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Have your say: How do we make time for happiness amid the daily grind?

CRAIG AND MARC KIELBURGER

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Craig and Marc Kielburger founded Free The Children and Me to We. Their biweekly Brain Storm column taps experts and readers for solutions to social issues.

On Wednesday, the United Nations marks the world's first-ever International Day of Happiness – a full quarter-century after musician Bobby McFerrin revealed the simple secret to being happy: “Don’t worry.”

It was a catchy tune, though it lacked any more specific detail. So many of us rush through our days, checking off to-do lists and struggling to get ahead or even just get by.

Shawn Achor, author of *The Happiness Advantage*, believes we can have both success and happiness if we just reverse the formula: His studies show that a happy brain is more efficient, productive and ultimately successful than a stressed one.

But how do we break the cycle of the daily grind and rewire our brain to think happy before our next

deadline?

This week's question: How do we make space to be happy amid everyday pressures and stresses?

The experts:

Andrew Sharpe, executive director of the Centre for the Study of Living Standards

“A key determinant of happiness is a strong sense of community and belonging, which can be provided through colleagues, friends and family. Despite everyday pressures and stresses, it is very important to take time to connect with people.”

Jamie Gruman, chair of the board of directors of the Canadian Positive Psychology Association

“Produce a happy brain and foster your success by turning your thoughts to others: Buy a sandwich for the homeless man on the corner; surprise a colleague with an unexpected compliment about the quality of her work; and hug your kids extra hard when you get home. Then watch for the surge of vitality you'll feel – doing things for other people is one of the best ways to help promote our own success in life.”

Kita Szpak, co-author of *Tipping Point to Happiness*

“Take time for yourself: It's not a luxury but a necessity. ... ‘Alone time’ is the opportunity to relax and shut out the noise of the world. Make this personal reflection and internal decluttering a daily part of your life: Get up a few minutes earlier every day, take a walk during lunch hour or incorporate some meditation with exercise.”

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