You have to do hard things to be happy in life. The things no one else is doing. The things that frighten you. The things others can’t do for you. The things that make you question how much longer you can hold on and push forward.

Why?

Because those are the things that define you. Those are the things that make the difference between existing and living – between knowing the path and walking the path – between a life of mediocrity and a life filled with happiness and success.
Of course, the hard things are often the easiest things to avoid. To procrastinate. To make excuses. To pretend like they somehow don’t apply to you and your life situation. But reality always rears its head in the end. And the truth about how ordinary people achieve immense happiness and incredible feats of success is that they step out of their comfort zones and do the hard things that their more educated, affluent and qualified counterparts don’t have the courage, drive or determination to do.

So for your own sake, start doing the hard things TODAY. I guarantee, you will be blown away at just how remarkable you really are and just how amazing life can be. Here are some ideas to get you started:

1. You need to take small chances every day. – It’s the best way to face any problem, crush every fear and overcome life’s greatest challenges. And you get just about as many chances in life as you’re willing to take. So never let your fear decide your future. Take small chances every day, one step at a time. Some will work out and some won’t. But good choices or bad, if you never take these chances, someone else will build your life for you. And you don’t want that.

2. You need to worry less about what other people think of you. – A beautiful life is about spending your time passionately, being happy with who you are inside, and not worrying about everyone’s petty judgments. If you want to achieve greatness, stop asking for everyone’s approval. You don’t need anyone’s approval to be happy or to follow your heart.

3. You need to ignore what everyone else is doing and achieving. – Your life is about breaking your own limits and outgrowing yourself to live YOUR best life. You are not in competition with anyone else; plan to outdo your past, not other people.

4. You need to invest in yourself even when no one else is. – Truth be told, there are only a few people in this world who will stay 100% true to you, and YOU should be one of them. Prioritize your own needs into your daily to-do’s. Invest in your education, health and happiness every single day. Create a life that feels good on the inside, not one that just looks good on the outside to everyone else.
5. You need to walk the talk. – Do not ask others or the universe to guide your footsteps if you’re not willing to move your feet. If you really want it, prove it! Happiness will come to you when it comes from you. Success will be yours when you take responsibility for making your goals a top priority.

6. You need to put your heart into your work. – Love is a verb. Act on it. Put your heart into goals that move you. Work hard. In the end, love is what makes you smile when you’re tired and still struggling.

7. You need to deliver results, even when making excuses is easier. – NO shortcuts. NO quick fixes. NO blaming others. NO “I’ll do it tomorrows.” NO MORE EXCUSES! Just get started. Quit talking and begin doing! Laziness may appear attractive, but work leads to happiness.

8. You need to make mistakes and look like a fool sometimes. – Quite often, the successful people who act the happiest are the ones who have overcome the most. Sometimes you have to lose something precious in order to gain something priceless. Never regret your past mistakes and failures, because they have given you strength. The one who falls and gets up is much stronger than the one who never fell.

9. You need to let go of yesterday’s struggles. – The story of your life has many chapters. One bad chapter doesn’t mean it’s the end. So stop re-reading the bad one already and turn the page. Accept what is, let go of what was and have faith in what could be. Remember, life does not have to be anywhere near perfect to be wonderful in the end.

10. You need to refrain from feeling sorry for yourself. – To those who are struggling, I understand how rough things are right now. I just want to let you know that things will get better, I promise. Keep pushing forward. I know you feel like nobody really cares, but you’re wrong. People care. I care, otherwise I wouldn’t be writing this. You’re not alone. We may be miles apart, but we’re all going through similar challenges. Realize that self-pity is not helpful. Life is not about feeling sorry for yourself. It’s about forgiveness, acceptance and looking forward to what makes you stronger and better off in the long run.
11. You need to toughen up. – The strongest, happiest, most successful people are NOT those who always win, but those who don’t give up when they lose. They fail forward. So keep calm when everything seems to be going wrong. You may feel weak, but your spirit is strong. When things are tough, you must be tougher. Don’t pray for an easy life; pray for the strength to endure a hard one that leads to long-term success and happiness.

12. You need to fight hard for what you believe in. – Great strength comes from overcoming what others believe is impossible. And sometimes you have to lose the battle to win the war. So if you believe strongly in something, fight for it. In time things will fall into place... maybe not today, but eventually... maybe not exactly how you planned, just how it’s meant to be.

13. You need to be patient. – Don’t rush it. Practice patience. Keep a good attitude while working hard for what you believe in. When the time is right, it’ll happen.

14. You need to take control of your thoughts before they take control of you. – It’s often our own thinking that hurts us. Realize this. You can’t solve your problems with the same thinking you used to create them. There’s no reason to imprison yourself. Don’t think outside the box. Think like there is no box.

15. You need to be positive. – Happiness is in the heart and mind, not in random circumstances. Beautiful things happen when you distance yourself from negative thinking. Be positive and smile right now, not because everything is good, but because you can see the good side of everything. Smiling doesn’t always mean you’re happy; sometimes it simply means you’re strong. And smiling will help you feel better.

16. You need to spend more time with the right people. – And if you know the people around you aren’t the right people, you need to change the people around you. It’s not easy, but it’s worth it. Don’t expect to see positive changes in your life if you surround yourself with negative people. Don’t give part-time people a full-time position in your life. Know your value and what you have to offer, and never settle for relationships that always bring you down.
17. You need to stand up for yourself. – Some people will do anything for their own personal gain at the expense of others - cut in line, take money and property, bully and belittle, pass guilt, etc. Do not accept this behavior. Do not let people walk all over you. Most of these people know they’re doing the wrong thing and will back down and apologize surprisingly quickly when confronted. In most social settings people tend to keep quiet until one person speaks up, so SPEAK UP.

18. You need to forgive everyone who has wronged you. – Kindness is not to be mistaken for weakness, nor forgiveness for acceptance. It’s about knowing that resentment is not on the path to happiness. Remember, you don’t forgive people because you’re weak. You forgive them because you’re strong enough to know that people make mistakes.

19. You need to reach out and help people. – The closest thing to being cared for is to care for others. We are all in this together and we should treat each other as such. Your beliefs alone don’t make you a better person, your behavior does. Use your voice for kindness, your ears for compassion, and your hands for charity, always. You don’t need a reason to help someone else.

20. You need to be present enough to enjoy your journey. – Find your balance between planning and presence. When life is good, enjoy it. Don’t go looking for something better every second. Happiness never comes to those who don’t appreciate what they have. You must be willing to loosen your grip on the life you have planned so you can enjoy the life that is waiting for you in this moment. It may not be everything you want for your future, but it’s everything you need right now.

The floor is yours...
What else would you add to the list? What’s one hard thing you do that makes you happier? Leave a comment below and share your thoughts.

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