



## WHAT HAPPINESS MEANS TO TOP HOSPITALITY LEADERS & HOW THEY CULTIVATE IT AT WORK

Be happy for this moment.  
This moment is your life.  
– Omar Khayyam

In the hospitality industry, the concept of happiness is a critical component of both guest satisfaction and employee engagement. Happiness is not just an outcome but a strategic pursuit and a key driver of excellence in hospitality. By cultivating environments where joy and wellbeing are prioritized, hospitality businesses can enhance service quality, foster positive work cultures, and drive success.

We asked some of our best leading professionals in the spa and wellness sector what happiness means to them and how they bring happiness to their guests and staff, and they shared these thoughts with us:



Verena Lasvigne-Fox, International  
Spa Consultant, Spa & Wellness  
Industry Expert

I had the chance to dive deeper into the science behind happiness when taking Yale University's Science of Well-Being course during the pandemic. This course allowed me to reflect on what happiness means to me since it means something different to everyone. And I understood as well that my personal happiness level depends mainly on my own actions and decisions.

For me, happiness is a multifaceted experience that encompasses personal fulfillment, meaningful connections, and the ability to live authentically. It's the feeling you get when you're surrounded by loved ones, pursuing passions, or simply being present in the moment.

In the professional context, happiness translates for me to creating an environment where both guests and staff feel valued, respected, and cared for. It's about fostering a culture where everyone can thrive and experience moments of joy, whether they are staying for a night or working through a busy shift. Ultimately, it's about how we make one another feel.



Carlos Calvo Rodriguez, Senior Spa Director, Four Seasons Toronto

Happiness is finding joy in the little things that make life special and remarkable. It's not just a fleeting feeling, but a way of life! I strive to bring happiness to the guests and team members by taking the time to connect with them on a deeper level, and by celebrating life's daily accomplishments, not just the major milestones. I believe we achieve happiness by showing love, giving love, and receiving love.

Most folks are as happy as they make up their minds to be.

– Abraham Lincoln



Maritsa Victorian, Area Director of Spa, Remington Hospitality, Bardessono Hotel and Spa, Hotel Yountville

Happiness comes from within, being true to who you are, and maintaining an optimistic outlook regardless of circumstances. At Bardessono, we hire individuals who share this positive attitude, creating an environment where it's almost impossible to resist the uplifting energy. We foster positivity because we genuinely love welcoming and serving our guests. Our sincere service and kindness are immediately recognized and appreciated, bringing everyone into the present moment, making them smile and feel good. This joy is contagious – it makes us feel good too. Happiness also stems from self-acceptance and liking yourself on the inside, which gives you a beautiful glow on the outside. When mind, body, and spirit are in balance, happiness radiates and it is infectious. Participating in what truly brings me joy is also happiness. I have a sign in my office that states, "Do what you love and love what you do" and I wholeheartedly believe in that. Since we spend so much of our time at work, our jobs should be our passion. Getting paid for what we love to do is simply a bonus.



Vivianne Garcia-Tunon, Vice President of Operations, Wellbeing, Auberge Resorts Collection

To me, happiness means enjoying the simple moments of awe and celebrating everything! It involves leading with an open heart, expressing my emotions, and creating deep connections with my team members and my community. I infuse a "life is happening now" energy into every wellness concept, allowing guests to find their own version of happiness and vibrancy. As for my team members, I genuinely love working with practitioners and wellness professionals. This love translates into opportunities for them to learn something new, support them in their professional journey, and offer a tight hug and a smile, always. Making others happy is my love language.

Everything has its wonders, even darkness and silence, and I learn, whatever state I may be in, therein to be content.

– Helen Keller



Jennifer Lynn, Director of Spa & Wellness, Fontainebleau Las Vegas

Accept people and situations as they are. When you accept, you find freedom. Acceptance of things allows us to respond rather than react. Typically, we only like to accept the things we like or the situations we agree with. A profound life is lived in our ability to accept everything as it is. Acceptance allows us to receive in an open state. Non-acceptance is limiting and small and distances us from the profoundness of life.

As leaders in spa operations, we have the opportunity to set the happiness tone for the day. It starts at the top. Showing up, being present, supportive and genuinely hospitable is key to setting the stage for a happy destination for spa guests and our spa team.

Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony.

– Mahatma Gandhi



Daisy Tepper, Director of Spa Operations & Development, Landry's, The Post Oak Hotel

Happiness is a state of emotional well-being. Gratefulness, positivity and appreciating all we have in life. Understanding there's a lot worse in the world. I motivate my team by highlighting all the wonderful things we have in our lives, the great company we work for, appreciating all of their accomplishments, especially our Forbes rating for the past six years. I challenge the team to always find the positive out of the negative and focus on that.



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