

If you want to be happy as you get older, say goodbye to these 9 behaviors.

By Lachlan Brown: [If you want to be happy as you get older, say goodbye to these 9 behaviors \(thevessel.io\)](https://thevessel.io)

Aging is inevitable, but how we age, especially emotionally, well, that's entirely up to us. Happiness as we grow older isn't just about welcoming new habits, but also about letting go of certain behaviors that weigh us down.

If you're looking to be happy as you age, I've got a list of 9 behaviors you might want to consider waving goodbye to.

These aren't just any behaviors. These are the sneaky ones that seep into our daily lives almost unnoticed and often rob us of joy.

Let's get started.

1) Saying yes to everything

As we age, it becomes more important than ever to prioritize our time and energy.

One common habit that many of us fall into is saying yes to everything. We say yes to social engagements we're not interested in, to requests for help when we're already stretched thin, to tasks at work that aren't really our responsibility.

It's natural – we want to be helpful, we don't want to let people down, and sometimes it just seems easier to say yes and get on with it.

But this can lead to burnout, stress, and ultimately, unhappiness. Constantly agreeing to things you don't want to do or don't have time for can also lead to resentment.

As we grow older, it's crucial that we learn the art of saying no. It's about respecting your own time and wellbeing as much as you respect others'.

Saying no doesn't make you selfish or unkind. It means you're looking after your own happiness and that's not just okay, it's necessary.

2) Holding onto grudges

From personal experience, I can tell you that holding onto grudges is one of the most toxic behaviors that can rob you of your happiness as you get older.

A few years back, I had a falling out with a close friend. We both said some things we didn't mean and ended up parting ways. For years, I held onto the bitterness and resentment. Every time I thought of her or our argument, my mood would instantly sour.

But one day, I realized that this grudge wasn't hurting anyone but me. My friend had moved on, and here I was still stewing over a past argument.

I decided to let go. I reached out, we talked it over, and I felt a weight lift off my shoulders. We didn't become best friends again, but that wasn't the point. The point was to free myself from the bitterness that was eating away at my happiness.

Letting go of grudges doesn't mean you have to be best buddies with everyone. It simply means releasing the negative emotions attached to past situations. Trust me, your older self will thank you for it.

3) Neglecting self-care

Self-care isn't just about bubble baths and spa days as often depicted in popular media. It's about taking care of your physical, mental, and emotional health.

Did you know that according to the World Health Organization, depression and anxiety are two of the most common mental health disorders among older adults? And a significant contributing factor is the lack of self-care.

As we age, we often prioritize others' needs over our own or dismiss self-care as indulgence. But in reality, it's an essential part of maintaining our overall well-being and happiness.

Incorporate self-care habits into your routine. This could be as simple as taking a few minutes each day for deep breathing exercises, scheduling regular health check-ups, or setting aside time for hobbies you enjoy.

4) Comparing yourself to others

With the rise of social media, it's easier than ever to compare our lives with others. We see people our age traveling the world, achieving career milestones, or enjoying their retirement, and it's easy to feel like we're falling behind.

But truth is, comparison is a thief of joy. Everyone's journey is unique and has its own pace. Just because someone else seems to have it all doesn't mean they're happier or more fulfilled than you.

Instead of comparing yourself to others, focus on your own progress and achievements. Celebrate your small victories and take pride in your own journey.

5) Overthinking and worrying

Overthinking and worrying are common habits that can significantly impact our happiness as we age. When we constantly dwell on the past or worry about the future, we rob ourselves of the joy of living in the present.

It's easy to get caught up in 'what ifs' and 'if onlys', but these thought patterns rarely serve us well. Most of the things we worry about never happen, and overthinking can cause unnecessary stress and anxiety.

Instead, try to practice mindfulness. Engage fully with the present moment, whether you're spending time with loved ones, enjoying a hobby, or simply savoring a cup of coffee.

Letting go of excessive worrying and overthinking isn't easy, but it's one of the most effective steps you can take towards a happier life as you age.

6) Not expressing your feelings

Many of us grow up believing that showing emotions is a sign of weakness. We bottle up our feelings, hide our tears, and put on a brave face even when we're hurting inside.

But trust me, there's nothing weak about expressing your feelings. In fact, it's one of the bravest things you can do.

Hiding your emotions doesn't make them go away. It only allows them to build up inside you, causing stress and unhappiness. Whereas expressing your feelings can be incredibly liberating. It helps you understand yourself better and fosters deeper connections with others.

So let it out. Cry if you need to. Laugh out loud. Tell people you love them. Don't let unexpressed emotions steal your happiness as you age. Embrace your feelings, all of them, because they're what make you human.

7) Fearing change

I'll be the first to admit, change can be scary. I've spent nights wide awake, worrying about the uncertainties that come with change. Be it a new job, moving to a different city, or even smaller changes like a new haircut.

But over time, I've realized that change is inevitable and often necessary for growth. More importantly, fearing it doesn't prevent it from happening. Instead, it just adds unnecessary stress and prevents us from fully embracing new opportunities.

It's important to remember that not all changes are bad. Many lead to new experiences, personal growth, and yes, even happiness. So next time you're faced with a change, try to see it as an opportunity rather than a threat. It can make all the difference in your journey towards happiness as you age.

8) Living in the past

It's natural to look back on our lives as we grow older. Memories, both good and bad, are a part of who we are. However, when reminiscing turns into dwelling on the past, it can become a roadblock to happiness.

Longing for the 'good old days' or ruminating over past mistakes and regrets can prevent us from enjoying our present and looking forward to our future.

While it's important to learn from our past, it's equally important to let it stay there. Use your memories as a steppingstone to move forward, not as an anchor holding you back.

**Embrace the present moment. After all, today is tomorrow's 'good old days'.
Make it count.**

9) Not valuing yourself

Above all, the most detrimental behavior to your happiness as you age is not valuing yourself. Your worth is not defined by your job, your relationships, or how much money you have in the bank. It's intrinsic and unchanging.

You are deserving of love, respect, and happiness simply because you exist. Don't let anyone or anything make you believe otherwise.

Value yourself, love yourself, and treat yourself with kindness. Because ultimately, your relationship with yourself sets the tone for all other relationships in your life. And a healthy self-relationship is key to a happy and fulfilling life, no matter how old you are.

Final thoughts: Happiness is a journey

Aging and happiness are not mutually exclusive. In fact, many studies have found that people often become happier as they age. One reason being, as we grow older, we tend to prioritize what truly matters to us.

However, our habits can have a significant impact on our happiness. As we've discussed, certain behaviors can hinder our journey to happiness.

Remember, change doesn't happen overnight. It might be challenging to let go of these behaviors. But every small step towards saying goodbye to these habits is a step towards a happier you.

As Abraham Lincoln once said, "Most folks are about as happy as they make up their minds to be." So make up your mind to be happy. Embrace the changes that come with age, let go of the behaviors that no longer serve you, and cherish the joy of growing older.

After all, aging is not just about adding years to life, but also about adding life to those years. And happiness makes those years all the more beautiful.