

Oprah Winfrey Said Lifelong Success, Happiness, and Fulfillment Come Down to Just 5 Words

Oprah's insight on how to achieve long-term happiness is so simple, anyone can do it. [🔗](#)

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What's the meaning of happiness? Better yet, how does one *become* happy? Oprah Winfrey gave us a resounding answer in an episode of NPR's *Morning Edition* late last year. I'll let the billionaire mogul and philanthropist explain in a minute.

But first, let's clarify something: So often, people misunderstand the concept of happiness from the get-go. They view happiness solely as an emotion when, in reality, it's our emotions that *reflect* our happiness.

If we base our pursuit of happiness solely on chasing after fleeting feelings, we'll find ourselves at the mercy of everyday circumstances--like what we ate for breakfast or if our home team won the game. This approach is far from happiness and isn't sustainable for long-term fulfillment.

So, what's the key to long-term happiness? Here's an excerpt of Oprah explaining it on *Morning Edition*:

“I'm telling you, if you do something to make someone else happier, it's almost like it comes back to you exactly 100-fold. I got that when I was a little girl living in Mississippi. And it was so rare that we ever got actually like a real candy bar, like a Three Musketeers or Snickers. Oh, my god, Almond Joy. And I learned for myself, even as a little kid, that the candy bar tasted better if I had somebody to say, "Isn't this good?" If I could share it with somebody. And so that philosophy of sharing what you have, understanding that all things in life get better when you share it, and when you do something for someone else, the benefit comes back to you as well as to them. That's where I get my great joy.”

Happiness in five words: 'Do something for someone else'

Those five magical words are much easier to act on than what the world tells us we need to do to be happy. Many people think happiness is all about chasing after money, power, fame, and being super bright or having tons of followers on social media. But that's not really what it's about.

Oprah boils down real happiness to using what you're good at to help others--to be in service to others, plain and simple.

One of Oprah's favorite quotes is from Martin Luther King Jr., who said, "Not everybody can be famous but everybody can be great, because greatness is determined by service."

Overall, Oprah's perspective on helping others underscores the idea that true happiness and success are measured not just by individual achievements but also by the positive influence we have on the world around us. It's ultimately using that success to make an impact on the lives of others. That's something we can all agree on.

Science backs it up

But did you know that helping others is good for you, too? As you help someone--or show your generosity through acts of giving or volunteering--Harvard Health says your brain releases endorphins, the "brain's natural pain reliever." When you volunteer or engage in activities you enjoy, endorphins create a sense of well-being. This feeling is sometimes referred to as a helper's high. That's good for our health and our happiness.

But there's more. A study published in the *International Journal of Psychophysiology* showed that giving to others can lower blood pressure, similar to the benefits of a healthy diet and regular exercise.

Another study published in the *Innovation in Aging* journal found that giving and helping has been linked to lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol and can help decrease stress levels.

What does all of this come down to? It's simple: being in service to others brings deep happiness and fulfillment, much like Oprah Winfrey's experience. This helps us and others grow, become more resilient, improve well-being, and make the world a much better place. It's a win for everyone.