

# THREE GOOD THINGS

Difficulty: **CASUAL** | Frequency: **1X/DAY** | Duration: **10 MINS**



## WHY YOU SHOULD TRY IT

In our day-to-day lives, it's easy to get caught up in the things that go wrong and feel like we're living under our own private rain cloud; at the same time, we tend to adapt to the good things and people in our lives, taking them for granted. As a result, we often overlook everyday beauty and goodness—a kind gesture from a stranger, say, or the warmth of our heater on a chilly morning. In the process, we frequently miss opportunities for happiness and connection.

This practice guards against those tendencies. By remembering and listing three positive things that have happened in your day—and considering what caused them—you tune into the sources of goodness in your life. It's a habit that can change the emotional tone of your life, replacing feelings of disappointment or entitlement with those of gratitude—which may be why this practice is associated with significant increases in happiness.

## TIME REQUIRED

10 minutes/day for at least one week.

## HOW TO DO IT

Each day for at least one week, write down three things that went well for you that day, and provide an explanation for why they went well. It is important to create a physical record of your items by writing them down; it is not enough simply to do this exercise in your head. The items can be relatively small in importance (e.g., “my co-worker made the coffee today”) or relatively large (e.g., “I earned a big promotion”). To make this exercise part of your daily routine, some find that writing before bed is helpful.

As you write, follow these instructions:

1. Give the event a title (e.g., “co-worker complimented my work on a project”)
2. Write down exactly what happened in as much detail as possible, including what you did or said and, if others were involved, what they did or said.
3. Include how this event made you feel at the time and how this event made you feel later (including now, as you remember it).
4. Explain what you think caused this event—why it came to pass.
5. Use whatever writing style you please, and do not worry about perfect grammar and spelling. Use as much detail as you'd like.
6. If you find yourself focusing on negative feelings, refocus your mind on the good event and the positive feelings that came with it. This can take effort but gets easier with practice and can make a real difference in how you feel.

## EVIDENCE IT THAT WORKS

Seligman, M. E., Steen, T. A., Park, N., & Peterson, C. (2005). [Positive psychology progress: Empirical validation of interventions](#). *American Psychologist*, 60(5), 410.

Visitors to a website received instructions for performing this exercise. Writing about three good things was associated with increased

happiness immediately afterward, as well as one week, one month, three months, and six months later.

## WHY IT WORKS

By giving you the space to focus on the positive, this practice teaches you to notice, remember, and savor the better things in life. It may prompt you to pay closer attention to positive events down the road and engage in them more fully—both in the moment and later on, when you can reminisce and share these experiences with others. Reflecting on the cause of the event may help attune you to the deeper sources of goodness in your life, fostering a mindset of gratitude.

## SOURCES

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This practice is part of [Greater Good in Action](#), a clearinghouse of the best research-tested methods for increasing happiness, resilience, kindness, and connection, created by the [Greater Good Science Center](#) at UC Berkeley and [HopeLab](#).

