Wouldn’t it be great if we could capture the moments when we feel happy? That way when we lose it, especially at a time when we think we should be happy, we could just uncork the bottle instead of trying to capture it again. But in this game of pursuit, are we just chasing our tails?

According to Psychology Today, the idea of happiness is most burdened with myths and expectations. It is these myths and expectations that can lead us not to more happiness, but rather to unhappiness and disappointment.

Renowned “happologist” Susanna Newsonen debunks happy myths in a recent article published at psychologytoday.com:

**Happiness is the absence of negative emotions. False.**

Happiness is not about always smiling, laughing, and being joyful. Happiness is not about being numb to negative feelings.

**The truth:**

Happiness is having the full human experience, including positive and negative emotions. Consider the words written in 1842 by poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow:

Be still, sad heart! and cease repining;
Behind the clouds is the sun still shining;
Thy fate is the common fate of all,
Into each life some rain must fall,
Some days must be dark and dreary.

To have the full human experience, you need to experience the full range of human emotions—the good and the bad, the positive and the negative. Don’t shy away from the negative emotions, because they are like a compass guiding your way, explains Newsonen. Learn to manage them in an effective way so they don’t overpower the positive ones.

**There is one formula for happiness. False.**

To assume we all want the same things in life—and therefore need the same things in life to be happy—couldn’t be further from the truth. We are all unique. That means that each person will need to create their own unique life that is right for them.

**The truth:**

There is no one-size-fits-all for happiness. You might be happiest as a director in a big corporation. Or you might be happiest as a one-(wo)man-show entrepreneur. Or you might be happiest as a stay-at-home parent. There is no right or wrong, because only you know what is right for you. When in doubt, Newsonen recommends asking yourself these two questions:

1. What gives you “hedonic” happiness—the momentary joy, pleasure, and contentment in your life?
2. What gives you “eudaimonic happiness”—a sense of meaning, purpose, and fulfillment that makes you whole?

While happiness can be encouraged by the way we live our lives, it can’t be produced to order. Chasing happiness may only make you tired in the end.
Ways to protect yourself from extreme heat

(NC) Canada’s summers can get hot and in some places of the country very humid. We may look forward to warm weather, but those scorching days can take their toll.

That’s why it’s important to know the signs of heat illness. For heat exhaustion, this includes high body temperature, confusion, muscle cramps, dizziness, nausea, headache, rapid breathing and heartbeat, and decreased urination.

The signs and symptoms of heat stroke, a more serious condition and a medical emergency, can overlap with those of heat exhaustion. They include high body temperature, confusion, lack of coordination, dizziness and fainting. In classic heat stroke, a person doesn’t sweat but may show very hot, red skin; however in exertional (associated with exercise) heat stroke there may be profuse sweating.

If you or someone you are with is suffering from any of the above the signs, get help immediately. Call 911 or your local emergency number immediately if you are caring for someone who has a high body temperature and is either unconscious, confused or has stopped sweating. While waiting for help, cool the person right away by moving them to a cool place if you can, applying cold water to large areas of the skin or clothing; and fanning away by moving them to a cool place.

To stay cool and safe, follow these tips recommended by Health Canada:

Take breaks. Spend a few hours in a cool place. It could be a tree-shaded area, swimming facility or an air-conditioned spot such as a shopping mall, grocery store, or public library. If you’re at home, take cool showers or baths to feel refreshed.

Keep your home cool. If you have an air conditioner with a thermostat, keep it set to the highest setting that is comfortable - somewhere between 22 and 26°C. If you are using a window air conditioner, cool only one room where you can go for heat relief. You can also block the sun by closing awnings, curtains or blinds during the day. If safe, open your windows at night to let the cooler air into your home.

When it comes to cooking, prepare meals that don’t need to be cooked in the oven - opt for salads, sandwiches or grilling something outdoors under the shade.

Pay attention to how you and those around you feel. Frequently visit neighbours, friends and older family members, especially those who are chronically ill or live alone, to make sure they are cool and hydrated. Never leave people or pets in your care inside a parked vehicle or in direct sunlight.

Find more tips on how to stay cool this summer at canada.ca/health.

Know the facts about repelling mosquitoes

Mosquitoes are pesky little insects. We will do just about anything to ward off getting bitten, but do any of the home remedies we hear about actually work?

Here are few mosquito myths explained, thanks to a recent article published at theweathernetwork.com:

**Mosquitoes are not vampires:** Dracula may not be big on garlic, but mosquitoes just don’t care. There’s no magic diet that will keep the bugs at bay.

**Those critters are not choosy:** Mosquitoes are attracted to heat and carbon dioxide, not the smell or type of your blood. Therefore larger people emanate more heat, and may attract more mosquitoes. If you’re little and stand like a statue and don’t utter a word, mosquitoes may not bother you, but experts say that at some point everybody is attractive to a mosquito.

**Mosquitoes are not big on perfume:** It’s a common belief that even a little dab of perfume will make you a target for mosquitoes. But in fact, mosquitoes are not really attracted to sweetness. Rather, perfumes made with oils can sometimes be just as effective as some repellents, which are often made with oils. Repellents attach to a mosquito’s antennae, deterring a bite, and perfumes can do the same.

**Citronella candles are not the answer:** Citronella candles, or any type of candle for that matter, do not protect you from bites. Since mosquitoes are attracted to heat, they may flock to the candle, but if a nearby human is generating more heat, that person will be a greater target.

**One thing that is true:** Research has shown that dark colours tend to attract mosquitoes more than light colours, though there’s no clear reason to explain it. Covering your skin with light, tight-knit clothing will protect you best.

And remember, mosquito bites can bring illness in certain parts of the world, namely the Zika Virus or West Nile Virus. If you will be travelling to international destinations this summer, speak with your health care professional about Zika and how to prepare against getting infected.
Ways to avoid the sleep-stress hamster wheel

Have you ever have those nights where you may feel tired, but your brain has no “off” switch? It’s likely that the evil usurper of sleep, also known as stress, is taking away your ability to get your much-needed rest. Because you are getting less sleep, you’re wiped out during the day so you tend to feel even more stressed, anxious, and irritable. Over time you could find yourself in a vicious cycle if you are not careful. Avoid running on the sleep-stress hamster wheel. Here are a few ways to ease feelings of stress and promote feelings of relaxation from amerisleep.com:

Journaling.
A recent study published in Applied Psychology, found that students who wrote in a gratitude journal for just 15 minutes per night worried less at bedtime—and achieved better sleep. Why not give it a try? You've got nothing to lose and sleep to gain.

Guided imagery.
Experts say that mind games like guided imagery can help you doze off faster. And it couldn’t be simpler: While you’re lying down, picture yourself in a relaxing, peaceful place. Over time the image becomes a sort of signal to your brain that it’s time to nod off.

Progressive muscle relaxation.
Because relaxing your physical body can be just as effective as relaxing your mind. Try repeatedly tensing and releasing your toes to the count of 10, recommend experts at the University of Maryland Medical Center, Sleep Disorders Center. It may sound a little out there, but it can actually help relieve pent up energy and help you feel more relaxed.

And don’t discount the powerful effect of a super comfortable bedroom. If you’ve ever spent a night tossing and turning because of a too-hot room or wonky mattress, you know that feeling uncomfortable can make it almost impossible to fall—and stay—asleep.

Plastics may break down but they never leave

Plastic debris can come in all shapes and sizes, but those that are less than five millimetres in length (or about the size of an ant) are known as microplastics, and some of it may be ending up in our stomachs.

Environmental and geographical lecturers at the UK's University of Keele explain that plastics that started out as drink bottles, fishing gear, and disposable cutlery among others, are known as “secondary microplastics”. The focus of many government initiatives are the “primary microplastics”, in particular microbeads which are the most familiar sources of tiny plastic pollution.

In 2016, Canada added microbeads in the Canadian Environmental Protection Act as a toxic substance, and banned the import or manufacture, as well as sales of toiletries containing microbeads in 2018. Secondary or primary, the fact is that all plastic ends up tiny. Even the largest, most resilient bits of plastic are broken up and degraded until eventually these chunks measure less than five millimetres across. In fact, a recent Canadian study by the University of Victoria indicates a significant amount of the microplastics humans consume may be in the air we breathe or water we drink.

The University of Keele lists several less obvious sources of microplastics in everyday use. They include:

Synthetic clothing
Outdoor gear, leggings, fleeces and sweaters made from acrylic and polyester, polyamide, spandex and nylon shed up to 700,000 microfibres with each wash. Once in water, microfibres are difficult to filter out and studies have shown that these fibres are now being found in tap water in many countries. The solution? Fitting all washing machines with filters and choosing natural fibres.

Wet wipes
Baby wipes, hand wipes, make-up removing wipes, all of these products are typically made from polyester, polyethylene, and polypropylene - or a mixture of those plastics and natural fibres. Not only do they block sewers, the plastic doesn’t break down. A traditional all-cotton flannel is the eco-friendly choice.

Teabags
Not entirely biodegradable, many teabags actually contain a polypropylene “skeleton”. That skeleton then breaks into tiny pieces when the paper breaks down in the compost or soil. Check the packaging of your favourite brew to see if it is plastic-free, or consider switching to loose-leaf tea or by choosing a brand that has folded edges and is sealed with a string and or staple.

Takeout cups
Many paper takeout cups might be lined with a layer of polyethylene. Like teabags, the paper element breaks down, but the plastic breaks up into tiny pieces if the cup is littered or composted. Consider using a refillable mug rather than the takeout cup.
Burnout syndrome gets WHO recognition

Burnout is real and it happens more often than you think. And now the World Health Organization is officially confirming the existence of this condition. It has identified it in the WHO International Classification of Diseases 11th edition (ICD) as Burnout Syndrome. The ICD categorizes diseases for diagnosis by health care professionals.

Including Burnout Syndrome in the ICS has ended more than four decades of debate among experts over how to define this stress disorder. The new diagnosis is defined as a “syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. Burnout refers specifically to phenomena in the occupational context and should not be applied to describe experiences in other areas of life."

For someone to be diagnosed with burnout syndrome, these three components need to be present:

**Emotional exhaustion**
You feel tired all the time. You may wake up every morning with a feeling of dread. Day after day you feel this, and it doesn’t lift, even after time off.

**Cynicism/Depersonalization**
You may have started out as someone who really enjoyed their job. Now, you find yourself feeling increasingly angry and irritable. You have a growing sense of detachment from your work and may even be alarmed by how cynical you’ve become.

**Reduced personal efficacy**
You’re losing confidence in your ability to do your job. You work harder and harder, but seem to accomplish less. Your productivity has dropped significantly, and your belief in yourself has fallen along with it.

You need to be experiencing all three of these components to be suffering from full-fledged burnout. Pay attention to how you are feeling and if you feel any of these symptoms, talk to your health-care professional first. Do not self-diagnose.

Here are a few things to consider from the American Institute of Stress to help you avoid full-fledged burnout syndrome:

- Practice proactive stress management such as taking frequent short breaks to unwind and recharge, or doing helpful exercises such as deep breathing.
- Build up resilience to stressors using techniques such as meditation, and mindfulness, yoga, Tai Chi, or simply taking walks.
- Avoid the 24 hour nonstop social media cycle. Establish work-life boundaries and learn how to avoid checking your phone or email after hours.

Cutting down on sugar is not as hard as you may think. Get started with these quick tips:

**Opt for sugar-free drink alternatives.**
Water is best, but if you crave something sweet, a refreshing alternative like sugar-free lemonade is a great option.

**Limit highly processed foods.**
Processed and prepared foods are often high in sugar, sodium and saturated fat. Eat them less often or have different, healthier options.

**Compare labels.**
When looking at nutrition facts, tables and ingredients, choose foods that have little to no added sugars. Added sugar can come in many names. For example, look for brown sugar, cane sugar, concentrated fruit juice, corn syrup, dextrose, glucose-fructose corn syrup, maltose and more. Here’s a hint: ingredients ending in “ose” are likely sugar.

**Consider your eating habits.**
Be mindful of what and why you are eating. Are you choosing the sugar-rich food and drink options because you are bored? Or it’s convenient? If so, try to avoid having highly processed, sugar-rich foods in the house. You are less likely to grab it if it’s not convenient. Have other snacks handy and ready to grab, like fruit, nuts, seeds and yogurt.

**Cut back your serving size.**
When opting for sugary foods, have them in smaller amounts.

**Add fruit.**
Instead of adding sugar, try adding fresh or dried fruits to your recipes.
Ways to ensure a healthy home

( NC) Whether you live in an apartment or a house, these are some of Health Canada’s tips on keeping a safe and healthy home.

■ Remove outdoor shoes when entering your home, and ask visitors to do the same. The soil outside your home can track in harmful substances that you don’t want inside.

■ Regularly wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds to help prevent infection and reduce your exposure to harmful substances. Hand washing is especially important before every meal.

■ Wipe down surfaces, vacuum, dust and wet-mop regularly to reduce dust and dirt.

■ Understand the hazard symbols on the labels of household chemical products and take appropriate precautions.

■ Dispose of household chemical products safely. Check with your municipality to learn how and where.

■ Ventilate your home to reduce pollutant and moisture levels that may result in poor comfort and adverse health effects.

■ Don’t flush expired medications down the toilet. Return leftover medications to your pharmacy.

■ Don’t smoke cigarettes, cigars, or cannabis inside your home.

■ Don’t use kerosene, oil space-heaters, lamps, barbecues or portable generators indoors unless they are meant to be used indoors. These appliances could release carbon monoxide, a poisonous gas that has no colour, smell or taste.

■ Don’t store products that may release harmful fumes or catch fire inside your home. These products include paints, solvents, gasoline, fuels or varnishes. Store them according to the instructions on the product’s label in a separate building if you can, or in a place that is well vented to the outside.

■ Never mix household chemical products together. Some mixtures can produce harmful gases and cause burns.

■ Don’t store textile products, food, paper or wood in damp areas like a storage locker or basement where mold may grow. To prevent mold growth, fix any moisture problems right away and control humidity levels in your home.

Find more tips at canada.ca/healthy-home.

Maintain a healthy diet with less meat

Finding alternatives to meat consumption while maintaining a healthy diet has become more than just a trend for millennials or post-millennials.

A recent study published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition found that eating large amounts of either red meat or white meat increased levels of LDL (low-density lipoprotein) -- often dubbed “bad” cholesterol -- present in the blood. Often associated with contributing to “bad” cholesterol levels, red meat consumption is generally recommended in moderation, while white meat, which is generally leaner, is usually considered a healthier alternative. However, the study suggests that this may not be the case.

Companies like Impossible Foods and Beyond Meat are offering a complete alternative by creating meat using a combination of plant proteins to make products that taste like hamburgers, sausages and luncheon meats. Not only can this be a healthy alternative, companies claim that buying such products also reduces the negative impact cows raised for slaughter have on the environment.

Whether it’s for your health or the environment, reducing the amount of meat, red or white, in your diet may have its advantages. According to the Mayo Clinic, a plant-based diet which emphasizes fruits, vegetables, grains, beans, legumes and nuts, is rich in fibre, vitamins and other nutrients.

The Canada Food Guide recommends the following for a healthy diet:

■ Have plenty of vegetables and fruits.

■ Eat protein foods.

■ Choose whole-grain foods.

■ Make water your drink of choice.

Consider these recommendations when making your food choices.
Air quality tips for a healthy home

Walking is an endurance activity and you will need to replace energy fuel when walking for two hours or more. These are things to take along on for eating while walking.

Fruit Snacks
Take along fruit for the truly all-natural carbohydrate burst. Bananas are an excellent source of potassium. Apples, small oranges, and raisins are great packable snacks. Be sure to dispose of peels and cores appropriately—in the trash, not just tossed in the bushes.

Trail Mix
Trail mix is the original energy bar, with less melting. You can mix it up yourself or buy it in bulk or packaged.

Generally, it contains nuts for protein, raisins or other dried fruit for carbohydrates, and often chocolate or carob for taste. It has salt to replace electrolytes.

Use portion control, as trail mix is often high in fat and calories—about 140 calories and 9 grams of fat per ounce.

Radiological pollutants, like radon.

Possible causes of indoor air pollutants include:
- Water leaks or other sources of humidity that could be causing mold to grow.
- Broken or improperly vented combustion appliances, such as your furnace or stove.
- Products that can release chemicals into the air, such as glues, paints, varnishes or wood-plastic composites (wood products combined with plastic and chemicals).
- Living organisms like bacteria, mold, fungi and house mites, including pollen from indoor and outdoor plants.
- Chemical pollutants like nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide, formaldehyde, lead, ozone, volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and dust or airborne particles.

There are many simple ways you can improve the air quality in your home. For example, open windows when painting, varnishing, working with composite wood, or installing carpets. Find more tips at canada.ca/healthy-home.

Photosensitivity is not sunburn

Does your skin still suffer effects from the sun such as a painful rash, discoloured skin or inflammation, even after you have applied sunscreen or covered up to protect yourself from the sun’s rays?

After spending time outside, we can be quick to pass off these symptoms as sunburn; however, the real culprit might be photosensitivity.

Photosensitivity is an immune system reaction and is triggered by spending even a short amount of time in the sun. The severity of the reaction can vary depending on the person and can include symptoms like an exaggerated sunburn or skin rash. These rashes can often be itchy, and in extreme cases you may experience blistering and peeling skin.

The most common cause of photosensitivity is a reaction to medication. Antihistamines, antibiotics, chemotherapy drugs, diuretics and even some skincare agents are known to create a reaction. Certain medical conditions, such as lupus and rosacea, can also cause photosensitivity.

If you believe you could be experiencing a photosensitivity reaction, talk with your pharmacist about your current prescriptions to see if you’re taking any medications that could make you susceptible. If a medication or skin product is making your skin more sensitive to sun exposure, there may be other options available that your pharmacist can recommend that do not cause the same reaction.

Whether or not you have photosensitivity, minimizing your exposure to direct sunlight is the most effective way to protect your skin.