

The Pursuit of Happiness: Your Weekly Positive Psychology Practice

Back to school can be a stressful time for many students. You might be adapting to a new schedule, meeting new professors, or getting used to a new living situation. Many students feel especially overwhelmed and stressed out. If this is the case, we encourage you to try some of the activities listed below, and/or consider calling 540-665-4530 to make an appointment with The Counseling Center.

WEEK ONE

Dance it out. Go for a walk/run. Talk about it. Go to bed earlier. Focus on what you can control. Reminisce on the good times. Listen to music. Look for opportunities in life's challenges. SMILE!

WEEK TWO

"Feelings are much like waves, we can't stop them from coming, but we can choose which one to surf."
Journaling! You might be thinking, "No thanks, I already have enough work", but journaling only takes 10 minutes a day and can have significant benefits. Write about whatever comes to mind: your job, school, friends, or anything else! You'll be glad you did.

WEEK THREE

"The goal is to learn to be nurturing with yourself so you can feel free." –Deborah Day
Treat Yourself! It is easy to think there isn't enough time in a day to take a moment or two to focus on you, especially when taking a full load of classes and having a part-time job to top it all off. But with a little bit of creativity, you will find that you can make the time to take care of you.

WEEK FOUR

"I urge you to please notice when you are happy, and exclaim or murmur or think at some point, 'If this isn't nice, I don't know what is.'" –Kurt Vonnegut
Gratitude Letters: Take a few minutes each day to jot down things for which you are grateful or even write a letter to someone! Expressing gratitude can help turn your attention to what you have, instead of what you don't. The biggest changes come from habitually expressing gratitude, but even one-timers will experience a short-term boost in mood!

WEEK FIVE

"That's the best revenge of all: happiness. Nothing drives people crazier than seeing someone have a good life." –Chuck Palahniuk (author of Fight Club)
Happiness has the ability to be infectious. The more we surround ourselves by things and people that provide us with a sense of joy and life, the easier it is for us to share that joy with others. So, try this: Talk health, happiness, and prosperity to every person you meet. Show the world the happiness you have within you and show the world how good happiness feels. Then, share the wealth!

WEEK SIX

"Remind yourself that it's okay not to be perfect." -Anonymous
Perfection Paradox: Positive affirmations are short statements that can lift your spirit. (Examples: Challenges help me grow. I can handle whatever comes. I am strong.) These can help you to achieve your goals, focus on the positive, and so much more. You can post affirmations around your house or say them to yourself throughout the day.

WEEK SEVEN

"Whatever you're going through right now, just remember: There's hope in every breath, in every heartbeat, and in every smile. Don't give up." –Robert Tew
Let's Love Ourselves. This could be accepting yourself for who you are, flaws and all. Maybe it means admitting you need help from someone else, even though you wish you didn't. Know you are good enough. Know you deserve love. Embrace the unknown. Be good to your body.

WEEK EIGHT

"Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle." –Philo
The Power of Kindness: Focus on joining with your peers to stand against the mistreatment of others and to promote the practice of kindness. We have the power to shape the way people treat each other. Let's set an example by being kind to others. Ask someone how they are doing. Sometimes just being there for a friend can mean more than words. Don't be quick to assume. Take a step back and realize that a friend or peer may be struggling and just might not know how to ask for help.

WEEK NINE

“Perseverance is the will to carry on. Once we discern our true direction, we stay the course for however long it takes, regardless of the obstacles that arise”

-www.virtuesproject.com

Practice the Virtue of Perseverance: Remind yourself that you CAN take small steps to achieve what you set out to do. Understand that with every step you take you will learn and grow. When you feel overwhelmed by a faraway goal, acknowledge that you have it within yourself, at this moment, to get to where you want to be later.

WEEK TEN

“The person who knows how to laugh at himself will never cease to be amused.” -Shirley MacLaine

Practice Laughter! Share something silly about yourself with a friend or classmate. Don't forget to laugh at yourself. We all do silly things so OWN it. Try to take yourself less seriously. It takes a lot of energy to be serious all of the time. So relax, kick back, and laugh it out!

WEEK ELEVEN

“Life is a series of natural and spontaneous changes. Don't resist them—that only creates sorrow. Let reality be reality. Let things flow naturally forward in whatever way they like.” –Lao Tzu

Go with the Flow: Have a clearly defined goal. Create a sense of purpose and meaning. Have ownership over what you are doing and your decisions. Know what you need to do. Know that you can do what you need to do—believe in yourself, your skills, and your abilities.

WEEK TWELVE:

“Never give up on a dream just because of the time it will take to accomplish it. The time will pass anyway.” –Earl Nightingale

Imagining the Future: Imagine how you would like to be a year from now. Create a self-portrait that reflects how you see yourself in the future. Use this as a way to jump start your path to becoming who you want to be in the future.

WEEK THIRTEEN:

“You're not as breakable as you think.” -Anonymous

Resiliency: Bend, don't break. Accept that all things are temporary. Not everything is forever. Don't be afraid of adversity; adversity helps us gain the tools to deal with challenges in the future. Be creative with problem-solving. Many problems can be solved... it just takes some thinking outside of the box.

WEEK FOURTEEN:

“Each morning we have an opportunity to start again.” – Anonymous

Focus on smiling, every single day. Smiling is contagious and all you need is just a little bit of happiness to get yourself started. So, try this: Write a little note or mantra to yourself and store them in a weekly pill organizer. Include chocolates and candies! Start each morning by opening up your box for the day to see what is in store for you! Some ideas for quotes: “It's okay not to be perfect.” “Stop waiting for things to happen. Go out and make them happen.” “Something wonderful is about to happen.” “Be better than you were yesterday.”

WEEK FIFTEEN:

“I am still determined to be cheerful and to be happy in whatever situation I may be, for I have also learnt from experience that the greater part of our happiness or misery depends upon our dispositions and not upon our circumstances.” -Martha Washington

Celebrating Accomplishments: It is easy to minimize our accomplishments by focusing on all the things we still have yet to do. Try not to look at accomplishments in black and white terms. Take a moment and acknowledge that you are moving towards your goals and that in itself is something to be proud of! Reward yourself. Whether it's giving yourself the night off from school work or eating your favorite dish, celebrate your accomplishments with something that will make you smile!

Meet an Organization:

www.PositivelyPositive.com

Positively Positive is a website all about optimism and inspiration. The goal is simple: to bring encouraging voices and messages to communities all around the world.



Counseling Center