

Let's be happy

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The International Day of Happiness is celebrated annually on March 20 to promote the belief that the happiness, well-being, and freedom of all life on earth is the ultimate purpose of every human being, nation and society.

The international celebration was established in 2012 by the General Assembly of the United Nations, when all 193 member states adopted UN resolution 66/281 which was initiated by Bhutan, a country which famously adopted the goal of Gross National Happiness over Gross National Product.

This year's 2020 International Day of Happiness campaign theme is 'Happiness For All, Forever'. The United Nations International Day of Happiness (UNIDOHappiness) launched the "Ten Steps to Global Happiness" challenge campaign, which can be found online at happinesday.org.

UNIDOHappiness founder Jayme Illien said: "Happiness is contagious. The Ten Steps to Global Happiness [can be taken by anyone] to celebrate the International Day of Happiness, with the idea of increasing individual happiness, as well as spreading happiness to others, while also elevating global happiness levels by making the planet vibrate, with our common celebration of happiness, in honour of this special day we all share together as fellow members of the great human family."

The first step in the Ten Steps To Global Happiness challenge is fairly simple: to "tell everyone" about the existence of #InternationalDayOfHappiness which recognises happiness as a fundamental human right for all.

All of us can complete the first step by wishing someone 'Happy International Day of Happiness', just as we would offer someone birthday wishes. After all, a happy greeting can brighten another person's day.

Here is how you can celebrate the day in line with the Ten Steps:

Do what makes you happy

We must feel happy before we can spread happiness to others. After all, happiness is contagious. Take the time to do the things you love, spend time with friends and family, or help others.

Partner up with friends to brighten lives around you

Organising a fundraiser with friends to help out an individual or a non-profit organisation in need is another way to bring a little joy to the lives of people. Even volunteering your time to help out in a charity or a children's home can brighten up their lives and yours a little.

Share uplifting stories

Tired of the same old posts in your social media timeline? Chances are, so are your friends. Spark a little joy in your timeline by sharing uplifting stories. These posts can serve as a good buffer or break away from daily, bleak news. For starters, you can follow pages such as [@goodnews_movement](#) and [@the_happy_broadcast](#) on Instagram.

Write positive letters or messages to friends

Take the time to write positive messages or letters to friends and family. Expressing how important they are in your life will definitely put a smile on their faces. It's also a nice gesture to thank them for being there when you need it most, or to mention what you love about them.

Give out hugs

Hugs are powerful enough to make someone feel better after a long day. According to American scientist Dr Paul Zak, hugs can help raise the production of oxytocin, also known as the cuddle hormone, which helps in reducing cardiovascular stress and improves the immune system.

While giving out hugs is a nice gesture, be mindful that not everyone may be open to accepting any form of hugs, especially from someone they don't know. To be safe, only offer hugs to people close to you and if both parties feel comfortable doing so.

Watch a funny show

A great way to put a smile on the face or have a laugh is to watch a funny show. It could be watching a comedy film or watching a standup comedy show. Feel like staying in? You can watch it all on a streaming service or read a really funny book or comic.