

Psst! Here's a secret that could make even
a pessimist smile: Minor shifts in your regular
habits can add up to serious joy. In these pages,
we've collected tips and insights from sunny
personalities (famous and not) to help
you discover more moments of
pleasure in your everyday life.

BY KATE ROCKWOOD

**a little advice
from some
of the happiest
people
on the planet**





--> Things are
already looking up!



Streamline your mornings

"The beginning of your day shapes how you feel the rest of the time. If you start out discombobulated, it's tough to clean your mental palate and begin again. So look at your morning patterns and think about what the snags are—the moments that make you scramble. Are you always struggling to find your keys? Commit to putting them in the same place. Are you always a little late to work? Time your commute for a week. If it really takes 27 minutes, giving yourself only 20 to get there will leave you feeling rushed."

—Gretchen Rubin, author of the best-selling *Better Than Before: What I Learned About Making and Breaking Habits*

Love the skin you're in

"When you're larger-bodied, you're taught to approach physical

activity thinking, 'This is not for me.' But when you talk to yourself like that, you don't stand much of a chance.

The first time I did yoga, I was 16, and it felt so new and scary. I really got beaten down. It wasn't until years later that I realized how big a role I had played in my own miserable experience. It took me seven years to even try yoga again.

We're all so obsessed with how others see us. I've been asked, 'What if people stare at me?' They're going to. They just are. But you have to check yourself: 'Why am I here? To worry about all the body issues other people are projecting onto me? Or to do my own thing and exercise?' I just ignore the looks and focus on my practice. If you empower other people's judgment and negativity, it brings you into their mental space. I want to live my life so out



→ The best reason to don cute lingerie: you!

DON'T SAVE YOUR GOOD UNDIES FOR DATE NIGHT

"Underwear is the first thing you put on in the morning and the last thing you take off, so it should be something you love to wear. I think of a pretty bra and panties as a way to take care of myself. They help you feel comfortable, sexy and luxurious. If someone else is lucky enough to see them? That's even better!"

—Heidi Klum, creative director of Heidi Klum Intimates

loud that I don't give a f--k if anyone is staring."

—Jessamyn Stanley, the yoga teacher behind the inspiring Instagram account @mynameisjessamyn

Flex your nostalgia

"When we study cultures from around the world, we find that the happiest people tend to have a connection to their ancestors and know where they come from. We humans get deep joy from feeling like we're part of a continuum. One surefire way to work in daily flashes of joy is to create what I call a 'pride shrine': Take pictures and memorabilia—a photo of your grandmother as a little girl, your kid's drawing, a seashell from the summer house you escape to with friends—and put them someplace you walk by every day. I have a pride shrine right outside my bedroom, and every day, I tend to linger on whatever catches my eye."

—Dan Buettner, National Geographic Fellow and author of *The Blue Zones: 9 Lessons for Living Longer from the People Who've Lived the Longest*

Invite people over

"I get such happiness from hosting friends, and I've learned that the parties I love most are the ones where you can take your shoes off, like a

casual dinner party or a game night. I like having some sort of shared activity. We did a clambake recently, and it took the pressure off of making small talk."

—Lauren Conrad, fashion designer and author of *Celebrate, a new guide to entertaining*

Make room for the not-so-happy feelings, too

"When someone asks how my day at the hospital was, I feel like I could either dump for 15 minutes and kill the conversation or keep it superficial and say, 'Fine.' It's easier to keep it superficial. But you can't be superficial with yourself. Sometimes at the end of one of those hard days, I'll want to work out or take my dogs to the park. Other times I'll shower and have a good cry. As sad as that sounds, it's a release of emotion. Allowing space for my sadness lets me move forward. After five years of taking care of sick kids, there are still more days that I come home feeling happy and deeply satisfied than not."

—Aileen Griffin, RN, a pediatric intensive care nurse at Lurie Children's Hospital in Chicago

Halt a stress spiral

"The things that we fret about are

often the things that are outside of our control: 'My plane is late, I'll miss my connection, I don't know what's going to happen next.' When I notice my thoughts starting to spin out of control, I say to myself, 'Something will happen.' It's a reminder that I can't figure out what that will be, exactly. But I'll still be OK. Something will happen. There's no sense in worrying that I'm going to evaporate in the meantime."

—Sharon Salzberg, co-founder of the Insight Meditation Society in Barre, Mass.

Pencil in time for pleasure

"Even if you work 60 hours a week, you probably still have time to do the things you love. The trouble is, most busy women assume they don't. So they make nebulous goals for some distant future, like 'Exercise more' or 'Catch up with friends.' That doesn't help."

But if you decide you want to grab coffee with your neighbor Beth, that's a very clear goal and you're more likely to do it. You'll call Beth and pick a date. When I studied the time logs of professional women, I realized that planning specific activities was key.

This Friday, take 10 minutes to set

priorities for the next week. Then look at your calendar. You want to exercise more? How about a spin class on Tuesday at 7 p.m.?"

—Laura Vanderkam, author of *I Know How She Does It*

Nip a bad mood in the bud

"Bad moods don't look the same for everyone. Being able to recognize your

Act like a big shot

"If you have an extra \$20 to burn, our research suggests that you can get even more joy from the money if you spend it on someone else. And, ideally, you'd spend it in a way that allows you to see the difference your generosity is making. Treat a co-worker to coffee, or take a friend who's in a rough patch out to a meal. You'll make them feel good—which will make you feel good."

—Elizabeth Dunn, PhD, a psychology professor at the University of British Columbia and author of *Happy Money*



own cues can help you avoid taking your frustrations out on the people you love. When I'm upset, for example, I rarely lose my temper, but I get quiet and impatient. So when I feel myself becoming impatient, I'll try to snap out of it. I'll eat a snack, take a nap or work out. After that, all is usually well."

—Michael Strahan, co-host of LIVE with Kelly and Michael and author of the new book *Wake Up Happy*

Smile at a stranger

"Children in preschool get so happy about the littlest things. When they're squeezing

orange juice, they're excited about how much they've squeezed. When they're growing pumpkin seeds, they're amazed by every half inch. It's a constant 'aha!' reminder about the uplifting impact even small moments can have. So I make

it a point to try to brighten someone else's day. I might compliment the store clerk's sweater or stop to chat with a homeless woman. I might offer a smile to a stranger—and wind up getting one back."

—Darla Pulliam, a preschool teacher at Culver City Unified School District's Center for Early Education in California

--> "Create peaceful mood lighting by replacing your light switches with dimmers, even for your porch or patio lights. It's a five-minute DIY fix that can make a huge difference."

Victoria Smith,
founder of the
interior design site
SFGirlByBay

Enjoy your job, even if it's not your one true calling

"We hear all the time that we should follow our passions. But new research shows that people who believe that and aren't currently in their dream job are more likely to be depressed. The truth is, you can be happy in a lot of jobs. It's often perspective that separates happy co-workers from those who are constantly thinking that life sucks. And when people are in a job long enough to become an expert at it, they typically find that it becomes their passion.

To enjoy the job you're stuck in now, start by writing down three new things every day that you're thankful

--> Stuck inside?
Bring a little
nature indoors.

Love a plant

"I find that having some greenery in my space gives me a little spirit boost. Try an autograph plant. They grow in sun or shade, in droughts or floods—and they're gorgeous. The real deal is awesome, but you can get the same lift from faux greenery. I have two dozen white tulips in a beautiful vase with water right now, and they make me smile every day. They're also fake as hell."

—Alison Victoria, host of HGTV's *Kitchen Crashers*



for at work. Sure, maybe you have a colleague you can't stand. But you got to work from home on Friday and your boss complimented your last report and someone left a box of doughnuts in the break room. We have a bias toward negativity that hardwires us to focus on the bad stuff. But writing down a list of the good things can boost our resilience and our happiness."

—Emma Seppala, PhD, science director of Stanford University's Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education and author of *The Happiness Track*

Prioritize movement

"My calendar gets very busy really quickly, but I know that my days don't work unless I find at least some time to be active. I schedule it in like a meeting, and then I have a backup plan in my mind (and on some days a backup plan for the backup plan) just in case conflicts come up. I get this energy from being active that I don't get from anything else. My body craves movement, and it inspires me. Sometimes I even go to a fitness class in the middle of the day just to get my brain working better."

—Payal Kadakia, co-founder and CEO of ClassPass

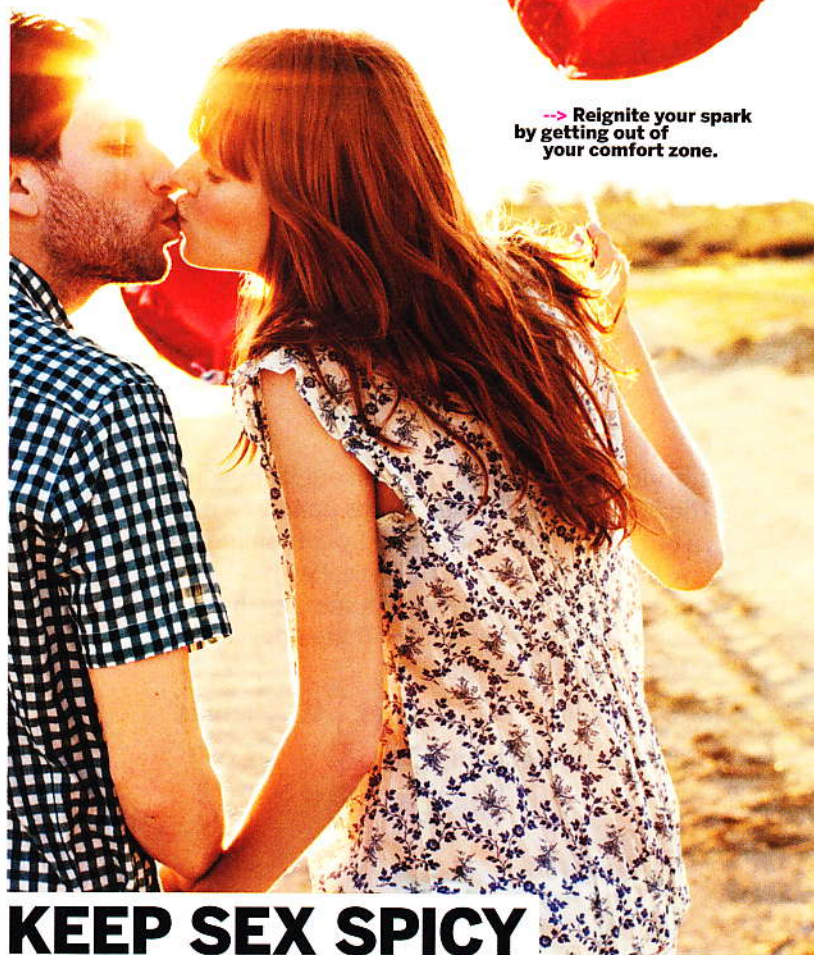
Replace a bad habit

"With a negative habit, you've got a billion neurons that are used to heading in the same direction, encouraging you to eat the ice cream or gossip with your co-worker or view the glass as half empty. If you want to stop a certain tendency, you have to fill the gap with a new behavior."

Let's say you're a natural complainer with your running buddy. Try starting the run by talking about something positive instead. Research shows that the beginning of a conversation predicts the ending. So with that simple shift, you're off on a different path.

Another tip: Make the new habit as easy as you can. The biggest barrier to starting a new behavior is the energy needed at the outset, like digging your guitar out of the closet before you practice. But if you shave just 20 seconds off the time it requires, the habit is more likely to stick. So move that guitar to a stand right next to the sofa. When you stack the cards in your favor, you'll start defaulting to the habit you want."

—Shawn Achor, a happiness researcher and author of *The Happiness Advantage*



→ Reignite your spark by getting out of your comfort zone.

KEEP SEX SPICY

"In the beginning of a relationship, there is so much mystery and novelty that the newness provides the mental stimulation piece of sexual arousal. Once the neurochemical cocktail of early attraction wanes, people think, 'What now?'"

Try to think of sex like food. When it comes to eating a balanced diet, you have a pyramid filled with variety. Sex also has some basic groups: sex that's about emotional intimacy, sex that's a quickie, sex that's really about fantasy, sex that's about the different senses. Consider what's on your personal sex menu—things you always like, but also things you only sometimes like and things you'd like to try. Just talking about it with your partner can heighten your arousal even before you get to the bedroom."

—Ian Kerner, PhD, a sex counselor in New York City and founder of the site *Good In Bed*