

Positive Emotions

why its so good to feel good

“the mind is its own place, and in itself can make a heaven of hell or a hell of heaven”
John Milton, Paradise Lost



The ability to experience positive emotions is a powerful protector for our wellbeing. We can cultivate moments of positive emotion for ourselves and those around us with two important reasons in mind:

- 1- for the good feelings we get in the moment of a positive emotion
- 2- for our psychological growth and sustained personal wellbeing.

What are Positive Emotions?

Emotions are short-lived bursts of feeling about personally meaningful circumstances. Different thoughts and behaviours can spark emotion in humans, because we are all so different. Being able to regularly experience positive emotion helps us to maintain our wellbeing, especially in times of adversity. You can find out more [here](#). Some common positive emotions include:

Emotion	Effect
JOY	Sparks the urge to play
INTEREST	Sparks the urge to explore
CONTENTMENT	Sparks the urge to savour and integrate
LOVE	Allows emotions to be experienced within safe, close relationships
OPTIMISM	Provides pathways for hopeful thinking
GRATITUDE	Triggers thoughts towards others and a feeling of thanks

Positive emotions are more than just ‘[happiness](#)’. They are not to be confused with overall ‘[mood](#)’ either. Think of them as typically short-lived and front of mind. We understand the reasons why we experience them in each moment. They help us feel good. They also help us to broaden our minds, and [research suggests](#) that we can build ourselves a bank of enduring personal resources such as problem-solving skills, hope, solidified social bonds and retention of new information by ‘banking’ each experiences of positive emotion, which we can then draw from later on in times of adversity or need.



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How can you build moments of positive emotion into your day?

Positive emotions momentarily broaden your mindset, which can help you to build personal resources to cope with future adversity. We broaden our mindset and can see the bigger picture when we can experience states of positive emotion. Here are a few things you might like to try to help cultivate some positive emotion each day:

- Listen to music that you love
- Spend time and connect with people you care about
- Play with your pets
- Think about things you are grateful for in your life. You could reflect on what is going well right now and how you have contributed to those situations
- Try and incorporate activities that you enjoy into each day, such as hobbies or pastimes
- Exercise can help raise your levels of positive emotion

What if I'm finding it difficult to be positive right now?

In times of uncertainty or adversity, sometimes humour and laughter are not the most appropriate pathways to positive emotion. Could you try to find positive meaning in the current circumstances? This is sometimes referred to as looking for a 'silver lining'. Finding benefits within adversity, infusing ordinary events with meaning and focusing on problem solving in your everyday life could all be alternatives to outward and obvious expressions of positive emotion.

Caring for young minds

The experience of positive emotion is as important for children and young people as it is for adults. Here are a few ideas to help children and teens explore positive states:

- Prioritise positivity in conversations – ask a simple question of “what went well today”?
- Encourage children to exercise kindness towards others
- Help young people to try and savour ordinary, everyday moments such as eating or observing things
- More information on positivity for children can be found [here](#)

