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IN SIGHT *for Oregon Lawyers and Judges*

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF YOUR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE

“HAPPY” ENHANCERS

*“Getting what you go after is success.
But liking it while you are getting it is
happiness.”*

— Bertha Damon

According to “happiness experts,” each of us is born with a happiness set point. This is a genetic level – from giddy to grumpy – around which our happiness level tends to settle, regardless of what happens to us. While happiness is influenced by genes, we can, with practice, find ways to dial up our happiness levels.

Try practicing some of the following “happy” enhancers:

- Get regular, brisk exercise. It’s a natural mood lifter.
- Rent funny movies or stand-up comedy videos. Just the physical act of smiling can improve your mood.
- Listen to inspiring music. Sing along. Dance around the house.
- Buy some brightly colored flowers. There’s a reason why flowers are such popular gifts.
- Snuggle with your dog or cat.
- Plan a change of scenery – especially one that gets you back to nature.
- Take care of your body. Get enough quality sleep and exercise. Eat a healthy diet, which means going light on junk food and sweets.
- Keep a gratitude journal, where each day you write down at least one thing you’re grateful for.

● Learn how to meditate. Feeling stressed can put a damper on happiness, and meditation helps you shed stress. Studies also show that meditation sparks higher levels of activity in the part of the brain where feelings of happiness, enthusiasm, joy, high energy, and alertness are generated.

● Forgive. Holding grudges can drain you of energy and the ability to feel happy.

● Do something for others. Sometimes, sacrificing what we want for the greater good can boost our happiness levels.

● Form relationships. People who have close connections, share physical touch, and enjoy the comfort of friendship and love are generally happier.

● Follow your dreams – not someone else’s. Be true to yourself.

● Know that a lifetime spent chasing the almighty dollar rarely brings true happiness. Experts say that acquiring things beyond “middle-class comforts” does not usually make us happier. Lottery winners say they are no happier than anyone else, once the excitement of winning has worn off.

Sources: David Lykken, PhD, University of Minnesota; Ronald Inglehart, PhD; *Journal of Happiness Studies*, Ed Diener, PhD, et al.; Jon Kabat-Zinn, PhD, founder, Stress Reduction Clinic at the University of Massachusetts Medical School.

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