

Your Guide to Invincible Happiness

from Rose Tinted Living





RoseTintedLiving

Brought to you by Claire Hunter & Rose Tinted Living

Is your deepest desire to be truly, unshakeably, blissfully happy? Invincibly happy? Then you're in the right place. Breathe, snuggle down and relax.

How do you want to feel? Joyful? Playful? Inspired? Sexy? Satisfied? Like your life matters? Me too.

Life can be pretty freaking awesome most of the time or it can be a heavy, stressed out, tiresome struggle. You choose. We all have difficult, challenging times, but we can still choose joy, love and compassion as our default.

That's what Rose Tinted Living is all about. It's not about being naive, misguided or falsely optimistic. It's about CHOOSING YOUR FOCUS. It's about being alive to the joy and beauty that is in your life RIGHT NOW.

And I promise you it's there. Sometimes we just need help to see it. You are in charge of this. Invincible happiness is ABSOLUTELY within your reach.

A joyful, beautiful life is our birth right; it's who we're meant to be. Look around though, and you'll see people struggling to find true happiness. It doesn't have to be this way. Achieving invincible happiness, and truly coming alive isn't that difficult. Honestly. I know this because I've learned the hard way. Following a diagnosis of breast cancer several years ago, I committed to transforming the way I see the world, and I've never been happier.

I am honoured that you're here and I would love to help you uncover the juiciest, most awesome version of yourself EVER!

Because when you come alive and step into your most perfect version of you, you can change the world!

Your commitment to your happiness is the most important commitment you will ever make. Your investment in your happiness is the most vital investment you will ever make. And it's absolutely NOT a selfish endeavour. When you're happy, this spills over into all areas of your life, and affects everyone around you. Your family, friends, loved ones and colleagues will feel the ripples of your happiness. C'mon, you know that to be true, right?



RoseTintedLiving

Well done for taking responsibility for your own happiness!

The world would be truly transformed into a peaceful, harmonious place of shared abundance if each and every one of us focused on creating our own happiness before we interacted with others. It's not happy, secure, generous, self-compassionate, vulnerable, gorgeous beings that cause war and perpetuate the unequal distribution of the world's wealth. Think about it.

The rest of this e-book is devoted to sharing invaluable kick-ass strategies that you can start RIGHT NOW to take responsibility for your own invincible happiness!

When you choose to put your rose tinted glasses on, you'll start to see love, joy, kindness, light, opportunity and abundance all around you.

And when you focus on the good stuff with every fibre of your being, you attract more of it.



Strategy One: Invest YOUR time in YOUR happiness!

If you asked people the question 'what do you wish you had more of?' a good proportion of them will say 'time'. Others may say love, happiness, money, fulfilment which are all things we have a degree of control and influence over. Time is the one thing we have no control over. A great way of ensuring you use this precious, disappearing commodity wisely, is to see time not as something to be 'spent', but as something to be 'invested'. This can help guard against drifting through your days unconsciously.

If you see time as something to be invested, you can start to make conscious, deliberate and positive choices about how you use it.

We all have commitments and obligations and of course it's important to honour these. I'm sure you're pretty good at doing that though, but how good are you at carving out time to keep your commitments to yourself? How much time do you set aside to consciously do things that make you happy?

Simple first steps to start taking today:

1. Make a commitment to yourself to do something that makes you happy EVERY SINGLE DAY. Record this commitment somewhere, like in a journal or on a sticky note stuck to the fridge. Be specific; so instead of just saying "every day I'll do stuff that makes me happy" try "every day, from 9pm until 10pm is my time to do things that matter to me and make me happy". Or are you more of a morning person? Try this one on for size then.... "every day from 6.30am until 7.30am is my time to pursue the things that really matter to me and make me feel good."
2. Go one step further and actually ring-fence this time every day. Record it on your calendar or in your diary and make this time pretty much non-negotiable. When the gremlins of doubt or guilt creep in to try and derail your protected 'me' time, remind yourself of the following:

When you do the things that make you happy, you come alive. When you truly come alive you are able to do the good you were born to do in the world. Focusing on your own happiness is not selfishness; it's your responsibility. No-one else is responsible for your happiness. YOU ARE. And when you live in a state of joy, it spills over into all areas of your life. You become a better partner, parent, friend, carer, worker.

3. Finally, share this commitment with the people around you, and perhaps make a pact with a friend to hold each other to account on it. Does this feel achievable? Your time is YOURS. You own it. It's yours to decide how you use it. Of course, you have commitments and obligations and these are important, but you should never feel guilty for using YOUR time to do things that are good for YOU. When you feel good about you, you can feel good about others. Everyone benefits.



Strategy Two: Journaling

Studies have found that journaling can have a positive impact on our mental health, and happiness (Frattaroli 2006). There is also increasing evidence to support the notion that journaling can also impact positively on our physical well-being by reducing the damaging impact of stress on your physical health (Pennebaker and Evans 2014).

Specifically, journaling can have these benefits:

- It helps you get to know the amazing person that you are. By writing routinely you start to process and understand the things that make you feel happy, confident and fulfilled. Conversely, you also start to understand what your triggers are, and this is important because it helps you design the life you want.
- Recording difficult emotions helps to release the emotional intensity and the energy contained in them. The writing process helps you understand and process difficulties. Whenever you feel jumbled up, confused or unsure, taking a few minutes to write down how you're feeling, without editing, can help you gain a sense of control. When we apply language to something, it gains structure and meaning, rather than being a jumble of painful emotions, and this can often help us see a way out of the pain.
- Writing can be useful as a way of problem solving. Often problem solving is dominated by left-brain thinking, but sometimes what is called for is a more creative, intuitive approach. When you write quickly, without editing or worrying about spelling and so on, it taps into the creative problem solving abilities of your right-brain.
- It can help you see things from different perspectives. Writing things down often opens up alternative perspectives and ways of looking at things, which can be especially usefully when we're in conflict, either with ourselves or someone else.

Simple first steps to start taking today:

1. Invest in a journal. This can either be a paper version or an electronic one and commit to journaling once or twice a week. Start small; once or twice a week for fifteen minutes is a good place to start. Don't let it become something tedious that you don't enjoy.
2. Try and write quickly and fluidly, and don't worry about spelling, punctuation and grammar- that's all left-brained work and what you're trying to do is unleash your creative, intuitive and feeling right-brain. If it helps, pick a theme for the week (for example, gratitude, fulfilment, confusion, change or anger).
3. Actually put time in your diary or calendar, or set some kind of reminder to ensure you actually do it. The importance of scheduling time to do things IN ADVANCE cannot be over-emphasised. If you don't set aside time to do things in advance they are SO much less likely to get done. And if you don't do the work, you're not going to see the results you deserve. Come on, you owe it to yourself!



Strategy Three: Choose Which States to Live in!

At any point in time we are experiencing an emotional 'state' which is a combination of our thoughts, feelings and physiology. Through a process of personal exploration we can become aware of the states that bring us joy and make us happy; our signature states. Once we have brought these into our conscious awareness we can deliberately choose stimuli and situations that create our preferred states.

This is really profound stuff in our quest for happiness. I am indebted to Danielle Laporte for the inspiration and would highly recommend her book 'The Desire Map' if you wish to go deeper with this process.

It's not material things, events, the achievement of goals, or even people that bring us happiness per se. Think about it, the same person can sometimes seem to bring you to a state of utter joy and the next day, bring you into a state of complete irritation. So the person isn't the source of joy, or frustration. What brings us joy or irritation in relation to the person, lies in the space between us, which is occupied by thought, emotion, and physical feelings. Of course, we do experience happiness in relation to people, events, achievements and so on, but it's because of how we FEEL in relation to them not because of their objective existence.

1. Recall a situation where you felt amazing. Choose an example where you felt alive, at one with the world and in touch with who you really are. It doesn't have to be a huge momentous sky-diving occasion, but it can be if you choose. Ensure you pick a single identifiable experience, not composites of several, so that you can evoke a clear memory of it in your mind's eye. Once you have the experience in mind, try and re-live it in vivid detail. See what you were seeing, hear what you were hearing and feel what you were feeling. Give a name to the emotional states evoked by this visualisation. For example:

- *'I felt a state of deep connection'*
- *'I felt feminine and sexy'*
- *'I feel in a state of ease and clarity'*
- *'A state of lightness, physically, emotionally and spiritually was present'*
- *'I was in a state of electric excitement'*
- *'I feel in a state of oneness with the world'*
- *'I felt free to do whatever I wanted'*
- *'I felt abundant and prosperous'*
- *'I felt like I was making a positive difference to people's lives'*
- *'I felt recognised and heard'*
- *'I felt strong but compassionate'*
- *'I felt filled with purpose'*



2. Once you feel ready to let the image go, take some time to explore in your journal what it was about the situation that felt good. Repeat this exercise several times with your most amazing memories; the ones where you were at your happiest. Identify the individual states that make your heart sing and make a record of these.
3. Once you have a list of the states that make you feel good, hone them down to a number that feels comfortable to you. More than two, less than eight is about right, but the choice is yours.
4. Every day take a couple of minutes to think through how you're going to evoke your signature states. It could be as simple as 'I'm going to wear my favourite dress today' or 'I'm going to kiss my husband like I really mean it'. Or, it could be more profound such as 'I'm going to stand up for what I believe today'. It could be something light and playful such as 'I'm going to sign-up for pole dancing classes today' (go for it!) or it could be something more momentous like 'I'm going to plan my trip round the world'. Try and establish a trigger for considering this question each day. The trigger could be brushing your teeth, taking your first pee, making a morning cup of tea or another activity you do every day. Setting your intention for the day, could take as little time as a minute a day. But this minute a day could change your life.

*Peace is something like happiness; you cannot say "I will be happy when..."
and you can't say "I will be peaceful when..."*

*Your happiness shouldn't depend on the situation you're in nor on the
circumstances that surround you.*

*In the same breath, you cannot wait for everything around you to become
peaceful in order for you to say "I am peaceful."*

*In both happiness and peace, there is a heart of strength, determination
and steadfastness;*

a heart that has the power to make things happen.

You have to be at peace. You have to be happy. Now

— C. JoyBell C.



Strategy Four: Have an Attitude of Gratitude

There's a huge body of evidence that shows the importance of gratitude to our overall well-being and happiness (Lyubomirsky 2007). It's so significant to the pursuit of joy and contentment that this whole guide could be devoted to the subject of gratitude.

'Thousands of years of literature talk about the benefits of cultivating gratefulness as a virtue,' according to eminent gratitude researcher and psychology professor Robert Emmons (2008). Throughout history, religious figures and philosophers have extolled the contribution of gratitude to health and well-being. Now, through the discipline known as 'positive psychology' researchers are uncovering convincing evidence about just how powerful gratitude is, to both our emotional well-being and physical health. According to Emmons, people who are truly grateful for the life they have been given, take better care of themselves through diet and exercise, which then has a clear impact on physical health. Aspinwall, a prolific researcher in the field of positive psychology, maintains that gratitude is closely correlated with optimism, a characteristic which has been shown to boost the immune system (Aspinwall 2002).

Gratitude comes easier when life is going well. But what about when times get tough? In the midst of really difficult times, people often ask what they've got to be grateful for. But it is precisely during times of hardship and challenge that we stand to benefit most from gratitude. That doesn't necessarily mean it will come easily though. Your gratitude muscle is one you have to exercise every day in order for it to become strong enough to support you when the going gets tough.

Of course, people don't tend to feel grateful when some kind of personal disaster strikes. However, there is a distinction to be drawn between '**being** grateful' and '**feeling** grateful'. We cannot easily switch to 'feeling grateful' or 'feeling happy' or 'feeling optimistic' when our thoughts are telling us otherwise. However, we can make a choice to cultivate an attitude of gratitude within our life. '**Being** grateful' can become our prevailing attitude that endures throughout the inevitable ups and downs of our life. It definitely takes effort, but the research shows that it's worth it.

Simple first steps to start taking today:

1. For the next week set aside a couple of minutes just before you go to bed to identify three things that have happened or you've noticed in the last 24 hours that you're grateful for.
2. To take this a stage further, record your gratitude practice in your journal.
3. Share your gratitude with those round you; it's infectious!



Strategy Five: Being more 'Present' With Loved Ones

Not having strong enough connections with friends and family is one of the most common regrets people have at the end of their lives. Bronnie Ware, a palliative care nurse recorded the epiphanies of people in their last weeks of life. These have now been published into a book called 'The Top Five Regrets of the Dying' which highlights five key themes. One of these is regret about losing contact with loved ones.

Social time is invaluable when it comes to improving our happiness, even for introverts. Many studies show how really connecting with those we love can have a big impact on how we feel. George Vaillant is the director of a 72-year study of the lives of 268 men. Reporting back some of the results of this study, he noted "the only thing that really matters in life are your relationships to other people". The quality of the men's relationships at age 47 was a very strong predictor of the quality of later life. Good sibling relationships seem especially powerful: 93 percent of the men who were thriving at age 65 had been close to a brother or sister (Vaillant 2012).

But is it enough just to remain in contact with loved ones? Is that what connection is? No, in order to truly connect with people you need to be 'present'.

Being present means being with what 'is'. It means paying attention, right now, without judging the situation or wishing it were different. Being present involves giving your full attention to the interaction between you and the other person. It also, crucially, means being available in an emotional sense.

Becoming emotionally present is imperative for healthy relationships, but what does this mean? Well, the first step is to be fully aware of your emotions and be brave enough to share your inner world. This involves vulnerability. Brené Brown, prolific researcher on the subject, describes vulnerability as "uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure" (Brown 2013). She debunks some myths about vulnerability, the most popular being that vulnerability is a sign of weakness. When we think of times that we have felt vulnerable or emotionally exposed, we are actually recalling times of great courage. "What most of us fail to understand...is that vulnerability is also the cradle of the emotions and experiences that we crave," says Dr. Brown. "Vulnerability is the birthplace of love, belonging, joy, courage, empathy, and creativity."

Another aspect of emotional presence in a relationship entails being comfortable and aware of someone else's emotions. This doesn't mean trying to diffuse someone's emotions or solve their problems; quite the opposite.

Emotional presence means holding a space for them to be able to safely express themselves and respecting their right to those feelings. Being present also involves empathising.



When we empathise we might not necessarily agree with what lies behind the feelings, but we are saying, "I know that feeling, I've felt it too". According to Brené Brown empathy comprises of several aspects:

- Perspective taking- recognizing the perspective as the other person's truth
- Avoiding judging- it's their truth, so it's not for you to say it's right, wrong, foolish, true or false etc
- Recognising emotion and communicating that understanding to the other person

Empathy is not about necessarily understanding the thing that led up to the emotions, but it very definitely is about you recognising that you have also felt this emotion and that you understand. So for example, if someone is angry you may not really agree with the source of that anger, but you yourself have felt anger. Because you have experienced the same emotion you can connect with their current experience and have some understanding of how they are feeling.

Simple first steps to start taking today:

1. When you're with someone, start by bringing yourself into the present moment. Focus on really listening, without letting your mind wander. Don't try to judge, evaluate or compare what they're saying- just listen. Avoid rehearsing what your response will be. Give the interaction your 100% attention. If it's not possible to give all your attention to someone, be honest and make a commitment to them about when you will be available and fully present.
2. Remind yourself that every moment you experience with someone, will be the last time you'll experience **that particular moment**. You can never get that moment back.
3. Beware of technology! It can be a huge barrier to being truly present. It's so common to see people staring at their phones, nominally present in social situations but really focused on something else. The lure of the screen can keep us from really listening to and experiencing each other.
4. Encourage the other person to share. Respond with empathy. Take some risks in making yourself emotionally vulnerable. Share your feelings, experiences, thoughts or anxieties.
5. Do not be tempted to solve problems, offer unsolicited advice, point out a silver lining or minimize what someone says. We may not intend to undermine or minimize someone's experience, but when we try to problem solve too soon, that's what it can feel like. Trust and love them enough to know that they can handle things. You don't need to solve their problems or make them feel better. They may know things will get better and that there are silver linings, but they may not know that it's ok to feel the way they do.



Strategy Six: Take your Mental Vitamins

*Affirmations are our mental vitamins,
providing the supplementary positive thoughts we need to balance the
barrage of negative events and thoughts we experience daily*
— Tia Walker

Affirmations are thoughts or statements declared to be true. In essence every thought you have is an affirmation. These thoughts create your life. Changing your thoughts changes your life, but it takes time and effort. You need to become aware of your thinking and practice repeatedly. Practice involves not just saying the affirmations but really trying to feel and believe them. Using affirmations doesn't mean you can never feel down or negative. Quite the opposite; it's important to honour your feelings whether positive or negative. Suppressing emotions is never a healthy thing to do.

If you were to do an internet search you will find people who wholeheartedly believe in the power of affirmations and positive self-talk. However, you will also find skepticism and disappointment. Perhaps this is because they haven't been applied consistently or properly. Often people set goals for the things they want to **avoid** such as losing their house, their job, their health or their relationship. This doesn't work, because your subconscious only understands the focus and doesn't decide if it is a negative or positive. For example, if your belief is concerning self-care being self-indulgent, it's important not to phrase your self-talk as "I will not see having half an hour to myself every day as selfish". Guess what your brain focuses on if you frame it this way? You guessed it- "having half an hour to myself every day is selfish". It's a bit like if someone tells you not to think of a red car. What's the first thing that pops into your head? Yup, a red car! So, many people are faithfully applying affirmations but because they are phrased with an avoidance focus, they don't have the desired effect.

Simple first steps to start taking today:

1. Start to integrate daily affirmations into your life. Pick certain times of the day or activities that will act as a trigger to using affirmations. Use negative thoughts and self-talk as a trigger too - whenever they appear follow up with a positive affirmation.
2. Listed here are some examples of affirmations related to feeling that you deserve to do things that make you happy every day. These may or may not be phrased in ways that feel natural to you. Feel free to use these, adapt them or develop your own. The possibilities are absolutely endless.

- 🍷 I deserve to spend time doing.....*
- 🍷 When I treat myself with love & respect, I have more to give to others*
- 🍷 I treat myself with love, care and attention*
- 🍷 I make healthy, happy and positive choices all the time*
- 🍷 I deserve to look after and nourish myself, physically and emotionally*
- 🍷 I make positive choices about my future all the time*



Strategy Seven: Live in a State of 'flow'

Flow is the mental state we experience when we're 'in the zone'. It's that feeling of being totally immersed in something we love. It's definitely not the same as 'going with the flow'. This state, first named by Mihály Csíkszentmihályi, gives rise to feelings of joy and energy (Csíkszentmihályi 2008). It was so named because when people were asked to describe their flow experiences, they often likened it to the feeling of being carried along by water.

Csíkszentmihályi (2008) suggests that flow occurs often when we're highly actively involved in our favourite pursuits such as gardening, listening to music, playing table tennis, cooking a good meal. It can also occur when driving, talking to friends, and perhaps surprisingly often at work. However, almost any activity can produce flow provided the relevant elements are present, so it is possible to improve the quality of life by making sure that the conditions of flow are a part of everyday life.

There are a number of key aspects to flow experiences:

- An activity which is sufficiently challenging but where you have a sense of mastery over the situation, and feel rewarded by
- Concentration on the present moment with a loss of focus on time
- A lack of self-consciousness

These can occur independently, but only in combination do they constitute a 'flow experience'.

Everyone has had flow experiences and by identifying what brings you into a state of flow, you can engineer your life to include more opportunities for being in this state.

Simple first steps to start taking today:

1. Take some time to think about times when you've felt flow; times where you've experienced profound enjoyment, creativity, and total immersion. Note this down in your journal
2. Take some time to think about these experiences and how you could live your life so that there are more opportunities for flow
3. In your journal, record 3 things you will commit to doing in order to live your life more in a sense of flow



Strategy Eight: Start Dismantling your Limiting Beliefs

Your life's course reflects your beliefs because these are the driving force behind thoughts, emotions, actions, habits, and therefore, ultimately, your life. For example, if you believe that 'marriages never last' or 'all my relationships are doomed' you will behave in such a way that confirms this. Because you hold these beliefs as 'facts' or inevitabilities you will focus on everything that's wrong in a relationship, and perhaps even initiate its breakdown because you see it as inevitable.

Our beliefs develop over time, as a result of our background, upbringing, experiences and the messages we're exposed to. Many of our beliefs were formed during childhood. We picked them up through our relationships with others, especially our primary caregivers. Some of these beliefs are held in our conscious mind. Many however, are held within the sub-conscious, and it's these deeper beliefs that often hold us back from great things.

Simple first steps to start taking today:

1. Ask yourself: what are my limiting beliefs in relation to the main dimensions of my life? Record these in your journal. There are probably layers of beliefs to uncover. The deeper you go, the more chance you have of changing the really stubborn beliefs that give rise to lots of other negative thought patterns. Once you have your most limiting beliefs down on paper, try and reduce these to their most fundamental level by a series of 'why' questions in relation to each one. So for example, if one of your beliefs is 'I'll never find true love', ask yourself why you believe this. This might lead to a deeper belief such as 'No-one could put up with me'. Again, ask yourself why you believe this until you get down to the deep-rooted belief. These are the core beliefs to focus on.
2. Once you're aware of your core beliefs you can begin a process of dismantling them. Pick just one to start with and consider on a scale of 1- 10 how strong this belief is. Record all of this information including the date in your journal. Come back to this over time to track your progress.
3. In your journal, explore specific examples that disprove the belief. Try and identify multiple situations that did not align with it. For example, if one of your beliefs is 'I'm rubbish at managing my finances', think of as many exceptions as you can to this.
4. Once you have been through these steps, take some time to think about the strength of your belief again. Does it still feel as true, or can you see some holes in it? As you go about your daily life, lookout for any instances that further disprove the belief.
5. Once you are not so tightly in the grip of the negative belief, reframe the self-limiting statement with something that is positive and record this affirmation in your journal.
6. Now, you need to take action in order to start breaking the pattern of this belief. Put yourself in a situation where you have the opportunity to test it. Use your journal to track your progress by re-scoring the strength of the belief.



Strategy Nine: Stop Trying to Rescue People

Some people to have a natural tendency to get embroiled in other people's drama and some folks seem to attract drama like a moth to a flame. Have you met people like this?

When someone is experiencing some kind of trauma, our natural tendency might be to fix things. This can create a form of co-dependency. It's 'co-dependent' because both parties derive some form of unhealthy benefit from it. The 'rescuer' feels needed and perhaps has a sense of mastery over someone else's problems, and the 'victim' is enabled in their helplessness by having someone else intervene. Ultimately this doesn't help the person in the midst of their drama because they are denied the powerful process of working through their own problems. It can also be an utterly draining situation for the rescuer.

*If you ever feel the person in your life needs rescuing,
particularly from him or herself - beware.
Codependency is rearing its head again
— David Stafford*

Simple first steps to start taking today:

1. When you feel yourself getting drawn into someone's drama, make a conscious decision not to switch to automatic pilot. Stay in the present moment, by recognising what's happening in your body, soul and mind. Use this present moment awareness to consider how to respond. Avoid becoming overly identified with the person's story and do not go into fixing mode. Consider just 'holding space' for them so that they can work through the situation themselves. Holding space means we are willing to be present for someone in pain, without judging them, trying to fix them or controlling them.
2. Be sparing with your advice. Holding space involves trusting that they have the resources to be able to learn for themselves. They may trip up but when we step in and take control or fix things, we often take their power away and inhibit their own growth and learning. When we hold space it can sometimes help to give information but be mindful about how you do this and what your motivation is. Don't overwhelm people with advice and keep your ego in check.
3. If someone repeatedly comes to you with their dramas, consider whether this is a healthy relationship. Does anyone in your life leave you depleted? Is this a relationship you want to invest in? If you're not able to completely extricate yourself from a toxic relationship, reduce your contact with that person.
4. Cultivate healthy relationships of inter-dependence, where each person takes care of themselves and each other. Healthy relationships are mutually satisfying, where over time, each party gives and receives in roughly equal measures. Think about the people in your life that lift you and make you feel more positive and happy. Make an active decision to spend time with people who nourish your soul, and perhaps less time with those that sap it.



RoseTintedLiving

Strategy Ten: Realise that Life is lived in the PRESENT!

When we put off our happiness until some mythical day in the future when things have aligned just as we'd like them to, we forget that THIS is our life. This present moment is all we have and when we stop focusing on seeing the joy and beauty in our present lives, our life passes us by. Here's the thing, you may get skinnier, wealthier, get a better job, get divorced or buy a bigger house and it may or may not make you happier, but do you really want to sacrifice living a life of joy right now, on the gamble of something that may never happen?

When we do this we trade our current happiness for the promise of joy in the future, almost as though happiness comes in a limited supply. But happiness, joy, gratitude and all positive emotions are like muscles. The more we use them, exercise them and let them out to play, the more natural and easy it becomes. It starts to feel like your natural state.

So, why do we put happiness on hold in this way? Perhaps we don't believe we really deserve happiness. If we consciously or unconsciously feel we don't have a right to be happy we will always put up blocks to its existence. If this resonates with you, this is an enormous stumbling block that you must get over.

*You were blessed with this life on earth and
you have an obligation to live it to the full.
More than that, you deserve it.*

Another reason might be that we mistake 'shiny objects' for happiness charms when actually they're never going to bring lasting happiness. Shiny objects can include more money, more material goods, fame, bigger boobs, fewer wrinkles, a better job and so on. If these things were guaranteed to bring happiness, we wouldn't see the number of rock star or actor suicides that we do. Once you have enough to live comfortably and safely, money does not bring you increased happiness.

So, what does bring us happiness? Science shows time and time again that there are a number of factors that significantly contribute to present moment happiness (Lyubomirsky 2010). These include:

1. Spending time with loved ones and people that 'get you'
2. Being part of something bigger than yourself- something that gives your life meaning and purpose
3. Kindness to and service of others



Your own recipe for happiness will also have lots and lots of unique ingredients. Strategy One involved identifying some of the things that make you happy and committing to investing time in these every day. In the hurly burly of everyday life, it's easy to let the day go by without doing the things that are guaranteed to make you feel happy. But happiness is the bottom line, so these little things are incredibly important.

*Enjoy the little things in life because one day you'll look back
and realize they were the big things
— Kurt Vonnegut*

Simple first steps to start taking today:

1. Feeling like you don't really deserve happiness or to invest time in yourself is a big barrier that you must address. You are unique and wonderful and nobody deserves happiness more than you. Remember, when you invest in your own happiness, you have more to give to the world, so a commitment to your own happiness is not a selfish endeavour. Consider using your journaling to explore these feelings. You may also want to engage the help of a counsellor or therapist if these beliefs feel particularly pervasive.
2. Plan your week so that you're able to spend time with people that love you and get you.
3. Make kindness and the service of others a part of every day. Research shows that acts of kindness and service to others result in a 'helper's high'.
4. Consider how you can add meaning and purpose to your life. For some people this means charity or community work, for others it's about being part of a team or collective of some kind. It doesn't matter what it is- science shows that being part of something bigger than yourself brings fulfilment and happiness.
5. Keep making a daily commitment to the things that you know make you feel good. It's really easy to let these go, so consider whether you need to schedule them in or whether you need some kind of reminder. Get your priorities in order and focus on what's important to YOUR happiness.
6. And finally, smile! Research has shown that smiling releases feel good hormones and is very contagious. Try smiling now and see if it has any impact on the way you're feeling. Now, don't get this wrong. This is not about suppressing negative emotions because that is also a sure fire way to unhappiness, but it's about having another tool in your toolkit that you can choose to use when it feels right. This is an interesting video from a 'smile researcher': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U9cGdRNMdQQ>



RoseTintedLiving

Over to You!

I hope you've found this information useful and I promise that if you give these things a go, you will start to see a positive difference in your life. Maybe you're ready to go deeper?

Like you perhaps, I have always been someone who is keen to grow and develop. Like you, I've had real lows as well as amazing highs. It took the shock of breast cancer, the near breakdown of my marriage and my subsequent emotional unravelling to wake me into properly starting to walk-the-talk of true personal growth. These events were a wake-up call that the clock of life is ticking. A wake-up call to the fact that I needed to grab life by the balls. A wake-up call to my own power. A wake-up call to designing my own destiny.

In waking up, I learned how to love myself. How to show myself compassion. How to stop playing small. How to be more vulnerable. How to live in the moment. How to create a beautiful, loving, gentle intimacy with my husband. How to parent mindfully and with humility and playfulness. How to balance work and play better. How to say no. How to stop being a people pleaser. How to stop trying to be perfect.

I woke up and appreciated my perfectly imperfect self, and I can help you do the same if you feel ready and you're willing to do the work.

Tell me....

- Are you a heart-centred person who often follows their heart rather than their head?
- Do you feel things deeply?
- Are you willing to change your focus from what's wrong to what's right?
- Are you ready to look inside?
- Are you ready to do the work?
- Are you yearning for more?

If so, we're a great fit. I am here to help you and I PASSIONATELY want you to be happy. My speciality is happiness coaching and I have a range of programmes and coaching options available for people who are ready to embark on an intensive programme of personal development that will STICK.

If you'd like to find out more about my programmes and coaching I'd love to hear from you. Email me at claire@rosetintedliving.co.uk

References

Aspinwall, L.G. (2002). Happier and wiser: Optimism and positive affect promote careful realistic thinking and behavior. In C.R. Snyder & S. Lopez (Eds.), Handbook of positive psychology (pp. 754-755). New York: Oxford. Published, 2002.

Brown, B. (2013) Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead. Portfolio Penguin

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1997) Finding Flow: The Psychology of Engagement with Everyday Life. Basic Books, New York

Csikszentmihalyi, M (2008) Psychology of Optimal Experience. Harper Perennial Modern Classics

Laporte, D. (2014) The Desire Map: A Guide to Creating Goals with Soul. Sounds True

Emmons, R (2008) Thanks! How Practicing Gratitude Can Make You Happier. Mariner Books

Frattaroli, J. (2006) Experimental disclosure and its moderators: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin* 132, 823-865

Lyubomirsky, S. (2007) The How of Happiness. Piatkus, London

Pennebaker, J. W. and Evans, J. (2014) Expressive Writing: Words That Heal Idyll Arbour

Vaillant, G (2012) Triumphs of Experience: The Men of the Harvard Grant Study. Belknap Press

Ware, B. (2012) The Top Five Regrets of the Dying: A Life Transformed by the Dearly Departing. Hay House, New York