



127 HOURS

Our Special Happiness Edition



Daniel, 12V

My recipe for happiness

Happiness is a positive emotion that many people experience differently due to their interests and experiences. Unfortunately, the world we live in is not the best place for happiness to flourish within people because it's cruel, unfair and dangerous. In today's world it's important to find ways to stay happy despite all of the unjust events that have taken place, are taking place and will take place. I'll be sharing with you 2 recipes for happiness, a universal one and a personal one.



Photos in this issue: Donna Mechkuevska

Universally, for your happiness you would want a mix of everything that's positive for all people including yourself, therefore our ingredients include:

- 8g of financial stability
- 500mg of free time
- 1^{1/4} teaspoons of world peace
- 12g of basic intellect
- and a pinch of pleasant weather

Add them in the order they were listed in, stir until smooth and enjoy your happiness. Of course, you're free to modify the recipe by changing some of the measurements to your liking or including additional ingredients like an inconvenience remover in the form of *luck*.

As much as anyone would like that recipe to be possible, as explained above, the world wouldn't allow for that to happen so we have to focus on our individual happiness, which is why we're moving onto my personal recipe (results may vary).

In my recipe for happiness, I usually use the following ingredients:

- 5g of free time (primarily stolen)
- 11g of entertainment (video games, TV shows etc.)

Donna, 12V

“My happiness comes from my favourite activity - photography. It's a talent inherited from my grandfather. I took my first photo 6 years ago, this time of the year. Since then, I started to feel the need to capture every beautiful detail of life in photos. When my grandpa died, I promised him I would never give up photography. And it's not hard to keep it - it's like a natural process for me, such as breathing. I feel empty if I forget my camera at home, so I go back to get it. Now I've taken over 8000 photos and the number increases every day.”

- 11g of escapism (primarily in the form of daydreaming)
- ½ a teaspoon of tasty but unhealthy food
- And sprinkle in hanging out with friends (the frequency depends on the amount added)

Due to my inability to cook, I usually consume this mixture as it is. It's very important to immediately dispose of any lumps of *thinking about the future*, that may have formed in the process. It's also good to note that this recipe isn't optimal because some amazing ingredients are not within my, and many people's, reach. If you wish to try out my recipe and possess extravagant and rare ingredients such as *gifts, help, knowing how to do anything* or *inner peace*, you must



Photos in this issue: Donna Mechkuevska

add them for a smoother, more pleasant experience of happiness.

I hope these recipes were helpful and insightful to you, your friends, family and loved ones and I hope you find your own recipe if you still haven't because happiness is important and we all acquire it differently.

Naya, 12V

My happiness recipe

or at least the things that bring me joy

Time.

Give yourself time...

to hear the words and conversations around you.

The laugh and joy of strangers, and the interactions between others.

Give yourself time to hear the world around you, the way a beat merges with the plugging of strings and the sound of piano keys.

Give yourself time to see...

the way others walk and talk and the way they carry themselves,

how they behave toward themselves and others.

How everything constantly moves, how the trees shake and sway and the birds sing and laugh..

how the clouds race and the wind chases them.

Feel.

Feel the nightly breeze against your cheeks and the stone-cold walls under your fingertips.

Feel the beat of the music at the soles of your feet and drink in the sun kissing your skin.

Enjoy the small moments in life, give yourself a rest, a minute or too, to feel the world around you.

Sit on the sand and listen to the waves crashing.

Light a candle and listen to the music playing.

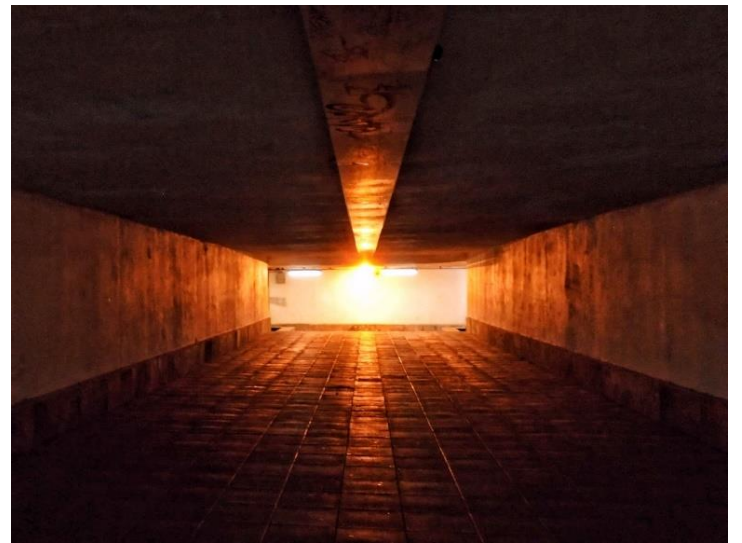
Sink into the grass and enjoy the smell of pine and earth.

Slow dance alone or with someone new.

Give yourself a little credit, give yourself time to grow and learn.

Learn patience with yourself and others, and understand how time flows.

Give yourself time to enjoy yourself.



Magdalena Dimova, 12V

Biochemistry of Happiness

In the human body there are hormones that make us happy and feeling positively charged. They are dopamine, oxytocin, serotonin and endorphin. And each of them has a different function.

Dopamine makes us feel blissful, euphoric and the most important happy. It also affects our concentration and motivation. The brain releases dopamine when you are expecting a reward. When you associate a certain activity with pleasure, the anticipation alone is enough to increase dopamine.

Oxytocin is called the “love hormone” for a reason - it is associated with emotional bonding, satisfaction, establishing trust and feelings of gratitude. It is secreted in large quantities during childbirth, causing rhythmic contractions, as well as during breastfeeding. Another way to stimulate its production is through physical contact, touching and cuddling, massage, contact with a pet.

Serotonin is a neurotransmitter that helps regulate mood and memory, and most people associate it with sleep-wake cycle. It's an interesting fact that about 95% of the body's serotonin is produced in the gut, not the brain- where it plays a key role in the proper functioning of the digestive tract. Serotonin helps with natural mood regulation, making you feel calmer, happier, more focused, and more emotionally stable. Ways to increase its levels are eating more fish, meat and nuts, and doing aerobic exercise.



Photos in this issue: Donna Mechkuevska

Endorphins reduce pain and increase feelings of happiness. Endorphins help enhance social attachment. Some of their main benefits are associated with soothing pain, relieving depression, reducing stress, regulating appetite, increasing self-esteem. Natural ways to boost endorphin production are physical activities, sports, when you love someone, eating dark chocolate, laughing.

Alena, 12V

Six lessons from the longest study of happiness

Happiness is one of the most cherished experiences we seek as humans. So, what is the secret key to happiness? Contrary to what you might think, it's not career advancement, fame, money, exercise or weight loss.

The Harvard Study of Adult Development is the longest study of adult life that has ever been conducted. For 75 years they have tracked the lives of 724 men, asking about their work, their home lives, and their health.

The clearest message from the study is that positive relationships keep us happier and healthier.

<https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2017/04/over-nearly-80-years-harvard-study-has-been-showing-how-to-live-a-healthy-and-happy-life/>

1. **Healthy relationships** are the single most important key to happiness. They reduce stress by providing ongoing emotional support and encouragement in hard times; they create a sense of purpose and belonging with the accumulation of shared experiences and memories, mutual trust and support. People in healthy relationships tend to live longer.

2. **Loneliness** is deadly. Lack of meaningful social connections leads to isolation, depression, anxiety, and a sense of emptiness; it brings you stress which could lead to mental problems; it greatly diminishes the experience of happiness.

3. Being **introverted** is not a disadvantage. Introverts tend to cultivate deeper, more meaningful and sincere connections. This ability to connect on an emotional level can create bonds that contribute significantly to happiness. The Harvard study reveals that having just one or two strong connections can be sufficient for happiness and well-being.

4. **Social media** could be positive or negative depending on how you use it. Social media should be approached

with the intention of focusing on meaningful interactions and positive engagement to create a harmonious blend of online and offline experiences that contribute to overall happiness.

5. Individuals who find **purpose** in what they do experience a deep sense of satisfaction that money alone cannot provide. The study reinforces the idea that happiness is about finding deeper meaning and satisfaction in the pursuit that makes up our life.

6. **Good health** translates to energy and vitality. Being healthy provides us with more enthusiasm, resilience, and the ability to engage fully in daily activities. Taking care of our health fosters a positive self-perception and self-esteem. Also, it demonstrates self-respect and self-worth which contributes to a greater sense of personal contentment.



Petya, 12V

“Happiness is not a destination to be reached but a journey to be embraced”

Simone, 12V

“Finding a person who keeps pushing you day by day could be worth more than anything”

Maggie Borisova, 12V

WHEN I WAS A KID THE THING THAT MADE ME HAPPY WAS A TOY.

BUT I AM A GROWN UP NOW SO I WOULD SAY THAT IT'S MY BOY.

IN MY HEART HE IS THE JOY.

MY CHARMING LOVING BOY.

WITH A SMILE THAT LIGHTS UP MY DAY.

IN HIS ARMS I WANT TO STAY.

WITH EVERY LAUGH AND EVERY TEAR

IN HIS LOVE I FIND JOY AND CHEER

I LOVE HIM , YES, THAT'S TRUE

IN HIS EMBRACE I ALWAYS KNEW

THAT WITH HIM LIFE IS A BEAUTIFUL RIDE

MY BOYFRIEND FOREVER BY MY SIDE.

Stefi, 12V

My Happiness Recipe

Ingredients:

- ✓ Love, hope, and a pinch of selfishness

Method of preparation:

- ✓ Hard work, patience, and real good quality communication

Finish it all up with some confidence and you've built yourself the perfect happiness recipe. That makes the final product looking like a person who's proud and happy with themselves.



What is your happiness recipe?

12V's Alex Simov, Simone and Donna collected tips from teachers and school administration staff.



"Basically, what makes me happy is life itself. Why not? It's the little things that bring so much pleasure and happiness.

For example: a blooming rose, a little kitten on the street, I don't know, a friendly stray dog just running around and seeming to smile at you. In a nutshell, it's the little things in life that make me happy."

Principal Alexander Lazarov

"Happiness is interpreted in different ways. Being happy at work is loving what you do and feeling valued. Family happiness is to be happy with what you have achieved, to love and be loved. And finding the positive in everything."

PE Teacher Plamen Yordanov



"My three pillars of happiness are health, interacting with people who radiate goodness and positivity, and pleasure from work. I appreciate health and take care of it as much as I can. I believe that someone is happy when they're healthy and healthy when they're happy. I'm thankful for meeting wonderful people. And I'm sure that the pleasure of communicating with another person is irreplaceable. I know that to love and to be loved is a gift. I love my job, I feel it's my place. Even when I'm most tired, I'm not dissatisfied.

From the top of these tree pillars, the world seems beautiful, the horizon - clear, the dreams - achievable."

Bulgarian teacher Neli Ilieva

Deputy Principal and English Teacher Tanya Aleksieva: *Many things make me happy. Of course, on a personal level, my family makes me very happy. No matter how hard my day has been, my two pets jumping with joy when I open the door make everything better. With them, there are no expectations, except to be loved, to be paid attention to... This is a special kind of happiness. Early in the morning, when we go for a walk, I don't think about anything else but what is happening around me, enjoying the good weather. It definitely makes me really happy.*

Sometimes it can be a very nice day where everything goes relatively smoothly. It could be just a cup of coffee or tea, reading for pleasure, or updating the lists of books I want to read.

Sometimes it's the little things, here at school. It could be something small, some kind of effort. To be a part of someone's progress, even though it is a personal achievement for the particular individual. So, many things can make a person happy if they manage to notice them. Because, to be honest, we don't always pay attention to those little things.



German teacher Sylvia Bozhilova:

- **To love.** Not only yourself, but others. The more love you carry within yourself and give it out, the better you feel.
- **Good music** and art can do a lot to help a person feel happy.
- **Walks.** If someone does not like sports, it is good to walk.
- **To do good,** even if it is not asked, but to do it out of inner necessity. Making someone happy, helping them with something, or just saying a kind word always has an immense positive effect on ourselves, too.
- **But out of all these things, the most important one is to find the right partner in your life.**

(And then, of course, there are other little things like Toblerone chocolate 😊)

"Every life battle a person goes through makes them feel more and more satisfied with their whole life"

German teacher Sylvia Bozhilova

Dafina Milanova: *We have a very short recipe: a good sense of humor that makes us laugh, even in difficult times. We come to work with a smile, we work with a smile, we leave with a smile. Even when it is very difficult, Mrs. Shuleva and the whole team smile.*

Mila Shuleva: *It is important not to take yourself too seriously. To know that we are all human, we all enjoy the little things, not to get angry over trifles... To support each other in difficulties.*

"My happiness recipe? A pinch of health, a pinch of love, and a tablespoon of luck."

Deputy Principal Velislava Petrova-Angelova

Spanish teacher Kiril Nizamov:

My recipe comes down to a single word. Chocolate.