

# 7 Brushstrokes to a **HAPPIER** **LIFE**



*The simple steps you  
do each day add up  
to a happy life.*

**By For the Strength of Youth Staff**

**WHEN YOU AREN'T** feeling as happy as you would like, it can seem that everyone else's life is going well but yours.

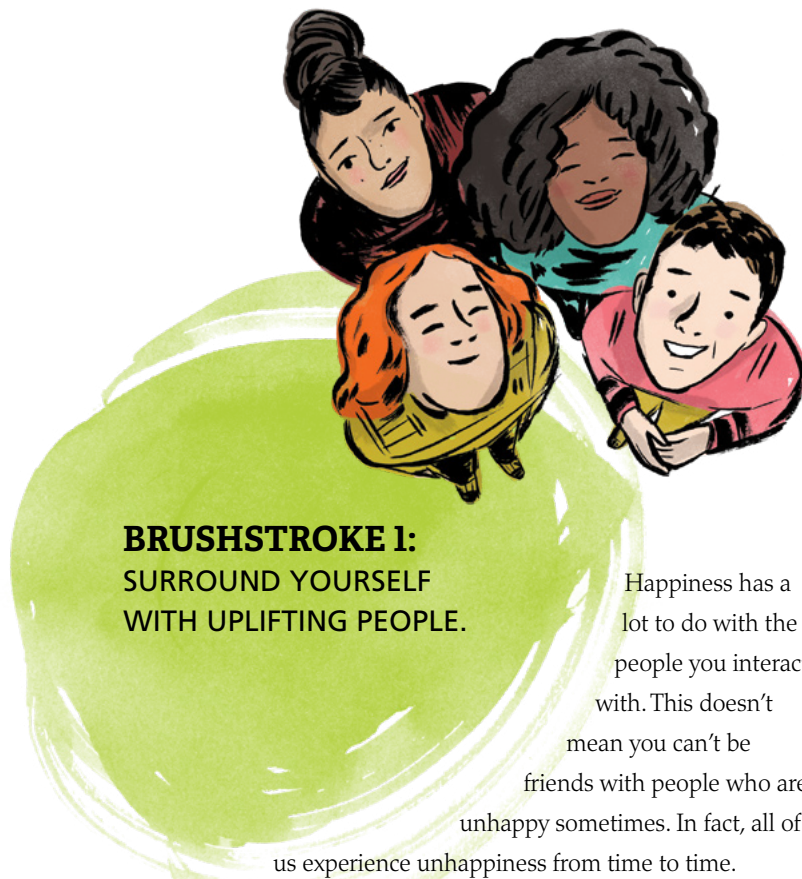
Sometimes people sit around waiting for happiness to happen to them. But your happiness is largely within your control. There may be rough patches, but even in hard times there are things you can still do that lead to happiness.

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles once taught, "Just as . . . strokes of paint complement each other and produce an impressive masterpiece, so our consistency in doing seemingly small things can lead to significant spiritual results."<sup>1</sup>

Think of a painting you've seen. Usually there isn't a single brushstroke that makes it beautiful. In fact, when you look at a single brushstroke by itself, it isn't all that impressive. However, when you combine them all, you have a breathtaking work of art.

Finding happiness in life is similar to painting. There are small, intentional brushstrokes, or daily activities, we can do to create a life full of happiness. Applied by themselves or done only once, these things won't seem incredibly extraordinary. But when we combine them over and over in daily and weekly efforts, they can create an abundantly happy life.

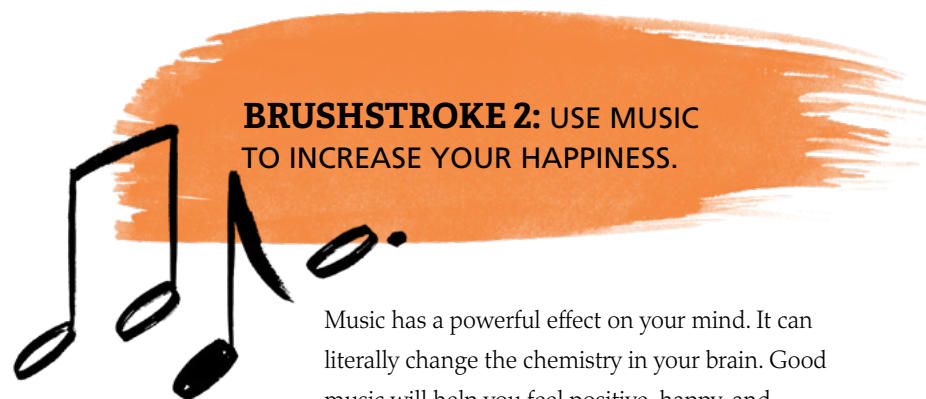
Here are seven brushstrokes or activities you can develop to create more happiness in your life.



**BRUSHSTROKE 1:  
SURROUND YOURSELF  
WITH UPLIFTING PEOPLE.**

Happiness has a lot to do with the people you interact with. This doesn't mean you can't be friends with people who are unhappy sometimes. In fact, all of us experience unhappiness from time to time.

But make sure you spend time with people who are uplifting and inspire you. Good friends who help you live the Lord's standards can make a big difference to your happiness. And try to be an uplifting friend to others. You can make a big difference in others' lives too.



**BRUSHSTROKE 2: USE MUSIC  
TO INCREASE YOUR HAPPINESS.**

Music has a powerful effect on your mind. It can literally change the chemistry in your brain. Good music will help you feel positive, happy, and inspired. Create a playlist of happy, encouraging, and faith-promoting songs you listen to regularly.



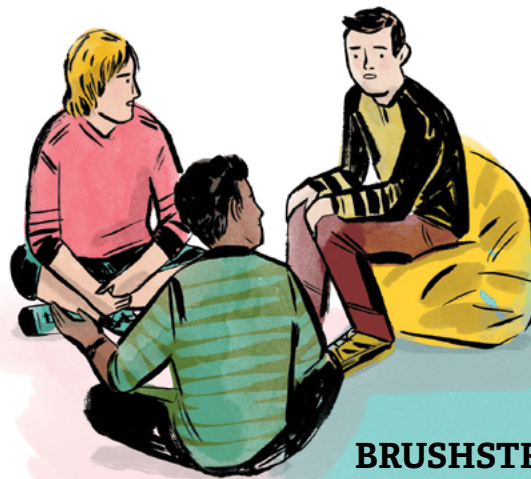
**BRUSHSTROKE 3:  
GET OUTSIDE.**

Enjoying God's creations is very healing to our spirits and bodies. It's critical to your happiness to regularly take time away from television, computer, and phone screens to go outside and enjoy the sunshine, plants, and animals around you. Go on walks with your family and friends, play games outside, read and study outside. You'll be amazed at how good you feel when you do.



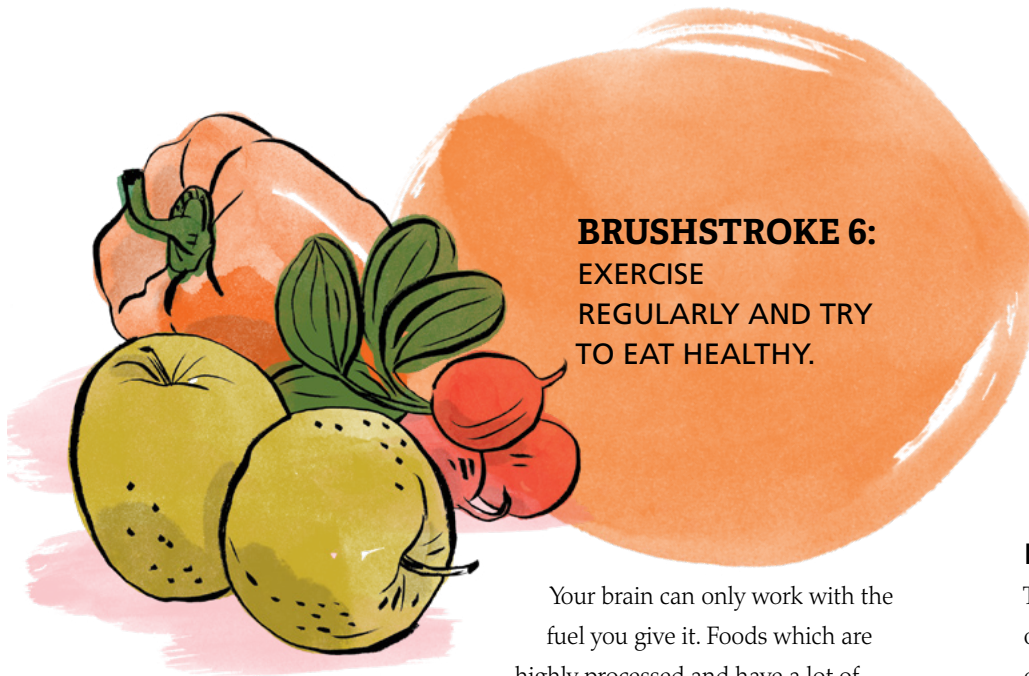
**BRUSHSTROKE 4: GET ENOUGH SLEEP.**

The Lord has said that sleep is essential to the health of your mind and body (see Doctrine and Covenants 88:124). Like a phone battery needs to be recharged, your brain needs sleep to work properly. Just as you set a time to wake up in the morning, be sure to also set a time for you to get into bed (and don't take your phone with you!).



**BRUSHSTROKE 5:  
HAVE DEEP IN-PERSON  
CONVERSATIONS.**

Using texting and social media to talk with your friends and family can be awesome. But having in-person conversations does something for your mind and spirit that electronic communication can't. Be sure you interact with your family and friends. Take time to listen and talk with those around you.



**BRUSHSTROKE 6:**  
EXERCISE  
REGULARLY AND TRY  
TO EAT HEALTHY.

Your brain can only work with the fuel you give it. Foods which are highly processed and have a lot of sugar (sometimes known as junk food) may taste good but often make your mind and body feel sluggish. The good news is that as you eat more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, your cravings for junk food will decrease. The Lord gave us only one body, so we'd better take care of it!

**Looking for More Ideas?**

These seven brushstrokes are only a few of the daily steps we can all take to fill our bodies and spirits with happiness. For more ideas, look through the *For the Strength of Youth* booklet to identify principles that have made you or others happy in the past. What do you feel impressed to do to incorporate those things more consistently into your daily life?

Always remember that the supreme source of happiness is our Savior, Jesus Christ. No matter your circumstances, He stands ready to bless you and help you through your difficulties. He will help you find the happiness you're hoping for. 🙏

**NOTE**

1. David A. Bednar, Oct. 2009 general conference (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 19–20).

**BRUSHSTROKE 7: PRAY AND PONDER.**

The Lord and His prophets and apostles have frequently counseled us to take time to pray and be still. Prayer and meditation positively impact the areas of the brain in which you experience happiness. If you take time regularly to ponder and pray, your happiness will increase a little each time. Over a long period of time, you'll notice a big difference in how peaceful and confident you feel.



**If You Need Help**

If you feel you are suffering from depression and/or anxiety, besides incorporating these brushstrokes into your daily life, be sure to talk to your parents, your doctor, and other trusted adults about how you're feeling. There is help available for you.