

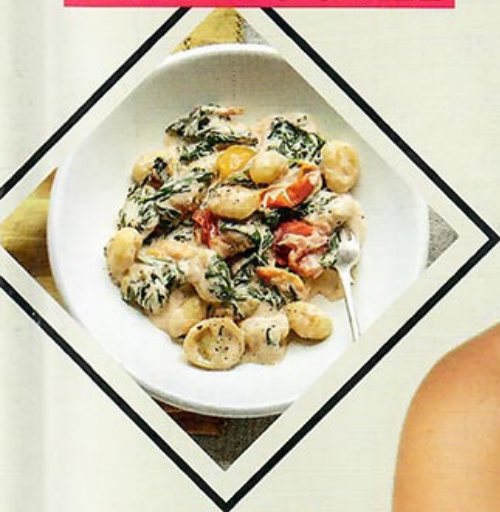
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# how to be happy

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{ real life }

# “Happiness is a state of mind”

Author Susie Pearl believes you create your own happiness. After beating brain cancer, she explains why creativity is a salve for our times

**M**y career has taught me that happiness isn't necessarily to do with what you have, or haven't, got. For 20 years, I ran a successful celebrity PR agency in London. We worked with some very famous people, including Madonna, The Spice Girls and David Bowie. But often, off stage, many stars weren't that happy. They had the villas, the holidays, the private jets and the big bank accounts, but their expectations of what they'd feel like when they got all those things were different to how they felt in reality.

I, myself, reached a very low point before I realised I could take my happiness into my own hands. My career was fantastic, I had a baby boy and a beautiful house, when my relationship broke down completely. I became a single mum, juggling family responsibilities with a demanding job, and I couldn't cope.

A friend of mine suggested I try Transcendental Meditation – which helps your mind settle in order to find calm. I felt like I'd arrived home. There was this sudden easing of anxiety. I made some life changes, selling my PR agency, and spending more time with my family. I learned about hypnosis and Theta Healing, and became the managing director for Paul McKenna's personal transformation seminars. Paul relies







Above: Susie is on the other side of her brain cancer now. Right: With her new book on creativity, and her son Will, 20



## “Lockdown has made us realise what’s important”

on techniques like neuro-linguistic programming to help people change their thoughts and actions. His books were really successful and I felt writing was something I could do. I took a course and wrote my first book, *Instructions For Happiness And Success*. It was all about bringing your desires into reality through positive thinking.

‘I realised I should walk my talk one day when I was paying a gigantic bill for my home in London. I’d written a book telling people how to be happier, but didn’t have time to have fun myself. I knew some people in Ibiza, so I made the radical decision to buy us one-way plane tickets to go and live there.

### THE C-WORD

‘I’d finally found the life I wanted to live, when a couple of years ago, I realised something wasn’t right. After agreeing to meet my neighbour in our favourite cafe, I couldn’t remember how to get there. She took me to hospital and after they ran some tests, they found I had a brain tumour. They told me I had six weeks to live, but something in my intuition told me I was going to pull through.

‘I decided to do everything I could to keep my mind and body as healthy as possible, so alongside chemotherapy and stem cell transplants, I meditated every day and practised hypnosis. I focused on my nutrition, eating organic food and fresh vegetables, and taking supplements. I was really nervous about having chemo, so I did lots of positive visualisation exercises around it, instructing my cells to allow it to come in and heal my body.

‘I was repeatedly told to face facts, but I wouldn’t listen. I believed wholeheartedly that I had the power to get through it. Tapping into my creative side helped immensely. I had my laptop at hospital, as well as crayons, coloured pens and big bits of paper, so that I could stick art all over the wall. My first brain scan had been awful, but by the second, the tumour had shrunk. After my third scan, the doctor said, “It’s gone – it looks like a miracle.”

### LIFE LESSONS

‘Ever since my illness, I’ve felt extraordinarily creative. It’s like life’s excuses – not having enough time, talent, or money – were no longer an issue.

‘My second book, *The Art of Creativity*, has just come out. It’s all about unlocking your creative potential in order to find fulfilment. I didn’t know there’d be a global pandemic when I started writing it, but don’t think it could’ve come at a better time. Creativity – journalling, painting, making music – has helped many of us pull through.

‘Lockdown has made us look at our lives and realise what’s important. Happiness is a state of mind and a choice. We can look at the world and see horror and disease, or choose to see all the good things happening. Nourish yourself with healthy food, surround yourself with friends, be kind, and don’t be afraid to ask for help. You’ll feel better for it.’ **📖**

*The Art of Creativity* by Susie Pearl (Orion Spring, £14.99) is out now. For more of Susie’s tips on finding happiness, visit [susiepearl.com](http://susiepearl.com)