

Live Big. Live Bold.

Your Life, Your Rules

The Road to Happiness Starts With Three Simple Steps

Living “heart-healthy” is so much more than physical.

by Alissa Sauer

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February is American Heart Month, a month set aside to raise awareness for heart health and heart disease prevention. At Leisure Care, living “heart-healthy” is more than being physically healthy, although that is a high priority too. Being heart-healthy is also about nurturing the soul, fully living in the present, being intentional about time and space, prioritizing self-care, and loving those around us better.

Dr. Marcia Sirota, M.D., believes there are four key principles that together significantly increase happiness for ourselves and those around us. She calls them the four pillars of happiness. The first pillar is having an open heart, the second is having an open mind, the third is having open eyes, and the fourth is having open arms.

It all starts with living with an open heart, the first pillar. Happiness begins here, with our own hearts open, loving and accepting ourselves first and then giving love to those around us. Truly, it’s not until we love and accept ourselves first that we can give love to others, finding a new sense of peace and well-being.



3 Steps for Living With an Open Heart

Eleanor Roosevelt said it best when she remarked, “Friendship with oneself is all-important, because without it one cannot be friends with anyone else in the world.”

But what does it mean to be friends with yourself? Well, it starts with caring about yourself. It starts with taking control of your life and prioritizing yourself now so you can make more meaningful contributions to those around you later.

These three steps will help you cultivate an open heart where you are fulfilled in the present and focused on the future.



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— Eleanor Roosevelt

1. Start each day with an affirmation.

An affirmation is a positive statement that helps you focus on positive thoughts and overcome negative ones. They should be repeated often, even out loud, and written down. They often note your strengths or state something you want to be true as true. For example, “I am a patient person who sets healthy boundaries,” can eventually help you become a patient person who sets healthy boundaries. Or, “I am open to a new adventure today,” can help you take healthy risks and expand your horizons.



2. Set goals.

Achieving personal goals increases appreciation and acceptance, but first, you have to set them. Think through your next few years — what do they look like? Where do you want to be? Make a vision board that can help you visualize your goals. This can be a highly motivating way to foster a positive mindset so you can use the present to make those future goals a reality.

Goals should be measurable, and you should be able to track your progress toward them easily. Celebrate even small victories, and reward yourself for hitting milestones, recognizing your efforts and sacrifices to hit your personal goals.

3. Say yes!

Don’t be afraid to say yes while also setting healthy boundaries. Before you turn down an opportunity or the chance to develop a new friendship, think about why you are saying no. Is it out of fear? Living with an open heart leads to living in abundance, so choose a “yes” when you can! Commit to a weekly coffee with a friend, join a new exercise program, try your hand at painting ... say yes and dive in.

Whatever your goals, remember that living with an open heart is the opposite of living in fear. Don’t be afraid of failure. It’s merely another opportunity to try again, to do something a new way, and learn to appreciate yourself, your efforts, and how far you’ve come.

Open Heart Living at Leisure Care

At Leisure Care, we are committed to helping our residents live with an open heart. We start by hiring people who are also committed to living with an open heart. We know who we are, we set goals, and we measure ourselves against those goals. We say “yes!” to new adventures. Living with an open heart at Leisure Care means embracing new hobbies, new interests and making new friends. And it all starts with loving and accepting yourself first.

Our residents have chosen to care about their futures, their health, and their own well-being by moving into a Leisure Care community. Leisure Care

communities offer a wide range of care services so that residents and their families have peace of mind, knowing needs are being met in a way that encourages and empowers each person. This allows our residents to relax and enjoy every day. Not worrying about mastering activities of daily living allows residents to focus on what is more important — their hobbies, interests, developing new friendships, and creating meaningful connections with those around them.

No matter if it’s care you need in the form of assistance with activities of daily living, motivation to attend that cardio class, help connecting with friends, or planning the trip of a

lifetime, Leisure Care is here to help. With robust programming like Travel by Leisure Care, PrimeFit, BrainHQ, and a dynamic activities calendar, Leisure Care communities encourage residents to seize the day, to see the world, launching new adventures from a safe place.

Loving yourself is the first step to loving others. You must appreciate yourself before you are able to fully appreciate others. Start today with Leisure Care. ♦

Learn more:

Read more about Dr. Sirota’s four pillars of happiness at www.marciasirotamd.com.

