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A NEWSLETTER FROM

MEZA TALBOTT LAW

JULY ISSUE

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How to Live a Happier Life

Once your basic needs are met, true happiness comes from within. To help you get started, we have collected strategies proven to help cultivate and nurture happiness. (See 'Happy' Page 2)

1. Keep a gratitude journal.

Take note of the things in your life for which you are grateful – the big things (a roof over your head, healthy children), as well as the small things (a bird at the porch feeder, a great parking spot, a full moon in the night sky). Acknowledging the good in your life will lift your spirit. Write in your gratitude journal every evening, or carry a small notepad with you to jot down these gifts as the day unfolds.

2. Turn up the music.

Music can be calming or energizing, comforting, cathartic or empowering. Whether you like Mozart

or something more contemporary, if it moves you, turn it up. If it makes you feel like dancing, so much the better.

3. Put down your phone.

Too much screen time can detract from your happiness in a number of ways. It removes you from the people around you and prevents you from being present in the moment. Scanning social media can leave you feeling isolated and inadequate (e.g., why does everyone have more/do more/look better than I do?). The 24-hour news cycle can leave you feeling battered or angry or both. You can't go entirely off the grid, but putting your phone down, especially before bedtime, will increase your happiness level.

4. Breathe.

Most of us don't think about breathing, but science suggests we would be calmer, healthier and happier if we did. See, e.g., <https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/relaxation-techniques-breath-control-helps-quell-errant-stress-response>. "Controlled breathing" is a way to activate the body's relaxation response and quash the stress (fight or flight) response. A number of free and low-cost apps are available to guide you through the practice of controlled breathing. Just Google "breathing apps" to find one that works for you.

5. Buy time, not stuff.

If you are like most busy adults, there is not enough time in your day to do everything you have to do, let alone time left over to do anything you want to do. This leaves you in a constant state of "time famine." Famine is not conducive to happiness; it breeds desperation and anxiety. So, how do you get more time (i.e., become "time affluent")? Take a look



Make Moving Easier

With thousands of years as nomads under their belts, humans have been moving from one location to the next for centuries.

Despite our mobile nature, there's no denying that moving can be one of the most stressful events one can experience. But, let's face it: at some point, we all have to move. If you do have a big move coming up, it won't be easy, but there are some ways to help alleviate the taxing event that is moving.

These are some tips that you should use on your moving day. These should help make moving easier and help you get settled into your new place.

- If you can, hire movers. Otherwise you might find yourself wedged in your new doorway, your mattress half inside your entryway, and an unnaturally high amount of cortisol coursing through your veins. Many people do prefer moving their own furniture to ensure that nothing is broken or damaged, in which case...



- If you can't hire movers, try to get the help of friends or family members. Moving can be tedious, but the more people you have on your team, the faster you'll get it done.
- Rent a moving truck for your furniture, or borrow a truck from a friend or family member. If you're renting a truck, make sure you are clear on

SEE 'MOVING' PAGE 7

Tips to Read More

With the advent of social media and every other form of entertainment that fulfills our need for instant gratification, a simpler and longer form of entertainment (one that requires just a little more concentration than reading your favorite celebrity's latest Tweet) has fallen by the wayside: reading books.

Think about it: when you're catching up with your friends and family, are they asking you about the latest book you read... or are they frantically wondering if you've seen the latest episode of *The Bachelor*?

While there's nothing wrong with watching movies and TV and engaging in social media, it's always good to maintain a healthy balance when it comes to something as important as what your brain is digesting on a daily basis.

We know that in today's fast-paced society, it can be difficult to find a moment to allow yourself to become engrossed in the pages of a book and allow your own imagination to lead the way, but there are some small steps you can take to start incorporating more reading time into your daily routine:



Join a book club... or start your own!

Check out your local community events to see if there's already a book club that you can join, and if there isn't—start your own! You can make it really fun by picking a theme and pitching the idea to a couple of friends. Do you and your friends find yourselves constantly rehashing the latest installment of the *My Favorite Murder* podcast? Have you marathoned every single

true crime documentary series on Netflix? Start a Murder Mystery Book Club! Prefer watching rom-coms? Make it a club that focuses on romance novels! Or adventure. Or non-fiction. Or any genre you want. Go wild—this is your club! And if you want to get really crazy, find an affordable shop on Etsy that can customize membership bookmarks with the name of your new club! The key is making it fun and making it your own—this way, reading will never

feel like a chore (especially when your fellow book-club members are there to keep you accountable!).

Always keep a book in your bag

Maybe you take public transportation—maybe you have a long lunch break at work. Instead of reaching for your phone to stave off the boredom, reach for your book! Even if you don't think you'll have a second to spare, it's always a good idea to have a book on hand. You could be waiting for your table at a restaurant, or even sitting in the waiting room of your doctor's office. There's always a reason to keep a book in your bag—just in case! The more you get into the habit of doing this, the more natural it will feel to reach for your book when you have a moment or two to spare.

In the evening, keep your current read on your nightstand

You're exhausted... you're ready to slowly doze off into a peaceful dreamland... but wait! Instead of falling asleep to a YouTube video, why not try to read just one, two, or maybe even three pages of



your book? Not only will you will fall asleep much more quickly than if you had the bright glow of your favorite gardening channel in your face, but those few pages each night will definitely add up!

Start a GoodReads account

Can't stay away from social media? You're in luck—there's a website called GoodReads for book-lovers of every genre. What better way to become a seasoned bibliophile than having access to a community of thousands of other readers (complete with book reviews and star ratings) right at your fingertips? You can add your real-life friends who read and make new online friends who may even introduce you to your favorite new genre!

Above all—no pressure

If you've realized a quarter of the way into a book that you're not enjoying it, it's okay to put it down and choose another book. Don't force yourself to read a book you don't like (especially if you're only reading it because other people said they liked it)—reading as a hobby should be fun, not a chore!

With these tips, you're well on your way to becoming a bibliophile--and you don't even have to make any drastic lifestyle changes! And let's be honest—after we're done reading a page or two (or a book or two!), I think most of us will still be scrambling to catch up with the newest season of our favorite show... Happy Reading! 📖

Illustrations by freepik



'HAPPY' FROM PAGE 1

at your to-do list. Is there anything on that list that you can pay someone else to do? Research has shown that spending \$40 on a time-saving service will make you happier. For example, if you don't like doing yard work on the weekends, pay a lawn service to do that work, and use that time to read or go on a hike or go to the gym or take your kids to the beach.

6. Make your bedroom or master bathroom a sanctuary.

Make this space the one place

in your home where you can relax and seek respite. Infuse it with good smells from candles or essential oils. Fill it with soft sheets, blankets and towels. Paint the walls a calming color. As with the rest of your home, keep this space free of clutter. Make your bed. Not only does it make your bedroom tidier and, therefore, more welcoming, it gives you a sense of accomplishment at the start of every day.

7. Cultivate personal relationships.

It is certainly possible to

be happy alone, but your happiness will be greatly enhanced by a strong social network. Happy people form deep emotional attachments to other people – a spouse or life-partner, good friends – and, often, to a dog or cat.

8. Find satisfaction in your work.

Even if your “dream job” is still just a dream, you will be happier if you change the way you approach your work. All work has value; sometimes you just have to look at it from a different angle to see it.

9. Be generous, and not just with your money.

Give what you can, in dollars, to causes that matter to you, but strive to also be generous of spirit. Volunteer. Share your talents and give of your time. Generosity is a seed of happiness.

10. Always lead with kindness.

Kindness may be the key to genuine happiness. At the very least, it will open a door that leads to happiness. Acts of kindness have been shown to increase levels of oxytocin (the “love hormone”), as well as energy levels, serotonin levels, lifespan, and, yes, happiness. See <https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/the-science-of-kindness>. In your daily interactions with others, let kindness be your guide. Try also to extend the same kindness to yourself. Make a conscious effort to choose self-compassion. 📌

Illustrations by pch.vector



'MOVING' FROM PAGE 3

- how much the company charges per mile, the cost of insurance in case of an accident, etc.
- Is it raining? Does the weather forecast say it might rain? Don't take any chances... make sure all your furniture is securely covered to protect them from water damage (that is, unless you enjoy sleeping on a soggy mattress!) Some truck rental companies will provide you with large furniture covers, but it's good to double check that these will be included.
 - Drink plenty of water! Even mild dehydration can make an uncomfortable moving process much worse than it has to be.
 - Take breaks. It's true that you'll want to get everything moved as quickly as possible, but 10- to 15-minute breaks here and there are essential to maintain your sanity (and your knees).
 - Try to move boxes to their respective rooms as you are moving, so that unpacking is less of a hassle, and so that you don't have to keep moving boxes around once you're already moved in. 📌

Illustrations by macrovector

Hawaiian Chocolate Bread Pudding

Prep 15 mins | Cook 1 hour, 15 mins

Oozing chocolate and creamy custard, this easy chocolate bread pudding will win you new friends.

INGREDIENTS

- 8 eggs, lightly beaten
- 4 cups of cream
- 3 cups of milk
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 2 T vanilla extract
- 1/2 t cinnamon
- 2 t butter
- 1.5 loaves of King's original Hawaiian Sweet Round bread, sliced into 3/4" slices
- 1 12-ounce package Guittard or other good quality chocolate chips

INSTRUCTIONS

- Heat oven to 300 degrees. Whisk together first 6 ingredients. Set aside.
- Butter a baking dish. Arrange half the bread slices in the bottom of the baking dish so they cover the bottom of the pan. Don't worry about the size or shape of the bread slices, just make sure the slices cover the the pan. Sprinkle with half the chocolate chips. Cover with a second layer of bread slices and chocolate chips.
- Crack the eggs into a large mixing bowl and lightly beat to incorporate yolks and whites. Add cream, milk, sugar, vanilla and cinnamon. Beat briefly just to combine ingredients. Don't over mix.
- Pour egg and cream mixture slowly over the bread. Pour slowly so the bread is able to absorb all the egg mixture. If you pour too fast it will overflow. If you are going to let the pudding soak for a few hours or over night, cover with saran wrap and press gently to ensure all the bread is moistened. Otherwise you can bake immediately.
- Cook an hour and 15 minutes. Check after one hour by inserting a knife in the middle. If it is runny, it is not done. Check every 10 minutes after the first hour. You don't want to over cook, but it may take as long as 1 1/2 hours to cook. When the pudding is no longer runny remove from the oven and let set 30 minutes before slicing. You can keep the pudding fairly hot for a while by covering it with foil.

