

Happiness: Antidote for anxiety

We know that anxiety can have a devastating impact on our mental health. And, now with the pandemic situation that we are facing, I know that for some people, anxiety has reached a peak, a level that is hard to overcome. We do not want to neglect that the situation we are facing with COVID-19 is challenging, but does that mean we are powerless, that we can't help ourselves? No, I do believe that it is a good time and a great opportunity to learn what we can do to



improve our general sense of well-being, for now, but also as a way of life, that will help us be proactive in dealing with anxiety in the future. So there are many reasons, and situations why people are experiencing anxiety, and also there are different avenues that can help reduce anxiety. We do know that happiness and joy are, in fact, soothing agents, antidotes against anxiety. So in this podcast, I will give you tips that will promote happiness.

Let's start by defining happiness...

So, happiness is not simply an emotion that makes you smile or laugh for a short period of time. It is much deeper than that. Happiness is a range of positive emotions, yes but deep meaningful happiness is linked to positive attitudes toward life, and it is the happiness linked to positive attitudes that will act best against anxiety. It is interesting to note that happiness is not simply something we feel, but there is a physiological reaction in our brain that is amazingly powerful. This reaction, the response in our brain has the potential to not only reduce anxiety but to help us face adversity and bounce back, to provide us with a greater sense of well-being and much more.

Cultivating happiness

The fact is, we all desire to be happy with ourselves, and with our life in general, and we seek happiness in all kinds of things. Our society teaches us that by chasing after money, wealth and power, and other various things, we will find an answer to our deepest desires of being happy.

Well, interesting studies are saying that true happiness is not something that can be found in external things. Of course, being successful at work, being comfortable financially, having a nice house can bring a sense of happiness, but this type of happiness does not last long. The reality is that human beings are often satisfied with things, only for a very short amount of time. It seems that we are always on the lookout for the next new thing that will make us feel happier, which will provide us with a sense of fulfilment. Although these external things bring a short period of joy in our lives, they are not the answer to long-lasting inner happiness.

What we truly need is a change of perception and attitude towards life in general. When we start appreciating what we have and slow down the desire of always wanting and seeking for something new, loving others and caring for ourselves, we can truly start cultivating happiness. We need to appreciate and see life through new lenses. Making these changes does not cost anything, we can all do it, we can all practice it.

Things you can do to rewire your brain, to change the way you see life, and cultivate happiness!

it is important to note that our brain is wired to focus more on the negative side of things, that is how our mind works. Changing our attitudes and perception, on life, will require of us a genuine effort at the beginning, but that is okay. The changes that must take place, can be compared, to learning a new language. It can be challenging at times, but with learning and practice, we can learn to speak the language!

Count your blessings: Be grateful. Gratitude is to recognize and to be thankful for the goodness you have and receive in your life. Gratitude has the power to positively change your mindset. Make a habit of counting your blessings, small or big. The joy of spending time chatting with a love one, sitting outside enjoying the sun, to being able to eat and sleep in a comfortable bed! Start naming and counting your blessings every day, you will soon see that you have a lot to be grateful for. Beware, anxiety can blur your vision, you might find it hard to find blessings in your life when the situation is difficult. Don't give up, dig and I am convinced you will find a blessing!

Learn from the past: From past difficult situations, we often focus on what was hard and negative about it. Without neglecting the hurt, we can practice reflecting on our personal growth from these experiences, and explore the rich life lessons we have gained from them. There are

often 2 sides to a situation, and focusing only on what went wrong, won't be helpful. But if we look closer, we might be able to pull, some good out of them.

Enjoy today: Live in the moment. Ruminating on the past, and worrying about the future will simply **WASTE YOUR PRESENT TIME AND GIVE YOU ANXIETY**. You cannot change the past, and we do not know what tomorrow will bring. Of course, there are past situations, that we need to revisit for resolution, and future situations we need to plan for. But, studies show that for most, our thinking about the past and the future is negative and useless. These thoughts, worries can be compared to “bad seeds” planted in our brain. From these “bad seeds” grows weeds. This is not helpful for our brains. It has the potential to increase your level of anxiety. Focus on today, bring your thoughts back to the present moment, and gain control of what you can do now. A simple exercise to refocus on the now: Name 5 things you see, smell, and hear..start with that!

Connect with people: There is something wonderful and fulfilling, in being able to love and serve others. Studies show that there is a direct link between, overall happier well-being and with serving or connecting with other people. It is amazingly wonderful what happens to our brain, and body when we interact with people, the love hormone is released and brings happiness. Serving, or caring for others can take different forms and shapes. Offer to volunteer in your community, help a neighbour, hold the door for an elderly person, simply smile and say hello. These gestures will contribute to your happiness.

Here it is. These tips are simple things, but they could have positive effects on your mental health well-being. I encourage you to implement one, or two things. Start small, but start making changes, and you might see big things happening