

Have you tried Madonna's mystical joy secret?

She's the first of the stars who've tapped into an ancient wisdom they credit for a newfound sense of happiness...

Question: what, apart from stardom, does Madonna have in common with Barbra Streisand, Gwyneth Paltrow and Demi Moore? Answer: they're all followers of Kabbalah, an ancient mystical offshoot of Judaism that teaches the spiritual way to happiness.

The former Material Girl started taking classes in it just before her daughter, Lourdes, was born, when she realized that despite her success, she wasn't happy, says life coach Jill Spiegel, author of *Flirting with Spirituality*. Since then, Madonna has credited Kabbalah with giving her a new sense of fulfillment and has inspired a slew of her famous friends to become followers themselves.

Discover the secrets they've learned—and how they can make you happier as well!

1 Getting is as important as giving!
Kabbalah—which literally means “to receive”—teaches that



Gwyneth Paltrow and Diane Keaton are two famous fans of Kabbalah.



“Looking at red can help you take on any problem!”

it's important to receive as well as give, since you can't do for others if your own tank is empty, says Kabbalah expert Debbie Mandel, author of *Turn on Your Inner Light*.
● To get the benefit: Spend 15 minutes a day doing something special for yourself. You'll be surprised how refreshed you'll feel, says Mandel.

2 You can make the world a brighter place!
Because Kabbalah views everyone as connected, it teaches that we should “pay it forward” by doing good for others, who will then be more inclined to do something nice for someone else . . . and so on. Inspired by Kabbalah's philosophy, Madonna has raised millions of dollars for schools by throwing fund-raisers and donating the proceeds from her books.



string around their wrists. “That's to ward off the effect angry people can have on you,” says Mandel. How? Since red is the color of energy, gazing at it makes you feel capable of handling anything negative, she says.

The idea is so popular that famous red thread-wearers include Goldie Hawn, Elizabeth Taylor, Roseanne and Diane Keaton.

● To get the benefit: You can get the red string at www.kabbalah.com, but you don't need it to get the benefits, notes Mandel—“anything red, such as a scarf, can work.”

4 Nothing is a coincidence.
Kabbalah teaches that God created the world with a plan in mind—and that everything that happens is supposed to happen, says Mandel. “So followers of Kabbalah see coincidences as signs they can look to for guidance.” Just ask Gwyneth Paltrow, who went to a Coldplay concert when gossip columnists kept linking her with the band's lead singer Chris Martin, whom she'd never met. She stopped backstage after the concert—a little over a year later, they eloped!

● To get the benefit: Be receptive if something you see or hear seems to be speaking to you, says Mandel. Since our subconscious dictates what we notice, she explains, you'll be getting in touch with your inner voice.

—Barbara Hustedt Crook

There's nothing mystical about the rewards she's getting, says Mandel. Studies show that people who help others feel that their lives have more meaning.
● To get the benefit: You don't necessarily have to volunteer, says Spiegel. Just do something like call an elderly neighbor to say hello. Her pleasure will make you glow.

3 Don't let negative people bring you down!
Followers of Kabbalah wear a red

Need a quick happiness fix? Try this!

Kabbalah teaches that happiness comes from aligning your physical, emotional and spiritual sides,” says Mandel. That's why she has members of her wellness class do this exercise: with your feet shoulder-width apart, rock back and forth from the balls of your feet to your heels. Then imagine your head being pulled up by a string, lower your shoulders, and hold that position for a few seconds. By symbolically “grounding” you, this position balances you, making you feel more centered—and more receptive to the joy around you!

Photo: Hannah M. Chanero; Jim Snelman/WireImage; Jeff Vespa/WireImage; Steve Grant/WireImage