

INGREDIENTS OF HAPPY AND HEALTHY LIVING

SELF-ACCEPTANCE. Healthy people choose to accept themselves unconditionally, rather than measure or rate themselves or try to prove themselves.

RISK-TAKING. Emotionally healthy people choose to take risks and have a spirit of adventure in trying to do what they want to do, without being foolhardy.

NON-UTOPIAN. We are unlikely to get everything we want or to avoid everything we find painful. Healthy people do not waste time striving for the unattainable or for unrealistic perfection.

HIGH FRUSTRATION TOLERANCE. Healthy people recognize that there are only two sorts of problems they are likely to encounter: those they can do something about and those they cannot. Once this discrimination has been made, the goal is to modify those obnoxious conditions we can change, and to accept (or lump) those we cannot change.

SELF-RESPONSIBILITY FOR DISTURBANCE. Rather than blaming others, the world, or fate for their distress, healthy individuals accept a good deal of responsibility for their own thoughts, feelings, and behavior.

SELF-INTEREST. Emotionally healthy people tend to put their own interests at least a little above the interests of others. They sacrifice themselves to some degree for those for whom they care, but not overwhelmingly or completely.

SOCIAL INTEREST. Most people choose to live in social groups, and to do so most comfortably and happily, they would be wise to act morally, protect the rights of others, and aid in the survival of the society in which we live.

SELF-DIRECTION. We would do well to cooperate with others, but it would be better for us to assume primary responsibility for our own lives rather than to demand or need most of our support or nurturance from others.

TOLERANCE. It is helpful to allow humans (oneself and others) the right to be wrong. It is not appropriate to like obnoxious behavior, but it is not necessary to damn oneself or others for acting badly.

FLEXIBILITY. Healthy individuals tend to be flexible thinkers — as opposed to having rigid, bigoted, or invariant rules, which tend to reduce happiness.

ACCEPTANCE OF UNCERTAINTY. We live in a fascinating world of probability and chance; absolute certainties probably do not exist. The healthy individual strives for a degree of order, but does not demand perfect certainty.

COMMITMENT. Most people tend to be happier when vitally absorbed in something outside themselves. At least one strong creative interest and some important human involvement seem to provide structure for a happy daily existence.