

# The 10 Habits of Highly Successful (and Deeply) Happy People

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Over the years I've had the privilege of working closely with over a thousand individuals, entrepreneurs, leaders, executives, business owners and coaches. Many of these people have tried radically different approaches to life. In having a front row seat to so many people's lives, you cannot help but notice certain approaches that work extraordinarily well, and others that do not.

This is a topic that has been of great interest to me for a long, long time. Over the past 25 years I have studied the teachings from many of the world's great spiritual and wisdom traditions, and had the opportunity to spend some time with a few very wise souls. I have also been an enthusiastic student of the burgeoning field of positive psychology - which has made huge strides in documenting just what does contribute to higher levels of happiness, flow, effectiveness and meaning in people's personal lives, careers and businesses.

So, while everyone's personal definition of factors is going to vary, here are a few of the key habits I see working very well for the most successful and happy people I know:

**Competence** – Successful people get really good at what they do. They choose paths that engage and challenge them and leverage their natural strengths. They get the best training and experience they can, and typically find teachers or mentors that can support their ongoing development and shortcut their journey. The better they are at what they do the more value they can add to their customers, clients, organization or world in general.

**Clarity** – Successful people generally have a good sense of who they are, and where they are heading. In a professional context this means knowing where their strengths, skills and knowledge can make the most difference, and having a pretty good idea as to what the next step is.

**Courage** – To be human is to have fears and doubts. Anyone who has met with any measure of success has found a way to move past their existing limitations – to move forward even though they are scared and don't have all the answers.

**Commitment** – Successful people have a persistent commitment to move forward. Even though they may often get distracted or discouraged, they have high levels of determination that allow them to take consistent action to put in the critical mass of effort required for any measure of success.

**Calendar Mastery** – Very successful and happy people learn how to manage their time well. They pay attention to the best use of their time and consistently get the most important things done. This includes learning how to plan, and delegate, learning how to leverage themselves and most importantly learning how to take care of their health and mental and emotional well-being in a sustainable way. Without some level of time mastery, most people dissipate their energy or burn themselves out.

**Change Mastery** – Nothing is static in life or business. Things are always changing. Successful people have a higher tolerance of uncertainty and learn to master the process of change. In addition successful people are very good at managing the stress that is inherent in any dynamic situation and managing their own energy levels around it – so they can respond to opportunity with creativity and wisdom. Also most successful people have a strong desire to keep learning and growing, and this self induced change translates into much more awareness, knowledge and wisdom over time.

On the more personal level, highly successful and happy people have certain common habits of thought including:

**Compassion** – Really happy and successful people genuinely care about others. They have a “win – win”, “give to get” mentality. They have a view of life that assumes we are all connected, so they treat the people around them as they would like to be treated. They usually derive a lot of meaning and satisfaction from seeing others succeed.

**Connections** – Most of the successful and happy people I have ever worked with put a high value on the important relationship in their lives. They make these relationships a priority and consciously cultivate intimacy, patience, forgiveness, reciprocity and fun with the key people in their lives. Some of the happiest people I know have also developed their own deep connection, (often refined to a daily routine or practice), to the larger currents and forces in life itself - God, The Universe, Nature, Mother Earth, etc. This provides them with higher levels of meaning, a greater sense of belonging, and often far more gratitude, joy, peace, and sense of purpose in their life.

**Candor** – Successful and happy people practice high levels of honesty and integrity in everything they do. They are particularly good at observing and testing their own thoughts, assumptions and behaviors to ensure they are based on reality and exhibit high integrity.

**Calling** – Once our basic needs are met, much of the richness and meaning in our lives comes from having some cause, calling or greater purpose that we are in service of. Really successful people find a way to weave more service and meaning into their life and work.

While not necessarily a habit, I frequently observe that the happiest and most successful people I know, did not get there all by themselves. Whether consciously or unconsciously, they know that as humans we are all blind to the changes we most need to make, and frequently get stuck in various perspectives or situations that prevent us from moving forward.

So if you look behind any very successful person, there is almost always some form of support team (spouse, coach, mentor, colleague, organization, etc.) that is key in assisting the individual to learn what they need to learn, be their very best, and do what they need to do to achieve extraordinary results.