

BEHAVIORAL & FINANCIAL INSIGHTS

Don't Worry, Be Happy

These days it seems there is so much to worry about. The media is replete with news of crime, shootings, civil unrest, and the remnants of a global pandemic. Financially, there are concerns about inflation, taxes, and deficits.

Life, with all its trials and uncertainty, provides ample opportunities to worry. If we aren't careful, we can be consumed with worry – crowding out the ability for us to experience happiness.

Be Happy

Telling someone “don't worry” is not realistic. There are things we should worry about. A healthy amount of worry can influence us to plan better and take action to obtain better results. But there must be a balance. There is definitely a time to worry, but we need to make sure we make time and consciously pursue opportunities for happiness.

The Power of Laughter

Young children are often the greatest examples of raw happiness; we can learn a lot from them. They are quick to forgive, and they laugh – a lot. Studies show that the average four-year-old laughs 300 times per day. Any guess how many times the average forty-year-old laughs in a day? Only four times ⁽¹⁾.

Laughter causes our brains to release dopamine, oxytocin, and endorphins. These hormones not only make us feel good, but they create emotional bonds with others. In a world of worry and disunity, it sounds like this is a fantastic remedy. Good-natured and appropriate humor is both uplifting and unifying.

Not Funny? Don't Worry

You don't have to be “funny” in order to benefit from laughter and levity. You can surround yourself with those that have a good sense of humor and benefit immensely. You can also make a point of watching a funny movie or going to a comedy show periodically – a small investment of time and money for some priceless benefits.

Even something as simple as smiling at someone or complimenting another can release neurotransmitters that elicit positive, constructive feelings. This may not seem natural, nor is it easy to do in a world filled with worry. However, it will certainly be worth it – both for you and the recipient of your good cheer.

⁽¹⁾ Aaker, Jennifer & Bagdonas, Naomil. *Humor, Seriously*. Page 25. Random House, 2021