

Take a moment for you

When we think about what brings us joy, we tend to focus on big things like an overseas trip. While these things *do* bring joy, it is usually short-lived and spontaneous. This is why taking the time to notice and savour the small joys in everyday life is also important for our wellbeing.

These 'little joys' provide an opportunity to gain positive emotions from more regular moments like sitting in the sun or lunch with friends and provide a more consistent boost to our happiness.

So how do we cherish little joys in everyday life?

Savouring. Savouring is the practice of deliberately enhancing and prolonging positive experiences. We can do this by noticing, bringing awareness to, and appreciating the positive emotions that come with the little things.

Sensory-perceptual sharpening is a savouring strategy where a person deliberately directs their attention to what they are experiencing in a particular moment. It's like enjoying a piece of chocolate cake without judgement by paying attention to the chocolatey taste and the cocoa smell to enhance the satisfaction you get from each mouthful. These small positive sensations, thoughts and feelings influence how we feel and if we notice them regularly, they can build positive internal resources that help us to balance the negative effects of stress. Experiencing even mild positive emotions can create valuable resources to help us face life challenges.

Positive emotions can promote resilience and reverse the cardiovascular aftereffects of stressful experiences and negative emotions.

How many valuable positive experiences pass us by every day without being noticed and appreciated because we are waiting for the 'big things?' Make a conscious choice to be more curious about the many little things that bring you joy.

How to create a savouring ritual

1. Identify and list the everyday activities that bring you joy. What do you look forward to? Is it a walk in the sunshine, a morning coffee or listening to your favourite podcast?
2. Choose two experiences and savour them each day for two weeks. When it happens, slow down, minimise distractions and intentionally notice the experience. It's normal for your mind to wander – so gently bring it back to focussing on the experience.
3. Use your senses (see, smell, hear, feel, taste) to create a memory of the experience and describe it to yourself in detail. Is it tasty, beautiful or sweet? If you feel comfortable, close your eyes and try to prolong the experience.
4. Reflect on the positive emotions that you felt in that moment.