

Becky's corner: Happiness and joy

By Becky Ruppert, RN, MS, OCN, Salem Health Radiation Oncology

I recently interviewed a Salem Health staff member for an article I am doing for our employee Intranet.

During that interview, we talked about finding our balance in life and specifically, we talked about joy and happiness.

The employee mentioned that he is reading the book, "The Happiness Advantage" by Shawn Achor.

I'm all for happiness so I checked the book out. The book can be summed-up in several sentences:

1. We become more successful when we are happier and more positive, not the other way around.
2. Happiness is the joy we feel in search of our potential.
3. The Happiness Advantage is not the belief that we don't need to change; it is the realization that we can change.

Happiness and joy aren't just moods - it can be part of our overall ethic. We can use our brains to change how we process the world and when we do that, it changes the way we react.

When we search for the positive, it allows us to experience happiness, gratitude and optimism.

We can, with some work, change our perception of failure into an opportunity for growth.

When we commit to looking at the world through a positive lens, this allows us to experience happiness, gratitude and optimism.

The most successful people, in work and life, believe that their actions have a direct effect on their outcomes.

Sadly, our typical behavior and approach to understanding has always been to look for the average. Approximately 80% of our thoughts are negative. We can turn that around and we should!

To study average is to remain average.

I would challenge you to do the following exercise: For one day, make a conscious effort to see things through a positive lens. Whenever you see someone behaving badly, think to yourself: *What could be so bad in that person's life? What opportunities exist for that person? What could I do to help?* Even if someone flips you off in traffic, rather than responding with anger, try thinking or even saying out loud, "I'm sorry you're having such a bad day. I hope things get better for you."

After taking the challenge, do a self-inventory of how you feel. I think you'll be pleasantly surprised by how good feel.

It takes some work but keep it up. You'll get there and be happier and feel greater joy.