

Lesson 3

Social Activities

Introduction

Being happier is linked to longer life, more fulfilling relationships, and greater productivity, and there's always room for improvement.

Happy people tend to go about their day making the most of less than perfect situations, focussing on the positive moments of an experience, seeking out activities/tasks that can extend their knowledge, and making the most of opportunities that fall their way.

Positive social interactions and activities are extremely important when it comes to happiness.

So it's worthwhile spending some time thinking about this, right?

Science

Spending more time with people you like, and doing things you enjoy, such as meeting a friend for coffee, or going to a spin class with a sibling can raise your levels of happiness. Doing this regularly paves the way for more frequent positive feelings, thoughts, and productive behaviours.

Choosing to spend some of your free time on positive pursuits also serves to meet several of your psychological needs, including, autonomy, emotional connectedness, and achievement, as they give you a sense of control over your time, build stronger and more meaningful relationships, and give rise to a sense of mastery over situations, especially if it involves learning a skill.

Studies show that engaging in social activities brings you slightly more happiness than non-social strategies. The great thing is that opportunities are everywhere, whether it's in your community or at work.

Why this helps

Giving thoughtful consideration to your level of happiness will help you know yourself better and provide food for thought on how to increase it even further.

You'll be able to enjoy and engage in social activities more purposefully, with the end goal of greater happiness in sight. Along the way, you'll think more optimistically, and act in ways which will attract positivity into your life.

The perks of doing this lesson is that it tells you about the most effect strategy that will lead to improved happiness. By increasing your positive social activities, you'll go a long way to meeting your need for social connectedness, control, and achievement. So, if all this seems just what you could do with right now, keep happy and carry on!

Exercise (Write down or downloadable form)

For this exercise, you will need 10 minutes during which you can dedicate your full attention, be curious about your interests, and have a desire to be happier.

That's easy, wouldn't you agree?

Once you're in the habit of doing things that increase your happiness, you'll never look back!

Step 1

Create a list of social activities you would like to pursue if they are new to you, or revisit, if you used to do them. These can either be home-based, community-based, or work-based.

Step 2

Now prioritise them in terms of enjoyment and accessibility.

List of activities I would like to pursue

Activity	Venue	Times	☒ ?
E.g. Zumba class	'Feel Great' health club	Mon, Wed, Fri, Sat: 11am, 1pm, 3pm, 7pm	☒

Step 3

Put a tick beside those activities that are available to do now.

Place a question mark beside those activities that you need to explore more in terms of availability, that is, dates, times, venue.

Step 4

Make the decision to attend the activity that you have said will make you feel happier and explore those activities you need more information on.

If you fancy an activity that is not available, what about setting one up and asking others to join? How about that for meeting your human need for social connectedness, control, and achievement?!

Bonus tip

If some of the social activities you've recorded lie outside of your comfort zone, don't worry too much. You have the deciding factor of whether you carry them out or not; however, stretching yourself just a little can make such a big difference in improving your happiness... and sense of achievement.

To make things easier, if you need a confidence boost to pursue one (or more) of your desired activities, why not ask someone you know to accompany you, even if it's for the first couple of sessions ...?

What have you learnt?

Engaging in positive social activities brings about the biggest gains to your happiness. It meets several of your human needs, including emotional/social connectedness, achievement, and control.

What next?

Now that you're starting to think about the activities you might want to pursue to improve your happiness, you might find that you're comparing yourself to others, or feeling the need to 'follow the sheep.' Our next lesson can help with this, as it gives you ways of how to live authentically.