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Can we be happy in the new year? | Letter

Alexia Georghiou Letter to the editor

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A new year does not wipe the slate clean. I am coming into January with my own pain and my own questions, just like many of you. I hear it in conversations every week. People are overwhelmed. They feel behind before the year even starts. They are exhausted from trying to prove their worth at work and at home. The pressure to achieve the next thing has become so automatic that we barely notice it anymore.

So the real question is not how to accomplish more this year. It is whether we can find a way to feel steadier where we are. Can we be happy even when life is not fixed. Even when grief or uncertainty sits in the background. Even when we do not have the answers.

What I have learned from both personal experience and the research highlighted in Harvard Business Review is that happiness is not something we chase. People perform better when they start from a positive state of mind. Clearer thinking. More creativity. Better stress response. These are not abstract ideas. They show up in real outcomes like improved energy, stronger leadership readiness, and greater resilience. And the most encouraging part is that the habits that build these changes take only minutes a day.

Begin with simple practices of gratitude and kindness. Small moments of pause. Checking in with your emotions instead of pushing through them. Noticing one good thing before your brain jumps back to survival mode.

These practices do not remove pain, but they help you move through it with more strength and less reactivity. Little by little, you gain momentum. Not toward success as the world defines it, but toward being more grounded and present in your own life.

Maybe happiness this year is not a goal. Maybe it is a practice. And maybe that is enough.

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