

Personal Happiness Handbook

Happiness
Alliance





25 actions

for

10

domains

of

happiness

The Happiness Index is a scientifically valid measure of well-being with indicators for 10 domains of happiness & satisfaction with life. Take it and get your own assessment of your well-being at happycounts.org



Economic Well-being

Two things you can do to increase your happiness along the domain of standard of living/material wellbeing:



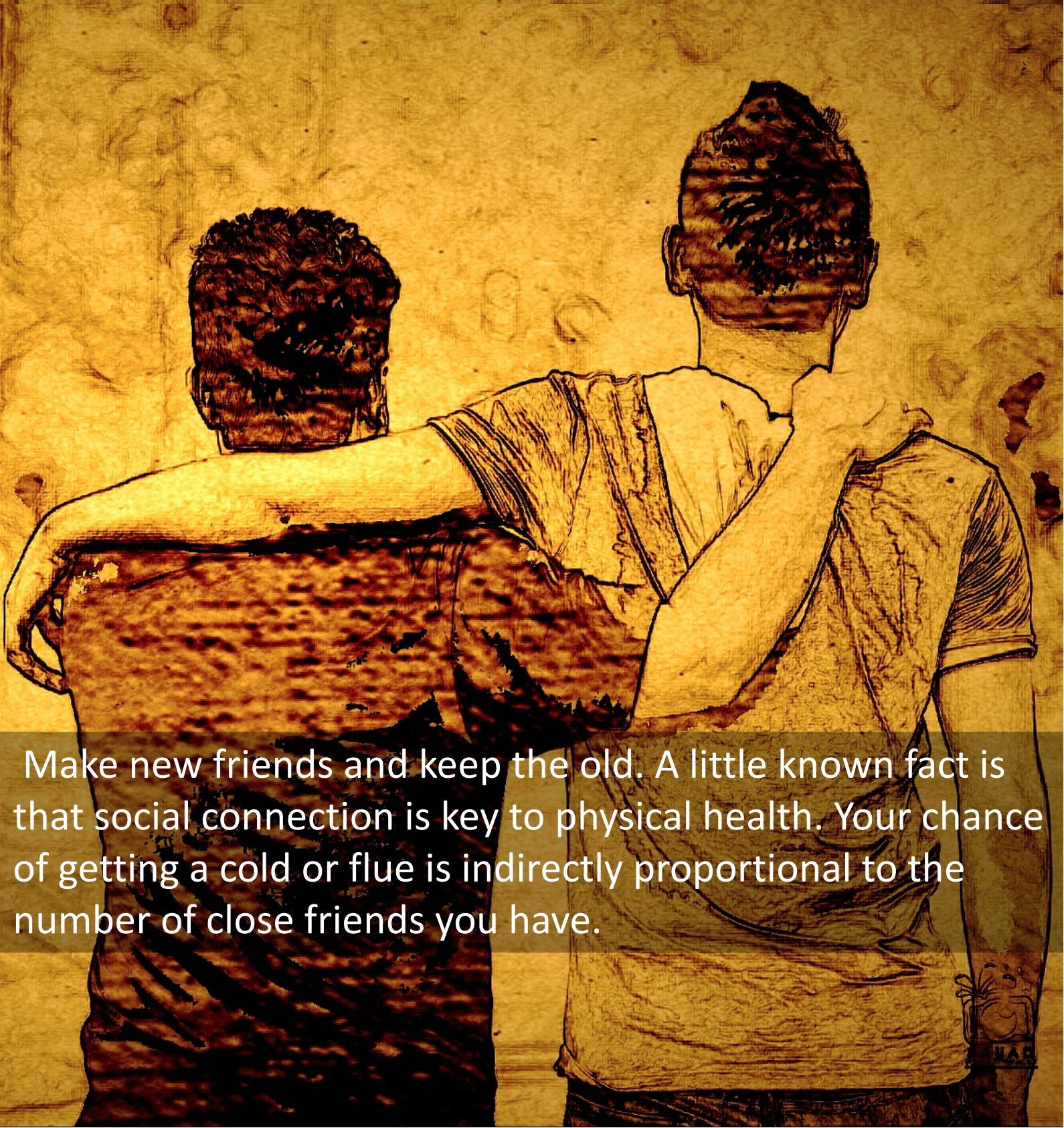
Make Less Money: Longitudinal studies show that happiness increases up to a certain level of income: about \$75,000 for a family of four. If you earn more, your happiness does not increase much. This is called the Easterlin Paradox.



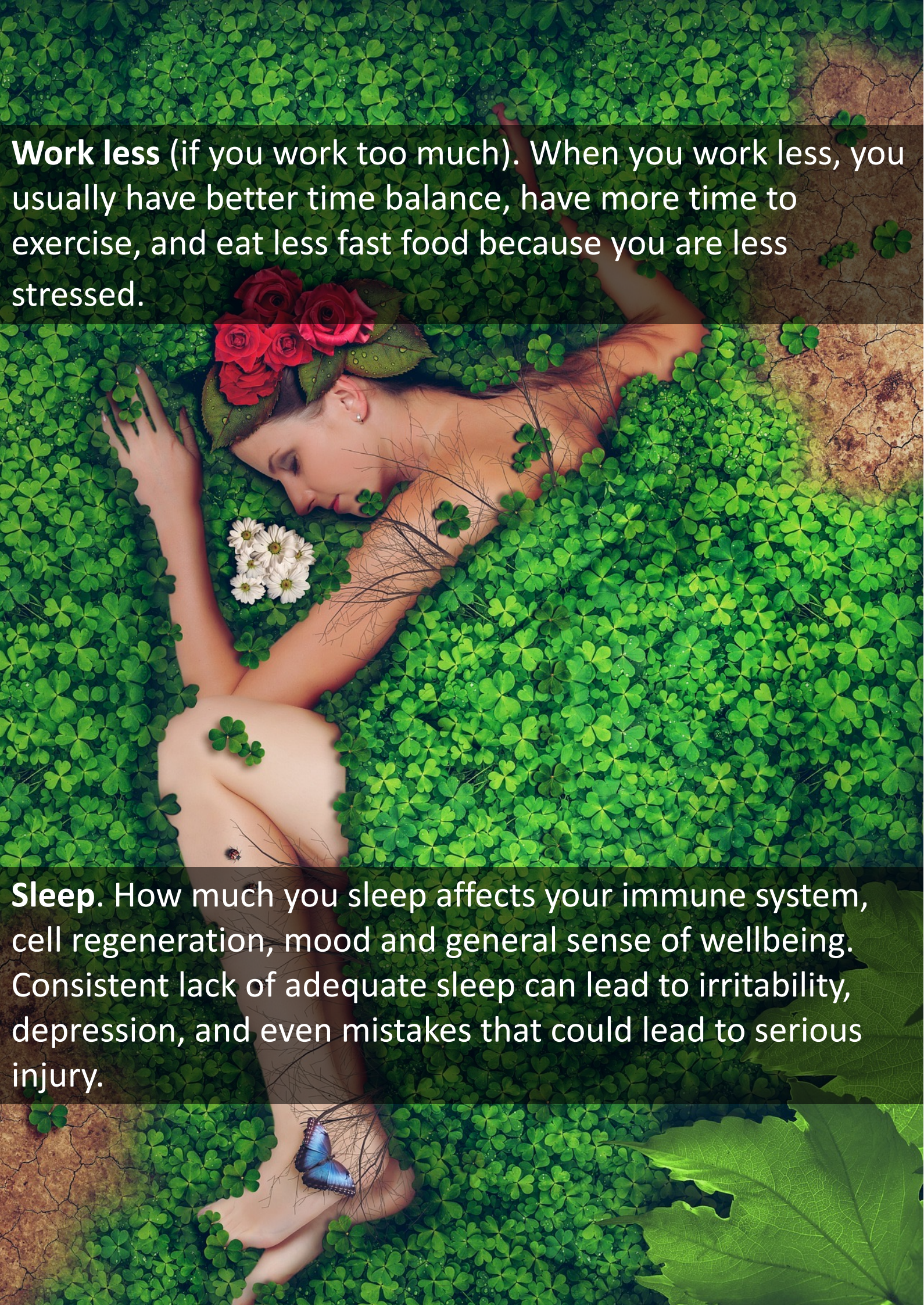
Give: Studies show that giving money makes you happier. A donation to a local cause you believe in may lead to greater happiness than working the extra hours to make more money. You can also give time in volunteer hours, and not only increase your happiness but also strengthen your sense of community.

Health

Three things you can do to increase your happiness along the domain of health:



Make new friends and keep the old. A little known fact is that social connection is key to physical health. Your chance of getting a cold or flue is indirectly proportional to the number of close friends you have.

A woman is lying on her back on a dense carpet of green clovers. She is wearing a crown of red roses and has a bouquet of white daisies tucked under her chin. A blue butterfly is perched on her right hand. The background is a mix of green clovers and brown, cracked earth.

Work less (if you work too much). When you work less, you usually have better time balance, have more time to exercise, and eat less fast food because you are less stressed.

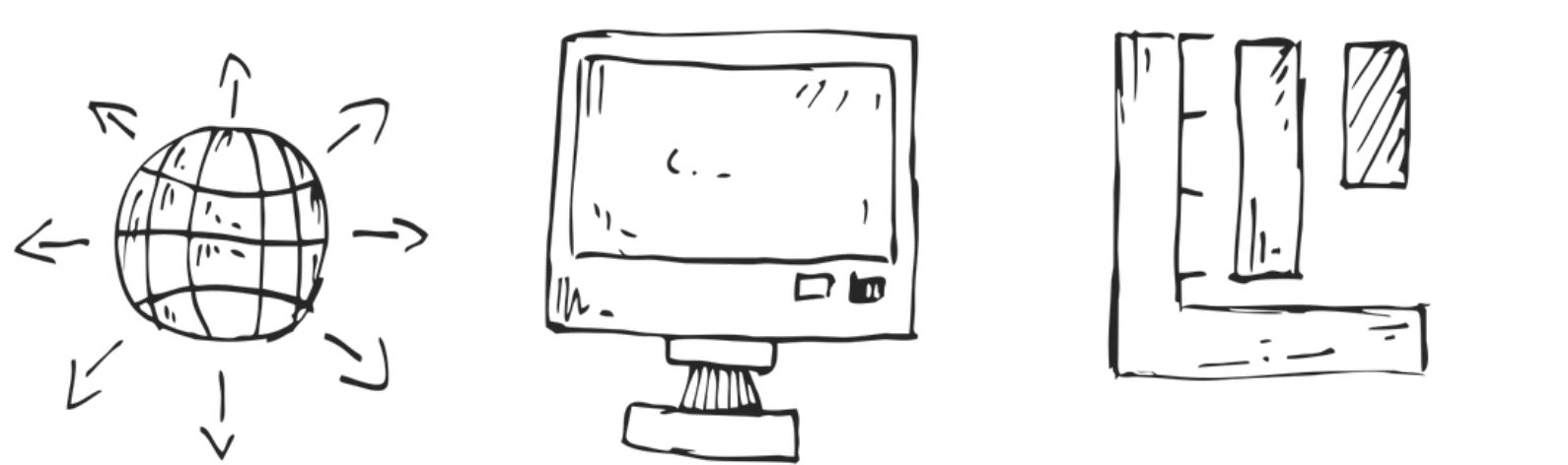
Sleep. How much you sleep affects your immune system, cell regeneration, mood and general sense of wellbeing. Consistent lack of adequate sleep can lead to irritability, depression, and even mistakes that could lead to serious injury.



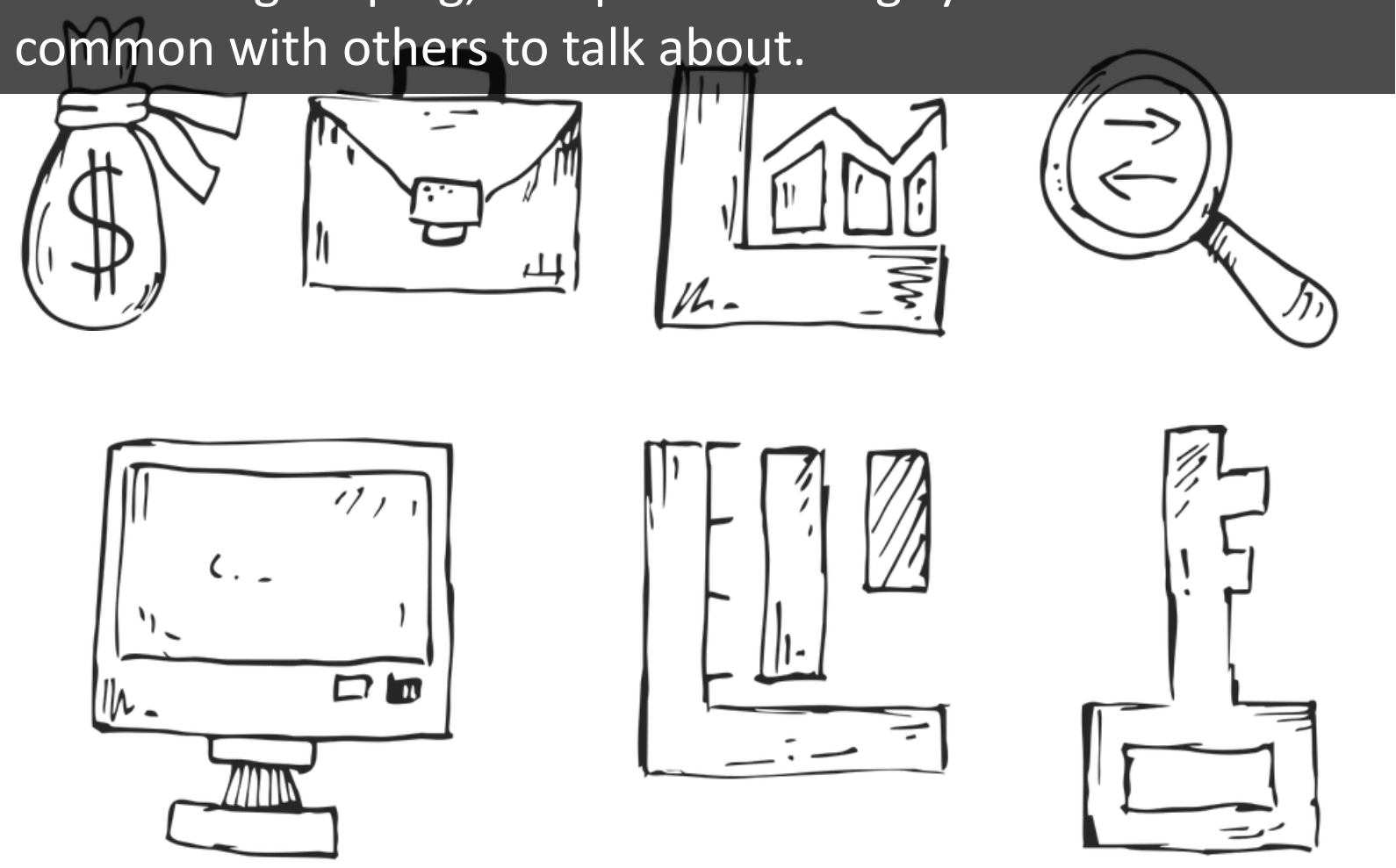
Work

Two things you can do to increase your happiness along the domain of work:

Work for a boss you trust. If you feel like you can trust your boss, you are more likely to explore how you can improve your own performance and that of your employer. You are also more likely to build trusting relationships with your peers at work, which increases your sense of community and happiness.



Don't Gossip. Gossiping, bad mouthing and excessive complaining can give a false sense of community and connection with others, but it can also keep you from forming meaningful relationships built on common values and life-enhancing experiences. Gossiping, bad mouthing and complaining can also have unintended long-term negative impacts on yourself, others and your relationships. Instead of gossiping, find positive things you have in common with others to talk about.



Community

Three things you can do to increase your happiness along the domain of community:

Look people in the eye and smile. When walking down the street, at the grocery store, or doing errands, instead of looking away, try looking the people you encounter in the eye and smiling. All said, always keep your personal safety in mind!

Grow food in your garden, then cook and share it with your neighbors. If you do not have the time or inclination to garden, try growing herbs in your kitchen or planting a hearty fruit tree or bush. If you do not have a yard, you might try growing and sharing kitchen herbs like basil.

Do a random act of kindness for someone in their presence. Studies show random acts of kindness done in the presence of the recipient increases a sense of well-being more than if done anonymously. All said, be mindful the act of kindness is desired by the recipient, and not intrusive!

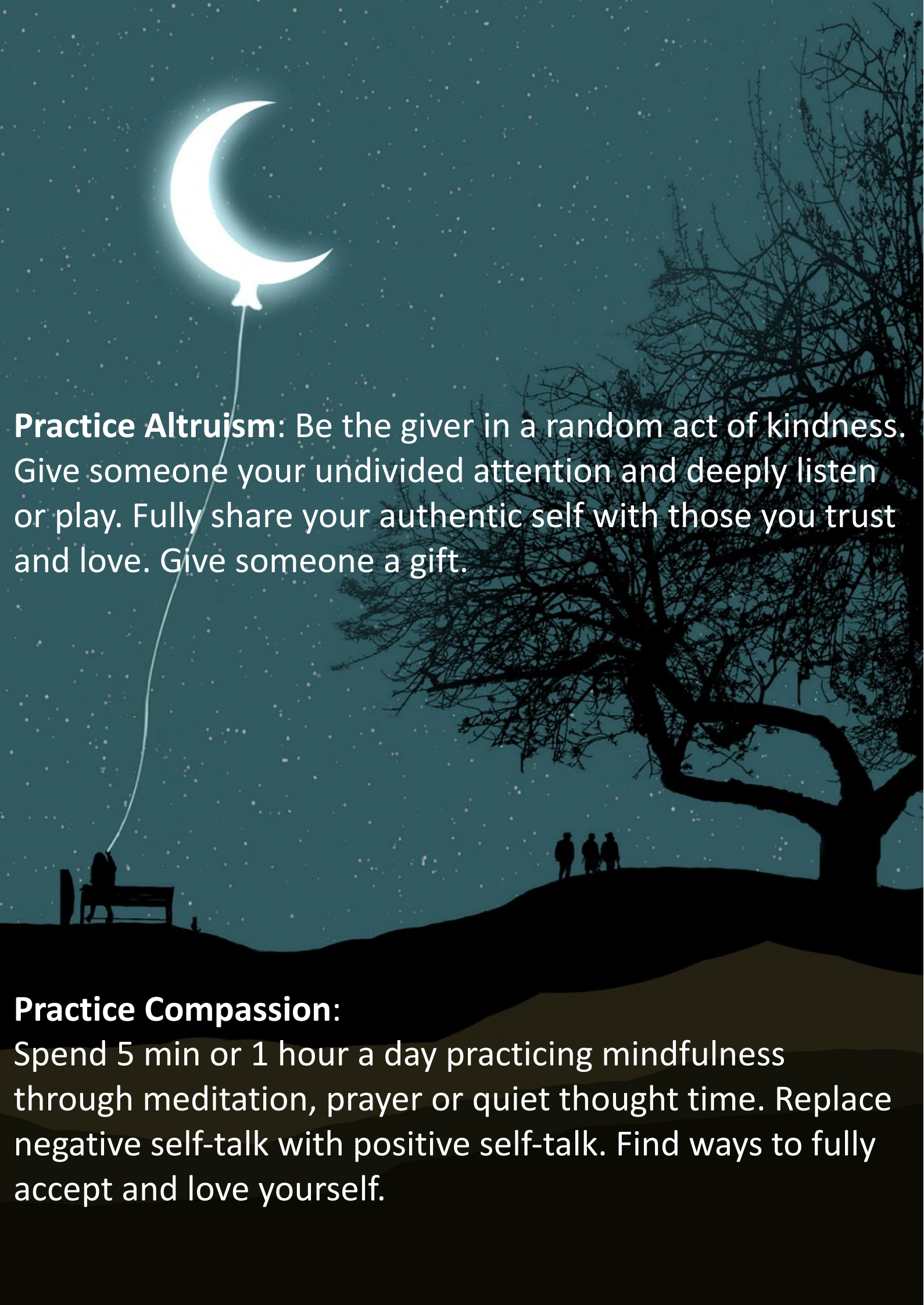


Psychological Well-being

Three things you can do to increase your happiness along the domain of psychological wellbeing:



Practice Gratitude: Keep a gratitude journal and write or post online something you are grateful for each day. Thank the people in your life from the grocery clerk to your closest friend and family member often. Create artwork, poems or music to express gratitude.



Practice Altruism: Be the giver in a random act of kindness. Give someone your undivided attention and deeply listen or play. Fully share your authentic self with those you trust and love. Give someone a gift.

Practice Compassion: Spend 5 min or 1 hour a day practicing mindfulness through meditation, prayer or quiet thought time. Replace negative self-talk with positive self-talk. Find ways to fully accept and love yourself.

Time Balance

A golden mechanical watch with Roman numerals is centered in the image. The watch is semi-transparent, revealing its intricate gears and mechanism. The background is a vibrant green and blue gradient with light streaks and a bokeh effect, suggesting a sense of motion and time.

Three things you can do to increase your happiness along the domain of time balance:

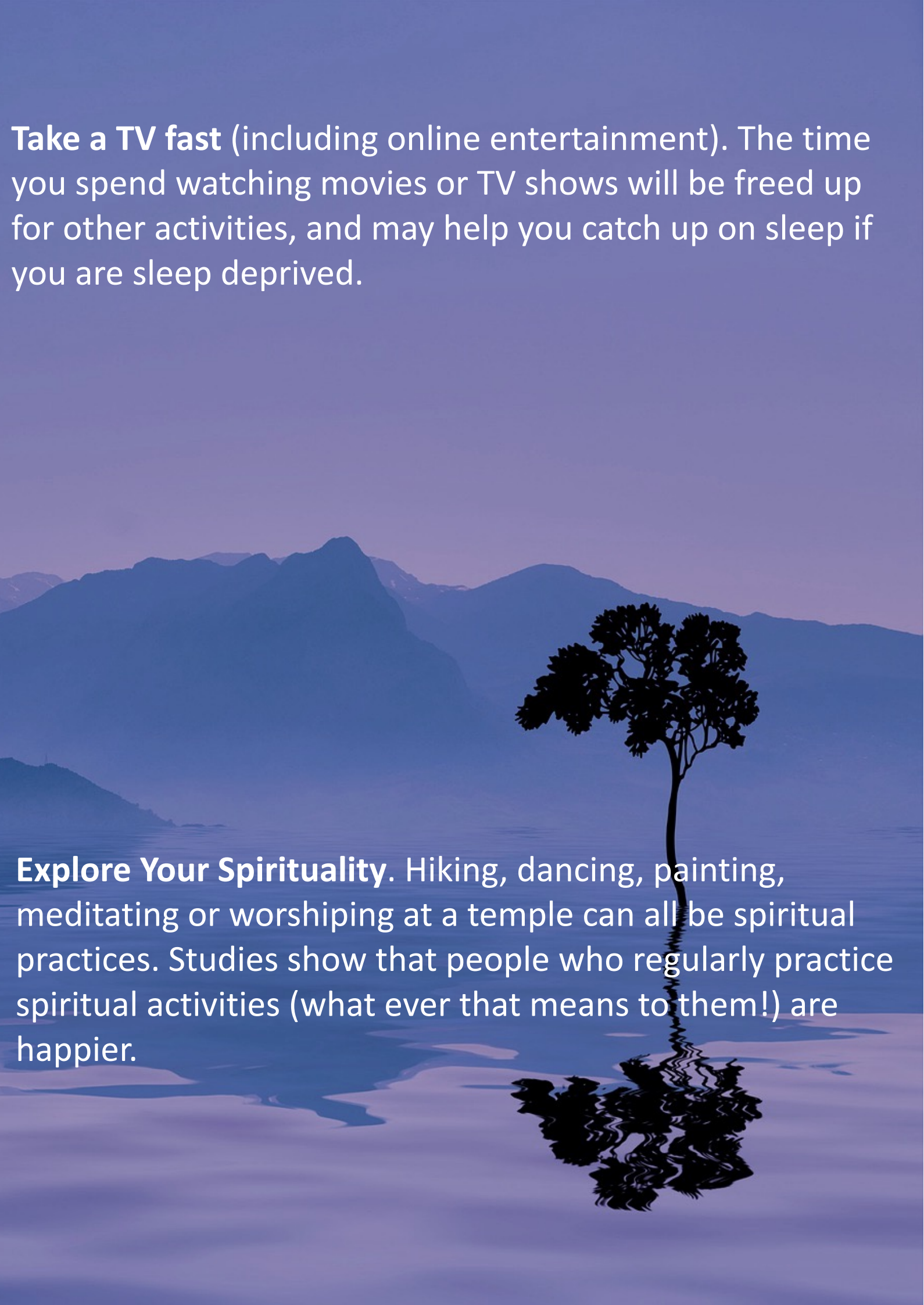
Savor the fun stuff: Your time balance is out of whack when you are trying to do too many leisure activities. If you find yourself rushing from one activity you enjoy to the other, with little time to pause between, so at the end of the day you are exhausted, try cutting out some of the fun stuff. Take the time to really savor and enjoy the fun things you do, instead of trying to pack in as many activities as you can.

Say No to Multitasking. Spending time concentrating on just one thing can alleviate the feeling of being rushed. Studies indicate too much multitasking may result in loss of short-term memory and concentration.



Limit Online Time. Taking time away from your cell, laptop, and otherwise “disconnecting” can actually lead to a greater sense of connection and relieve the stress of constant demands on your time.

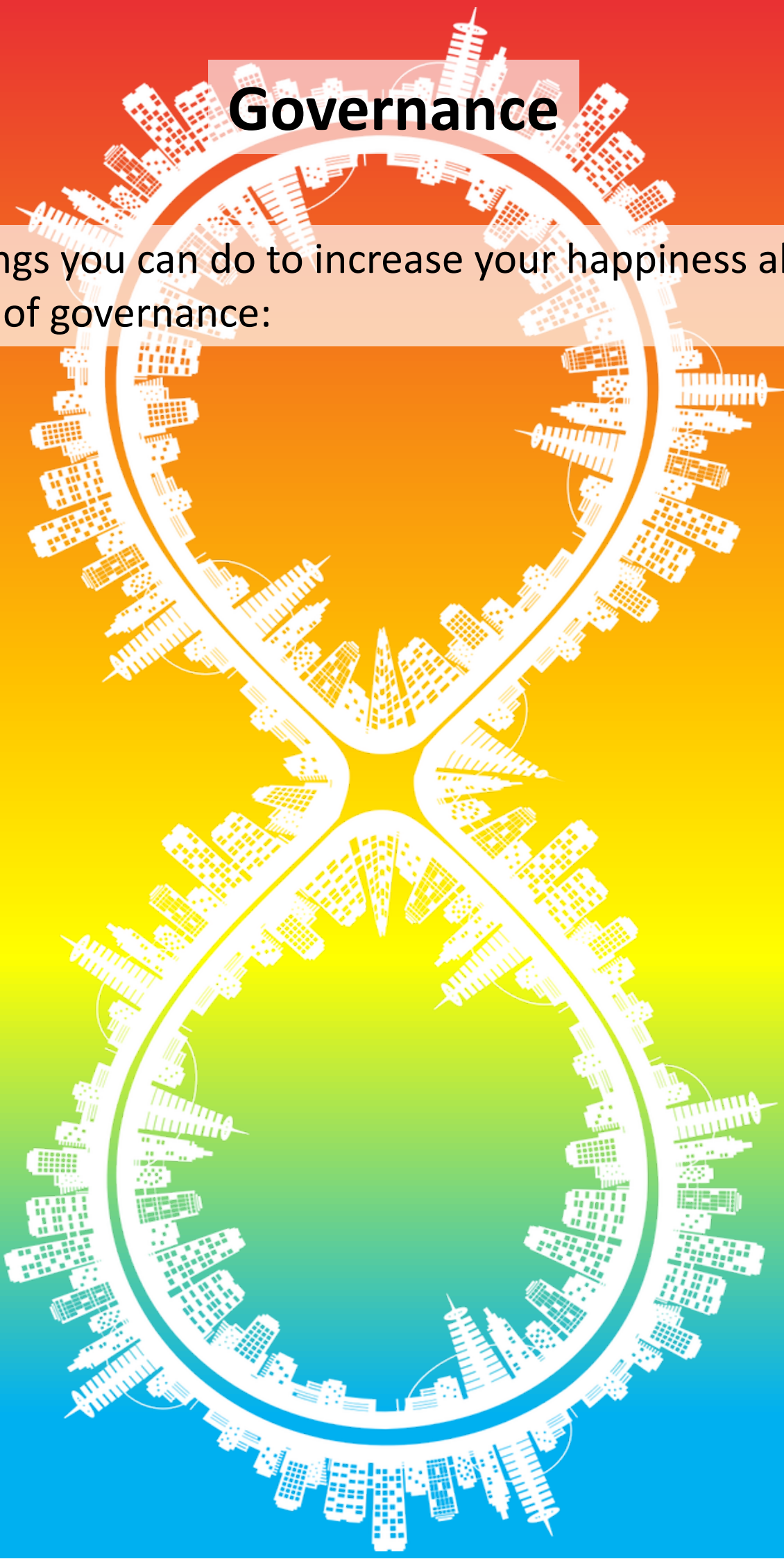
Take a TV fast (including online entertainment). The time you spend watching movies or TV shows will be freed up for other activities, and may help you catch up on sleep if you are sleep deprived.

A serene landscape featuring a calm body of water in the foreground. A single, dark silhouette of a tree stands prominently on the right side of the water, its form reflected in the still surface. In the background, a range of mountains is visible under a soft, hazy sky, with some peaks appearing to have snow or light-colored rock. The overall color palette is muted, consisting of various shades of blue, purple, and grey, creating a peaceful and contemplative atmosphere.

Explore Your Spirituality. Hiking, dancing, painting, meditating or worshipping at a temple can all be spiritual practices. Studies show that people who regularly practice spiritual activities (what ever that means to them!) are happier.

Governance

Two things you can do to increase your happiness along the domain of governance:





Get Political. For many of us, it sometimes feels as though we do not have much impact on our governments. Studies show that “the more developed the democratic institutions and the degree of local autonomy, the more satisfied people are with their lives.” Doing your part to increase participation in governance, and increasing the ways for others to participate, can increase your own sense of wellbeing.



Be a part of the change. Conduct a Happiness Initiative in your town or organization. Get involved in the Transition Town, Thriving Community, Compassionate Cities or another movement to more deeply connect with your community and the future wellbeing of all.

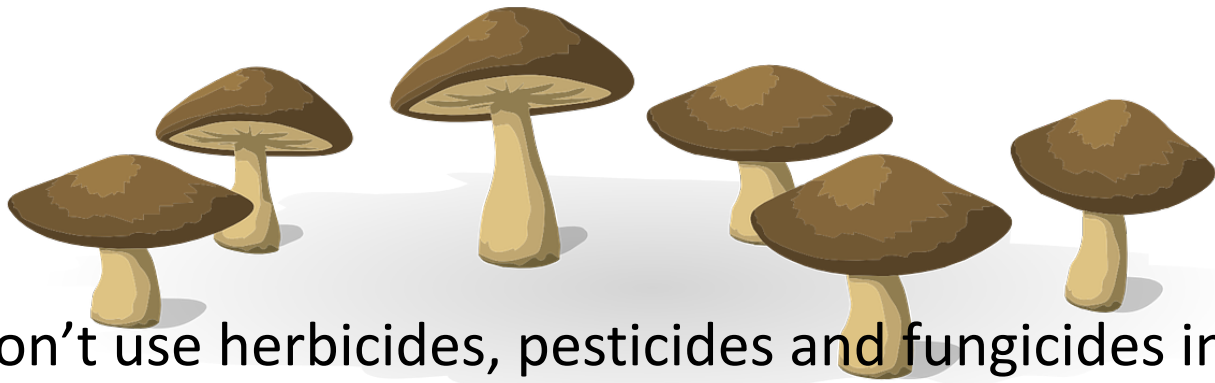
Environment

Two things you can do to increase your happiness along the domain of the environment:

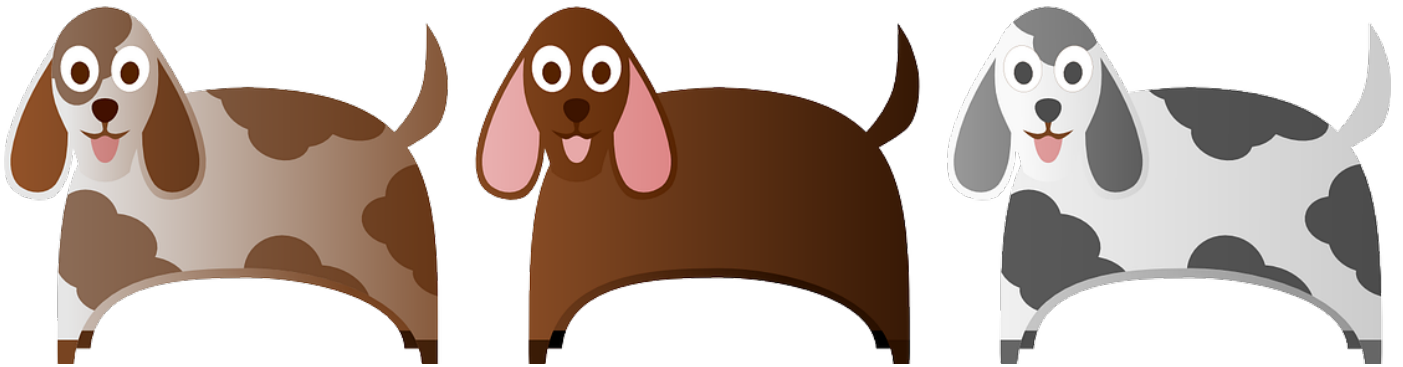


Eat Local and Organic. Food production has a large impact on our environment. When you can, buy locally or grow food in your yard. Local and organic food is not always more expensive than conventional food, so keep a look-out. Growing your own food in your yard, if you eat the food you grow and enjoy gardening, can be cost effective. Expanding your areas capacity for local food can also enhance your areas local economy and resilience.

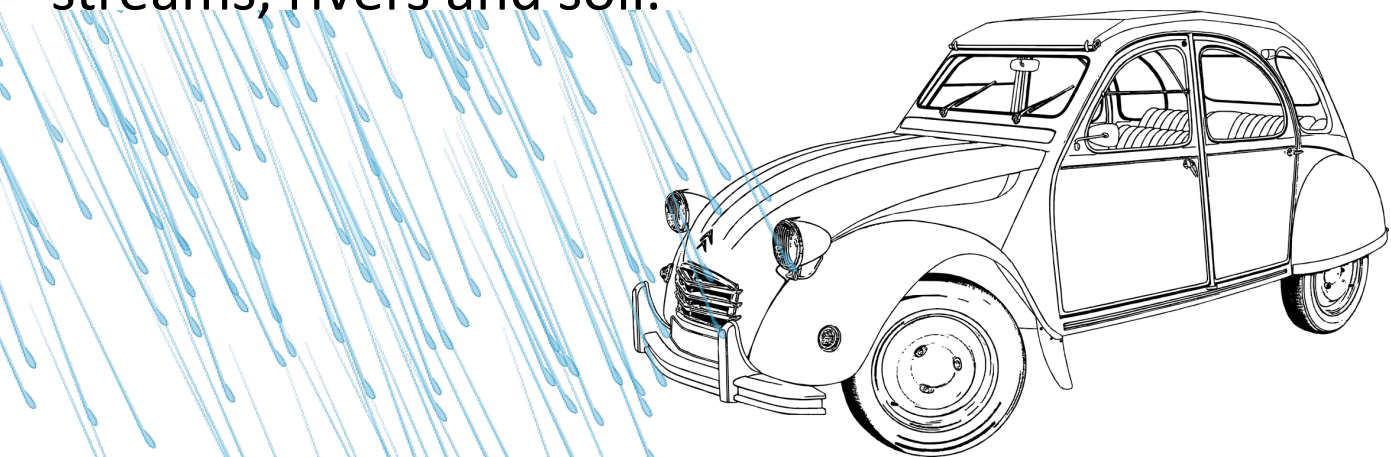
Do these three things:



Don't use herbicides, pesticides and fungicides in your garden so rainwater does not pick up excess and carry them into our waterways and soils.



Pick up your puppies' poop so it does not end up in streams, rivers and soil.



Only wash your car at a car wash, never at home where the dirt and soap run off into the drain.


These three acts can make a big difference in the quality of your local environment.

Social Support

Two things you can do to increase your happiness along the domain of the social support:



Communicate: effective communication strengthens bonds and can be an effective tool to negotiate conflict. Non-Violent Communication (NVC) is a methodology for listening and speaking that involves a four-step process to a) non-judgmentally observe what is happening b) state a feeling, c) state a need/values and d) make a request. The practice involves learning how to identify language of blame, judgment and domination, and learning to really listen.

A photograph of two women sitting on a wooden staircase. The woman on the left is a Black woman with a short haircut, wearing a white collared shirt and a light green apron. She is smiling and looking at a laptop. The woman on the right is a white woman with short blonde hair and glasses, wearing a black t-shirt and a light green apron. She is pointing at the laptop screen. The laptop is open on the woman on the left's lap. The background shows the wooden steps and a black metal railing of the staircase.

Take Time to Make Time: Studies show happy people take the time out of their schedules - no matter how busy - to spend time with friends and family. Even if, and maybe especially if, your life is super busy, take out the time every week to spend with a friend, your partner or a family member.

Happiness is the meaning and the purpose of life,
the whole aim and end of human existence.


~Aristotle



The care of human life and happiness, and not their destruction, is the only legitimate object of good government. ~Thomas Jefferson



Take the happiness challenge:

1. Take the Happiness Index survey at happycounts.org
 2. Use your results to create greater balance in your life.
 3. Use your results to increase happiness and sustainability in your community and on our planet.
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Your
Happiness
Matters

The Happiness Alliance provides tools, resources and knowledge for a new economic paradigm and personal happiness.

Take the Happiness Index to get your own self-assessment of your well-being.

