

Happy for No Reason

7 Steps to Being Happy from the Inside Out

By Marci Shimoff

Scriptures and LDS conference quotes chosen by Becky Whitaker

Focus on Solutions

Maya Angelou, poet

“If you don’t like something, change it. If you can’t change it, change your attitude. Don’t complain.”

Philippians 2:14

“Do all things without murmurings and disputings”

D&C 9:6-8

“Do not murmur, my son, for it is wisdom in me that I have dealt with you after this manner. Behold, you have not understood; you have supposed that I would give it unto you, when you took no thought save it was to ask me. But, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right.”

Jeffrey R. Holland, April 2007 general conference

I love what Elder Orson F. Whitney once said: “The spirit of the gospel is optimistic; it trusts in God and looks on the bright side of things. The opposite or pessimistic spirit drags men down and away from God, looks on the dark side, murmurs, complains, and is slow to yield obedience.” We should honor the Savior’s declaration to “be of good cheer.” (Indeed, it seems to me we may be more guilty of breaking that commandment than almost any other!) Speak hopefully. Speak encouragingly, including about yourself. Try not to complain and moan incessantly. As someone once said, “Even in the golden age of civilization someone undoubtedly grumbled that everything looked too yellow.”

Look for the Lesson and the Gift

Dr. Albert Ellis, psychologist

“The best years of your life are the ones in which you decide your problems are your own. You do not blame them on your mother, the ecology, or the president. You realize that you control your own destiny.”

Proverbs 1:5

“A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels.”

Galatians 6:7

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”

Richard G. Scott, April 1996 general conference

“Find the compensatory blessings in your life when, in the wisdom of the Lord, He deprives you of something you very much want. To the sightless or hearing impaired, He sharpens the other senses. To the ill, He gives patience, understanding, and increased appreciation for others’ kindness. With the loss of a dear one, He deepens the bonds of love, enriches memories, and kindles hope in a future reunion. You will discover compensatory blessings when you willingly accept the will of the Lord and exercise faith in Him.”

Make Peace with Yourself

His Holiness the Dalai Lama

“We can never obtain peace in the outer world until we make peace with ourselves.” --

Isaiah 32:17

“And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.”

Romans 14:19

“Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.”

Joseph B. Withlin, April 1991 general conference

“The value of peace within our hearts cannot be measured. When we are at peace, we can be free of worry and fear, knowing that with the Lord’s help, we can do all that is expected or required of us. We can approach every day, every task, and every challenge with assurance and confidence in the outcome. We have freedom of thought and action, freedom to be happy. . . . Few, if any, blessings from God are more valuable to our spiritual health than the reward of peace within.”

Question your Thoughts

Anthony de Mello, Jesuit priest and psychotherapist

“There is only one cause of unhappiness; the false beliefs you have in your head, beliefs so widespread, so commonly held, that it never occurs to you to question them.”

Isaiah 55:8-9

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

2 Nephi 9:28-29

“O that cunning plan of the evil one! O the vainness, and the frailties, and the foolishness of men! When they are learned they think they are wise, and they hearken not unto the counsel of God, for they set it aside, supposing they know of themselves, wherefore, their wisdom is foolishness and it profiteth them not. And they shall perish. But to be learned is good if they hearken unto the counsels of God.”

Joseph B. Wirthlin, April 1982 general conference

In his widely acclaimed essay *As a Man Thinketh*, James Allen reinforced what Jesus so beautifully proclaimed. Mr. Allen wrote: “Man is made or unmade by himself; in the armoury of thought he forges the weapons by which he destroys himself; he also fashions the tools with which he builds for himself heavenly mansions of joy and strength and peace. By the right choice and true application of thought, man ascends to the Divine Perfection; by the abuse and wrong application of thought, he descends below the level of the beast. Between these two extremes are all the grades of character, and man is their maker and master. ... All that a man achieves and all that he fails to achieve is the direct result of his own thoughts.” (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., n. d., pp. 8–9, 34.)

Go Beyond the Mind and Let Go

The Venerable Ajahn Chah, Buddhist monk

“If you let go a little, you will have a little peace. If you let go a lot, you will have a lot of peace. If you let go completely, you will have complete peace.”

Romans 12:2

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

D&C 84:81-83

“Therefore, take ye no thought for the morrow, for what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, or wherewithal ye shall be clothed. For, consider the lilies of the field, how they grow, they toil not, neither do they spin; and the kingdoms of the world, in all their glory, are not arrayed like one of these. For your Father, who is in heaven, knoweth that you have need of all these things.”

Ezra Taft Benson, quoted in April 1993 general conference by Elder Lowell Wood

“Men and women who turn their lives over to God will discover that He can make a lot more out of their lives than they can. He will deepen their joys, expand their vision, quicken their minds, strengthen their muscles, lift their spirits, multiply their blessings, increase their opportunities, comfort their souls, raise up friends, and pour out peace.”

Incline your Mind toward Joy

Colette, French novelist

“What a wonderful life I’ve had! I only wish I’d realized it sooner.”

Psalm 16:11

“Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.”

2 Nephi 2:25

“Adam fell that men might be, and men are that they might have joy.”

Dallin H. Oaks, October 1991 general conference

Joy is more than happiness. Joy is the ultimate sensation of well-being. It comes from being complete and in harmony with our Creator and his eternal laws. . . . Our Creator wants us to be happy in this life. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that “happiness is the object and design of our existence.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 255.) The things of the earth were created for our happiness. . . . There is no lasting happiness in what we possess. Happiness and joy come from what a person *is*, not from what he or she *possesses* or *appears to be*.

Focus on Gratitude

Meister Eckhart, German theologian

“If the only prayer you said in your whole life was ‘Thank you,’ that would suffice.”

D&C 59:7

“Thou shalt thank the Lord thy God in all things.”

D&C 78:19

“And he who receiveth all things with thankfulness shall be made glorious; and the things of this earth shall be added unto him, even an hundred fold, yea, more.”

David B. Haight, October 2002 general conference

“If we’re ever going to show gratitude properly to our Heavenly Father, we should do it with all of our heart, might, mind, and strength—because it was He who gave us life and breath. He gave us the opportunity to live as we are, to have the gospel in our lives, . . . As that gratitude is magnified and developed and expanded, it can bless our hearts and our minds and our souls to where we’d like to continue to carry on and do those things that we are asked to do.”

Practice Forgiveness

Robert Muller, Assistant Secretary-General to the United Nations

“To forgive is the highest, most beautiful form of love. In return, you will receive untold peace and happiness.”

Luke 6:36-37

“Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.”

D&C 64:9-10

“Ye ought to forgive one another; for the that forgiveth not his brother his trespasses standeth condemned before the Lord; for there remaineth in him the greater sin. I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men.”

Gordon B. Hinckley, October 2005 general conference

“Somehow forgiveness, with love and tolerance, accomplishes miracles that can happen in no other way. The great Atonement was the supreme act of forgiveness. The magnitude of that Atonement is beyond our ability to completely understand. I know only that it happened, and that it was for me and for you. The suffering was so great, the agony so intense, that none of us can comprehend it when the Savior offered Himself as a ransom for the sins of all mankind. It is through Him that we gain forgiveness.”

Spread Lovingkindness

J. M. Barrie, Scottish novelist

“Those who bring sunshine into the lives of others, cannot keep it from themselves.”

Colossians 3:12

“Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering.”

Alma 41:14

“See that you are merciful unto your brethren; deal justly, judge righteously, and do good continually; and if ye do all these things then shall ye receive your reward.”

James E. Faust, October 2001, general conference

“We do not prove our love for the Savior only by doing “some great thing.” If the prophet personally asked you to go on a mission to some strange and exotic place, would you go? You would probably make every effort to go. But what about paying tithing? What about doing your home teaching? We show our love for the Savior by doing the many small acts of faith, devotion, and kindness to others that define our character.”

Nourish your Body

Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, French writer

“Tell me what you eat, and I will tell you what you are.”

Ephesians 5:29

“For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church.”

D&C 89:10-11

“All wholesome herbs God hath ordained for the constitution, nature, and use of man—Every herb in the season thereof, and every fruit in the season thereof; all these to be used with prudence and thanksgiving.”

Boyd K. Packer, October 1994 general conference

“Your body is the instrument of your mind. In your emotions, the spirit and the body come closest to being one. What you learn spiritually depends, to a degree, on how you treat your body. That is why the Word of Wisdom is so important. The habit-forming substances prohibited by that revelation—tea, coffee, liquor, tobacco—interfere with the delicate feelings of spiritual communication, just as other addictive drugs will do. Do not ignore the Word of Wisdom, for that may cost you the “great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures” promised to those who keep it. And good health is an added blessing.”

Energize your Body

Martha Graham, dancer and choreographer

“There is a vitality, a life-force, an energy, a quickening that is translated through you into action. . . . Keep the channel open.”

Isaiah 40:31

“But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”

D&C 88:124

“Cease to be idle; cease to be unclean; cease to find fault one with another; cease to sleep longer than is needful; retire to thy bed early, that ye may not be weary; arise early, that your bodies and your minds may be invigorated.”

A. Theodore Tuttle, April 1975 general conference

“Despite medical marvels, ill health and early death still rob men not only of life but of the zest for life. We are a healthy people. . . . Obedience to [the Word of Wisdom] qualifies us to receive

the promised blessings: we shall receive health, wisdom, strength, and protection. We do not worry. We have an inner peace and quietude. Even knowing the calamities we may face, we know we will have the promised blessings and protection of the Lord.”

Tune in to your Body’s Wisdom

Harriet Lerner, PhD, clinical psychologist

“We will be in tune with our bodies only if we truly love and honor them. We can’t be in good communication with the enemy.”

1 Corinthians 3:16-17

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.”

D&C 88:67

“And if your eye be single to my glory, your whole bodies shall be filled with light, and there shall be no darkness in you; and that body which is filled with light comprehendeth all things.”

Boyd K. Packer, October 2000 general conference

“The Prophet Joseph Smith said: ‘We came to this earth that we might have a body and present it pure before God in the celestial kingdom. The great principle of happiness consists in having a body. The devil has no body, and herein is his punishment. He is pleased when he can obtain the tabernacle of man. . . . All beings who have bodies have power over those who have not’ (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 181). . . . Your body really *is* the instrument of your mind and the foundation of your character.”

Invite Connection to your Higher Power

Mother Teresa

“God is the friend of silence. Se how nature—trees, flowers, grass—grows in silence; see the stars, the moon and the sun, how they move in silence. . . . We need silence to be able to touch souls.”

Matthew 7:7

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.”

3 Nephi 18:20

“And whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is right, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you.”

Richard G. Scott, April 2007 general conference

“Prayer is a supernal gift of our Father in Heaven to every soul. Think of it: the absolute Supreme Being, the most all-knowing, all-seeing, all-powerful personage, encourages you and me, as insignificant as we are, to converse with Him as our Father. We need no appointment. Our supplication can be brief or can occupy all the time needed. It can be an extended expression of love and gratitude or an urgent plea for help. He has created numberless cosmos and populated them with worlds, yet you and I can talk with Him personally, and He will ever answer.”

Listen to your Inner Voice

Deepak Chopra, MD, physician

“To make the right choices in life, you have to get in touch with your soul. To do this, you need to experience solitude. . . because in the silence you hear the truth and know the solutions.”

2 Nephi 32:5

“If ye will enter in by the way, and receive the Holy Ghost, it will show unto you all things what ye should do.”

D&C 11:12-13

“Put your trust in that Spirit which leadeth to do good—yea, to do justly, to walk humbly, to judge righteously; and this is my Spirit. Verily, verily, I say unto you, I will impart unto you of my Spirit, which shall enlighten your mind, which shall fill your soul with joy.”

Robert D. Hales, October 2007 general conference

“We prepare to receive personal revelation as the prophets do, by studying the scriptures, fasting, praying, and building faith. Faith is the key.”

Trust Life’s Unfolding

Sri Ramakrishna, Indian saint

“The winds of grace are always blowing, but you have to raise the sail.”

Proverbs 16:20

“He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good: and whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he.”

Jeremiah 17:7

“Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is.”

Richard G. Scott, April 1989 general conference

“In many ways, the world is like a jungle, with dangers that can harm or mutilate your body, enslave or destroy your mind, or decimate your morality. It was intended that life be a challenge, not so that you would fail, but that you might succeed through overcoming. You face on every hand difficult but vitally important decisions. There is an array of temptations, destructive influences, and camouflaged dangers, the like of which no previous generation has faced. I am persuaded that today no one, no matter how gifted, strong, or intelligent, will avoid serious problems without seeking the help of the Lord. I repeat: Don’t face the world alone. Trust in the Lord.”

Find your Passion

Thomas Kinkaide, artist

“When we learn to say a deep, passionate yes to the things that really matter, then peace begins to settle onto our lives like golden sunlight sifting to a forest floor.”

Ecclesiastes 9:10

“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.”

Colossians 3:23

“And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.”

Dieter F. Uchtdorf, April 2006 general conference

You live in a time of great challenges and opportunities. . . . You are free to make the right choices. This requires hard work, self-discipline, and an optimistic outlook, which will bring joy and freedom into your life now and in the future.”

Follow the Inspiration of the Moment

Joseph Campbell, professor

“When you follow your bliss . . . doors will open where you would not have thought there would be doors; and where there wouldn’t be a door for anyone else.”

Job 32:8

“But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.”

1 Nephi 4:6

“And I was led by the Spirit, not knowing beforehand the things which I should do.”

James E. Faust, April 1980 general conference

“Personal revelation comes as a testimony of truth and as guidance in spiritual and temporal matters. Members of the Church know that the promptings of the Spirit may be received upon all facets of life, including daily, ongoing decisions.”

Contribute to Something Greater than Yourself

Albert Schweitzer, physician and humanitarian

“I don’t know what your destiny will be, but one thing I do know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve.”

Deuteronomy 16:17

“Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee.”

Luke 6:38

“Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.”

Thomas S. Monson, October 2006 general conference

“While driving to the office one morning, I passed a dry-cleaning establishment which had a sign in the window. It read, “It’s the Service That Counts.” The sign’s message simply would not leave my mind. Suddenly I realized why. In actual fact it *is* the service that counts—the Lord’s service. Along your pathway of life you will observe that you are not the only traveler. There are others who need your help. There are feet to steady, hands to grasp, minds to encourage, hearts to inspire, and souls to save.”

Tend to your Relationships

Jim Rohn, author

“You become the average of the five people you associate with most.”

1 Corinthians 12:25-26

“There should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it.”

D&C 126:3

“I therefore command you to send my word abroad, and take especial care of your family from this time.”

Henry B. Eyring, October 1996 general conference

“Every member has made a covenant to do works of kindness as the Savior would do. So any call to bear witness and to care for others is not a request for extra service; it is a blessing designed by a loving Heavenly Father and His Son Jesus Christ.”

Surround Yourself with Support

Martine Rutte, corporate consultant

“You have to do it by yourself, And you can’t do it alone.”

Proverbs 17:17

“A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.”

D&C 75:24-25

“It is the duty of the church to assist in supporting the families of those, and also to support the families of those who are called and must needs be sent unto the world to proclaim the gospel unto the world. Wherefore, I, the Lord, give unto you this commandment, that ye obtain places for your families, inasmuch as your brethren are willing to open their hearts.”

Robert D. Hales, October 1975 general conference

“The gospel plan requires giving and receiving. Faith alone is not enough. We need “works” to serve and to be served. We can’t do it alone. The many missions which we have in life cannot be embarked upon successfully without the help of others. . . . All these are acts of love and service which require the help of others and the giving of help to others. When we return to our Heavenly Father, he does not want us to come back alone. He wants us to return with honor with our families and those whom we have helped along the road of life.”

See the World as your Family

Maya Angelou, poet

“Human beings are more alike than we are un-alike. . . . Try to spread your giving of your self . . . to people who may not even look like you. You belong to everybody, and everybody belongs to you.”

Genesis 4:9

“And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy Brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother’s keeper?”

Jacob 2:17

“Think of your brethren like unto yourselves, and be familiar with all and free with your substance, that they may be rich like unto you.”

L. Tom Perry, April 1994 general conference

“We declare to the world the value and importance of family life. . . . If you want to live in a world of peace, security, and opportunity, the family you contribute to can add to the well-being, yes, even of the whole world.”