

Study reveals how to feel like a million bucks!

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There is a key to happiness, at least according to those who study such things.

I?heard the veritable "golden triangle" of happiness includes three main ingredients ??solid relationships, financial control and a sense of purpose. The Australian Wellbeing Index has been conducted twice a year over the last 15 years and involves more than 60,000 participants.

Well, as Meatloaf was so fond of saying in their 1977 hit: "Two Out of Three Ain't Bad." How about one of out of three?

It's been said that those who are in relationships are happier and perhaps live longer. This doesn't include relationships with pets, but pet owners are happier and do live longer!

These days, those strong, long-term marriages seem to be rare, as divorce rates continue to climb. The roller coaster ride of life was meant to be ridden. You simply can't get off while the coaster is in motion. You have to navigate every twist and turn.

Most of us have learned from our parents' marriages. Those tended to be life-long commitments, but in the post-war world, they were sometimes marriages of convenience and tradition, rather than true love. Regardless, the vows meant something and couples worked hard together to build lives and the foundations of generations to come.

While money doesn't make us happy, it sure makes the pain more tolerable. Seriously, a lack of financial stability is a leading factor of stress and relationship break-down, even [divorce](#). It's believed that financial issues can cause divorces. Unfortunately, this can happen to any couple. For many people, the idea of getting a divorce may feel like the worst thing ever, But I know a lot of people who have gone through this, and in the end after realising this was the best step to take say that they feel like a million bucks, literally. In fact, there are a couple of days each week that I'm worth millions and I'm driving around in a \$5 million automobile. Then, the lottery draw is held and my net worth plummets. Sad.

It's equally sad that I?not only live paycheque to paycheque, but also in between fantasy and reality.

I?think there's a lot of merit in having a "sense of purpose."?Given the nature of our existence, we don't know exactly what that is. But I?think most of us want to be busy, active, contributing members of society, in whatever role we choose. It's been said that volunteers are among the happiest and healthiest people on the planet ??even more reasons to get involved! I think if we have jobs that we enjoy (regardless of salary) and are active in our community, we can wear a smile proudly.

The happiest demographic is the 55+?age group. I?can understand the 55-65 group, being stable in both finances and career with established families. But those seniors beyond retirement age may not be the happiest folks around.

During the election, we heard that the well being of our seniors is in jeopardy and more are living in dire straits. Once thought of us financially secure, our seniors are facing more challenges than ever before, and that includes financially supporting their adult children.

While strides are being made, there is still a lack of affordable housing and services for our elderly.

Fathers tend to be happier than mothers. There are some very good reasons for this. While I?believe I'm an active, involved parent, I can't come close to my wife's level of concern, intuition and protectiveness. Being the "momma bird" can take its toll both physically and emotionally.

Another factor addressed in the study was use of social media. It seems moderation is key. When limited to just 30 minutes per day, people are the happiest. More than that and look out!

I?imagine the same can be applied to video games, online sites and eBay. I wonder how many of us, especially our teens, can limit themselves to 30 minutes a day on their Xbox. Yeah, I thought so.

I'm a guilty of having an iPad stuck to my paws some evenings, but I use it as a way to unwind and relieve stress. Honest!

I love "window shopping"?on eBay, looking at a whole realm of things I?can't afford or have no intention of buying.

While we have a limited amount of time on this planet, we do tend to fritter much of it away.

Just think, we spend one-seventh of our lives dreading Mondays! We sleep a substantial bit of it away. We waste untold hours per week simply waiting in line. And we pass the time in various Internet activities.

I have spent a considerable amount of time over the years waiting for good news, and a lot more dealing with the bad.

I've spent countless hours waiting on car repairs, which never had happy endings.

I've spent too much time saying good-bye to loved ones. In a 10-year span, I?buried my father, sister, mother and uncle, and in that same period, I?welcomed all three of my children. Needless to say, we stopped having children and I've stopped planning funerals.

These latest revelations by the Australian study aren't really new.

I think the rules governing a happy life aren't new, either. Since the time we lived in organized societies, happiness centred around family, shelter, food and a sense of purpose.

We just need to be reminded from time to time.