for example, can produce feelings of greater connectedness with others. Several studies have shown that people who feel gratitude toward particular individuals (even when they never directly express it) experience closer and “higher-quality” relationships with them. As Robert Emmons argues, when you become truly aware of the value of your friends and family members, you are likely to treat them better, perhaps producing an “upward spiral,” a sort of positive feedback loop, in which strong relationships give you something to be grateful for, and in turn fortifying those very same relationships. In addition, a grateful person is a more positive person, and positive people are better liked by others and more likely to win friends.

By preventing people from taking the good things in their lives for granted – from adapting to their positive life circumstances – the practice of gratitude can directly counteract the effects of hedonic adaptation.

Sixth, expressing gratitude tends to inhibit invidious comparisons with others. If you are genuinely thankful and appreciative for what you have (e.g., family, health, home), you are less likely to pay close attention to or envy what the Joneses have.

Seventh, the practice of gratitude is incompatible with negative emotions and may actually diminish or deter such feelings as anger, bitterness, and greed. As one psychiatrist has argued, “gratitude...dissolves negative feelings: anger and jealousy melt in its embrace, fear and defensiveness shrink.” Indeed, it’s hard to feel guilty or resentful or infuriated when you’re feeling grateful. My friend’s sister is one of the few working moms I know who feel not an ounce of guilt. The reason is that she is a prodigy at asking friends and family for help and thanking them so profusely and sincerely afterward that they feel like rock stars.

Last but not least, gratitude helps us thwart hedonic adaptation. If you recall, hedonic adaptation is illustrated by our remarkable capacity rapidly to adjust to any new circumstance or event. This is extremely adaptive when the new event is unpleasant, but not when a new event is positive. So, when you gain something good in your life – a romantic partner, a genial officemate, recovery from illness, a brand-new car – there is an immediate boost in happiness and contentment. Unfortunately, because of hedonic adaptation, that boost is usually short-lived. As I’ve argued earlier, adaptation to all things positive is essentially the enemy of happiness, and one of the keys to becoming happier lies in combating its effects, which gratitude does quite nicely. By preventing people from taking the good things in their lives for granted – from adapting to their positive life circumstances – the practice of gratitude can directly counteract the effects of hedonic adaptation.

UR Well EMPLOYEE



Visit Us At:

employeewellness.richmond.edu

Contact Information:

Heather Sadowski

Assistant Director – Wellness
Recreation and Wellness
hsadowsk@richmond.edu

Weinstein Center
28 Westhampton Way
University of Richmond, VA 23173
(804) 287-6368

Karen's Korner, Karen Hensley, UR Dietician: Food & Mood

The food you eat is important to how you feel. Nutrition affects your health, energy and also affects your mood. To boost your mood, try to do the following: 1) eat regular meals and snacks, 2) create meals and snacks that combine sources of fiber, lean proteins and healthy fats, and 3) consume foods that contain B vitamins, vitamin C and calcium.

Below are 10 foods that can help boost your mood:

Clams, oysters, and mussels- rich in vitamin B12, zinc, iodine, and selenium

Spinach, kale & swiss chard- leafy greens packed with magnesium and folate

Greek yogurt- rich in calcium which helps your body release neurotransmitters that reduce anxiety and irritability

Whole grains- source of selenium and help prevent oxidative stress in the body.

Chicken & turkey- rich in tryptophan, which helps our brain produce serotonin, a calming and relaxing neurotransmitter

Oranges, tomatoes, vitamin C rich fruits- helps reduce the feeling of stress

Karen Hensley, MS, RD, CSSD
Email: khensley@richmond.edu



Salmon- rich in omega 3 fatty acids which helps to reduce inflammation and can improve your mood and can help reduce depression

Nuts- rich in Vitamin E and omega 3 fatty acids

Sweet potatoes- releases serotonin

Dark Chocolate- releases endorphins- the 'feel good' chemical

If you are feeling blue, there are foods to consider adding to your diet that might help reduce stress, ease anxiety and fight depression.