

**HOW  
TO FIND  
TRUE HAPPINESS**

by

**PsiTek**

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**Introduction**

Let's play a game!

Are you ready?

Considering the current world population, can you take a wild guess on how many people are happy?

For the answer, let us look at some interesting statistics gathered by George Ortega of *The Happiness Show*.

At any given time, one fourth of Americans are mildly depressed! Here's another startling fact: Most people on this planet claim that they are LESS than 65% happy.

We might think that those people who say that they are MORE than 65% happy are those who are rich. You think this is true?

Let me show you another set of statistics. The personal income of Americans has increased more than 2 1/2 times over the last 50 years YET their happiness level has remained the same. Furthermore, 37% of the people on Forbes List of Wealthiest Americans are less happy than the average American! Professor Daniel Kahneman of the University of Princeton shares the same

findings for the British people, “Standard of living has increased dramatically and happiness has increased not at all, and in some cases has diminished slightly.”

Indeed, true happiness is elusive. Most people continue to look for happiness but fail to find it. Even the great achievers, the wealthy, and most powerful people on earth have been striving for it, yet many failed to have it. Is happiness impossible to achieve?

Happiness is not impossible to attain. Didn't we feel ecstatic when we were promoted? How about when we got our first paycheck? Didn't we feel happy while in a loving relationship? How about the first time when we cradled our child in our arms? How about being in the company of close friends? It might have been a long time ago and we totally forgot that once in our life we have experienced moments of happiness.

Why is happiness so elusive for most people? Could it be that we have been looking for happiness at the wrong places? Is it possible that we have the wrong concept of happiness?

In all these discouraging statistics and questions, this report aims to provide a ray of hope. Experiments conducted by New Zealand psychologist Kaye Haye, in line with *The Happiness Increase Experiment*, “have empirically demonstrated that individuals can be trained to be 25 percent happier through various training programs from two to ten weeks.”

This report presents breakthrough ideas in order to equip the reader with tools on how to achieve happiness. As individuals, we have a choice. We can always choose to find happiness. This report points to its various sources. Succeeding chapters will provide ideas on how to create and achieve happiness.

In addition, this report discusses the different causes of unhappiness and teaches us how to overcome them. It cites several barriers to happiness. One such barrier is our unrealistic expectations. We must always remember we cannot command the world to function according to our own desires. We can only control our needs and wants, but not the forces needed to achieve them. If we keep on desiring endlessly, we are just exposing ourselves to unhappiness. To balance off barriers to happiness, there are happiness enhancers. What will lift our moods and reinforce pleasant disposition? One of the objectives of this report is to provide the reader with keys to living a longer, healthier, and happier life. It is hoped that after reading this report, we will be able to pursue happiness in all areas of our lives.

Happiness is a choice. We are in control of our own happiness as only we can decide what to think and feel. As Helen Keller said, “Happiness cannot come from without. It must come from within. It is not what we see and touch or that which others do for us which makes us happy; it is that which we think and feel and do, first for the other fellow and then for ourselves.”

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## Chapter 1

### What is Happiness?

A report on happiness starts off with a quick look at the various definitions. Previous studies cited by The Happiness Show website traced the concept of happiness to the classical Greek word “Eudaimonia.” Etymologically, it consists of the words “eu” meaning good or well being, and “daimōn” referring to spirit or minor deity. This reference to spirit is extended to mean one's lot or fortune.

The same source sites a modern definition that refers to happiness “as a positive, enduring state that consists of positive feelings...and includes both peace of mind and active pleasures or joy.”

Ruut Veenhoven, acknowledged as an expert on international happiness, described happiness as “the degree to which an individual judges the overall quality of his life-as-a whole favorably.” Related to this is one definition of the Oxford Universal Dictionary which suggests that “it is a feeling derived from satisfaction with one's circumstances.” Wikipedia defines happiness as “a prolonged or lasting emotional or affective state that feels good or pleasing.”

The scientific community also tried to provide a biological explanation on the said concept. In the human brain, the neurotransmitter dopamine is reported to be involved in desire and seems often related to pleasure.

The definition of happiness varies for every person. Aristotle declared, “Happiness is the meaning and the purpose of life, the whole aim and end of human existence.” Happiness is commonly viewed as a fundamental goal in life. In fact, British people have rated happiness as their most important component of quality of Life. It is even more important to them than money, health, and sex!

Aren't we curious to know how other people define happiness? For many, happiness is what they feel when they receive something – a material gift or some sort of favor.

On the other hand, some people find it better to give than to receive. They feel so much happiness from giving and sharing what they have. This selfless act can be the most joyful experience for those people with generous hearts. “There is a wonderful mythical law of nature that the three things we crave in life – happiness, freedom, and peace of mind – are always attained by giving them to someone else,” remarked by Peyton Conway March.

Happiness is also what we feel when we are satisfied with what we are doing or what we have attained or accomplished. There are people who derive happiness from their success, wealth, or power. According to Albert Schweitzer, “Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success. If you love what you are doing, you will be successful.”

What about the majority of people who are not lucky enough to achieve the dream they have long aspired for? Do they not have the right to be happy?

Of course, they do! Happiness starts with appreciating and finding satisfaction from simple things that life has to offer. The affection of a spouse, children, or grandchildren, the company of friends and colleagues, and the compliments paid to us – these are some of the simple things that capture the essence of true happiness.

“Happiness is what we feel when we get what we want” – this is probably the most common notion people have about happiness. If this concept of happiness is correct, then unhappiness is what we feel when we do not get what we want.

Consider the definition above. The keyword in the definition is the word “want.” The problem starts when we want something and maintain an expanding list of wants. This problem escalates when despite all efforts, only a small percentage of our wishes are fulfilled.

Unfulfilled wishes increase with time. As we grow older and fail to get what we want, we get frustrated and become unhappy. Frustration sets in when we fail to fulfill most of our desires. As we are

exposed to TV, magazines, Internet, and other media, we compile a list of endless and unrealistic demands. Because of this, life becomes an endless race to fulfill desires.

According to Benjamin Franklin, "There are two ways of being happy: We must either diminish our wants or augment our means -- either may do -- the result is the same and it is for each man to decide for himself and to do that which happens to be easier."

To break out of this cycle, we must try to manage our needs and wants. Stephen Johnson differentiates wants and needs in his book *Yes Or No: Guide To Better Decisions*. He said, "A want is a wish. A need is a necessity."

We must learn to prioritize our needs over wants. Needs are things that are necessary in life, such as food, shelter, and basic necessities. Common wants are represented by latest models of cell phones, plasma TV, iPod, designer jeans, luxury cars, and the like. These are our desires, but we can continue living without these in our lives. Stephen Johnson differentiates the two concepts in a simple way, "In life, we may **want** a fancy house but **need** a loving home."

We cannot be truly happy if we keep on "wanting" or "desiring" more than what we have. Contentedness is the gateway to happiness. There is nothing wrong with having wants, just as long as these things provide a positive motivating force. It is okay as long as we find happiness and fulfillment in the process of going after our wants. Irrational wants can limit our happiness if we make these the focus of our lives; hence, these only become sources of frustration.

Happiness is a personal decision. We are in charge with our own lives. So if we truly want to be happy, let us be guided by this advice from Ken Keyes Jr., "We always have enough to be happy if we are enjoying what we do have -- and not worrying about what we don't have."

Real happiness comes from within us and it starts by being satisfied with what we have. It does not matter if we have little in terms of material possessions. It is finding contentment with things that we possess.

**First key to happiness: Learn to appreciate simple things and manage desires.**

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## Chapter 2

### Practical Sources of Happiness

We can find happiness right in our own home, our workplace, in school, in the company of our friends, etc. It is up to us to find the ways and means to achieve that happiness each of us seek and long for. However, it is essential to recognize that there is no one absolute way to achieve happiness. People may have different ideas with regard to the ways of achieving happiness.

The following classifications are perceived by many people as sources of happiness:

- 1) Family and friends
- 2)
- 3) Wealth
- 4)
- 5) Position/Rank
- 6)
- 7) Educational Achievement
- 8)
- 9) Fame (i.e. politics, arts, sports)
- 10)

#### **1) Happiness In Family And Friends**

The very first place where happiness dwells is right in our own homes. We find happiness just by being with our family – our parents, spouse, children and grandchildren. In fact, they are our source of strength and inspiration. Having a harmonious home life gives us happiness – one that we truly cherish and treasure.

True friends are also a source of happiness. The support we get from them goes a long way in helping us to get by in times of troubles. Somehow, friends make our life complete.

#### **2) Happiness In Wealth**

A lot of people associate wealth with happiness. Almost everywhere in the world, people are preoccupied in the acquisition of wealth. They look upon wealth as the main source of happiness. To some, wealth and happiness are synonymous.

Not that we should despise the rich and the famous or discourage others from aspiring to be so. There is nothing wrong with dreaming of becoming rich just as long as we acknowledge that wealth has limitations. Furthermore, our priorities must be clear from the very start. Clearly, we must know what should rank first in order of priorities lest we spend our days in this world meaninglessly and without hope. The pursuit of material riches should not be on top of our priority list.

How many times have we heard of people with millions of money but are willing to give it away just to have peace of mind? They live in a state of fear, that is, fear of losing their wealth through robbery or theft. They also fear for their life and the lives of those they love. These fears may even lead to sleepless nights, stress, tension, mental anguish, heart attack and death.

Understanding and accepting that happiness has nothing to do with the accumulation of wealth is perhaps the most liberating realization we can ever come to.

#### **3) Happiness In Rank And Position**

Can real happiness be achieved through the attainment of high rank or position in society?

To many, the answer is “yes.” For most people, having a high-ranking position is synonymous to power. Such persons would have the power to rule and lead. If they become “good leaders,” they would be able to lead based on sound moral values and good work ethics. In return, they would earn their people’s trust, obedience, support, loyalty and cooperation. Eventually, they would find happiness and satisfaction doing their job.

However, any person who is entrusted with authority and abuses it would definitely be responsible for misuse of power. His position would only be a source of misery, as he will be confronted with issues such as corruption and problems like loss of public trust, public revolt, coups d'état, etc.

History can speak for itself. How many unwanted rulers, kings, emperors, and presidents have been overthrown? A good example is former Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos, who ruled the country for 20 long years, but his reign came to an unfortunate end. He was “thrown” out of his own country by his own people and spent years thereafter in exile.

#### **4) Educational Achievements**

Can earning the highest level of education such as doctorate degrees give happiness? For people who derive happiness from learning, knowledge is power. Some successful people have attained high levels of education.

However, we hear about professional people who are successful in their own fields and yet feel miserable and depressed because they feel that something is missing in their life. We hear of doctors being sued for malpractice and negligence, of judges committing suicide, and of many other sad stories that are hard to believe but are actually happening to professional people. Does education really guarantee happiness?

#### **5) Happiness In Fame**

Fame is also associated with happiness. In sports and various careers, it is translated to victory, winning, and attaining the status of a celebrity. Are famous men and women happy?

Let's take the case of sportsmen. They practically devote their whole lifetime practicing to be the best at their chosen sport. However, sports can sometimes be so stressful, especially when they are carried to the extreme. Imagine the kind of pressure sportsmen have to go through to win over a game. To cope with high expectations, they take prohibited drugs to have the stamina and endurance required in their chosen field!

Consider the despair, embarrassment, shame, and ridicule that they have to endure whenever they lose a game! So, let us ask ourselves – can a life exposed to such pressures and humiliation be a truly happy life?

The story of the famous football player, Diego Maradona, is a very good example. For a time, his name was everywhere - in media and on almost all advertisements. Football earned him “wealth” and “fame.” But what caused his downfall? He used cocaine during an Italian league match! Consequently, he was arrested.

Let's focus our attention in the field of entertainment, specifically film and stage actors, singers, dancers, etc. Is the world of entertainment a source of true happiness?

It is surprising how many people still equate happiness with fun. The truth is that fun and happiness have little or nothing in common. Fun is short-lived while happiness is a more lasting and meaningful emotion.

Going to a ball game, watching a movie or television are fun activities that may help us relax. We “escape” and temporarily forget our problems. After the movie or any fun activities, reality sets in and we confront the same problems. There are things that do not and could not bring any real happiness to the person because their positive effects last only as long as the fun lasts.

Let us analyze fun and entertainment around us. It is a well-known fact that these so-called celebrities have practically everything that “seems to spell happiness” – wealth, glamour, fancy cars, expensive homes, etc. However, it is also no secret that beneath all their fame are stories about depression, alcoholism, drug addiction, children out of wedlock, broken marriages, extra marital affairs, etc. It is said that Elvis Presley, the undisputed King of Rock n Roll, died of drug overdose.

For many, the future is bleak. The continuing escalation of prices, natural and man-made calamities, terrorism, local and global strife, family problems, poverty, criminality, famines and other crises do bring desperation and hopelessness.

What they believe as solutions to their problems turned out to be abysmal frustrations. Sad to say, many have become withdrawn and apathetic to their problems. Some have become indifferent and unconcerned about what could happen next because they have done everything in their power to succeed, but to no avail.

Can we still find happiness in such a depressing situation? Yes, it is still possible to find happiness in such dire predicaments! What happens around us is largely beyond our control, but the way we choose to react is within our control. In short, even in the midst of difficulties in life, we can still make happiness happen; that is, if we want and choose to make it happen. True enough, life is what we make it! Isn't this a wonderful discovery?

**Second key to happiness: Happiness is found within us. It depends on the choices that we make.**

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## Chapter 3

### How to Achieve happiness

What Martha Washington once said still rings true, "The greatest part of our happiness depends on our dispositions, not our circumstances."

Happiness is achievable, but it entails some effort and the right attitude. We must have the proper attitude and outlook in life to be able to focus and condition ourselves on being happy in all the challenges we face.

#### ***How To Increase The Level Of Happiness***

Between our physical and mental being, the mind has the greater influence for most of us. The body, once it is well-taken care of and sustained with basic necessities in life, can easily function. However, the mind automatically records every event, no matter how trivial. Therefore, we must be on guard with what is recorded in our mind because it can have an effect on our levels of happiness.

Marcus Aurelius cautions us, "The happiness of your life depends upon the quality of your thoughts: therefore, guard accordingly, and take care that you entertain no notions unsuitable to virtue and reasonable nature."

Inner peace greatly comes from having love and compassion in our life. The more we feel loved and the more we care for the happiness of others, the greater is our own sense of well-being. We have peace of mind if we do not have enemies. This helps remove our fears and insecurities, and gives us the strength to cope with any obstacles we may encounter.

As long as we live in this world, we are bound to encounter problems. After all, the world is not "perfect." If we just stop to demand or expect things to be perfect, then being happy may become easier. If, at times, we lose hope and become discouraged, we should remember that there is an opportunity present in the problem. We only have to search for it.

Being realistic increases our capacity to overcome troubles. With this kind of attitude, each new obstacle can be seen as another opportunity for improvement. Let us cite one example: Two men have just lost their jobs. Instead of feeling sorry for himself, Mr. A. decides to take it as an opportunity to explore new things and find a better job. Mr. B., also facing the same circumstances, decides to jump off a twenty-storey building to end it all!

Here we see how two persons react differently under the same situation. It only means that only we can decide on how to react to every event that happens in our lives. Being happy is not always easy. It can be one of the greatest challenges we have to face in life, since it requires all the determination, persistence, and self-discipline that we can gather. It also takes a lot of maturity to be able to take responsibility in choosing to focus on what we have, rather than on what we do not have.

As long as we impractically yearn for much more than what we have, in terms of wealth or luxury, we will be unhappy. This is different from having a passion or desire and being motivated to reach it, wherein we are excited or thrilled in our journey to attain it.

Some people feel they do not have enough. How much is enough?

For most of us, enough is a little more than what we have. We often get envious of what our richer neighbors have. Sometimes, we fail to realize how lucky we are, compared to those who are less fortunate. An increase in wealth does not guarantee happiness.

It is obvious that happiness does not come from material things that we focus on everyday. To discover the secret to achieving contentment and happiness is to know how to enjoy what you have and manage the desire for things currently beyond our reach.

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## Chapter 4

### How To Achieve Happiness In Unfortunate Situations

Certain situations present big challenges for us. These are situations when most people have difficulty in finding joy and happiness. These situations include loss and grief, trials in life, troubled relationships, solitary life, and old age. Can we really find happiness in these?

#### ***Happiness During Times Of Loss Or Grief***

Indeed, one of the most painful things in life is losing a loved one. Most, if not all, would rather avoid going through it. Losing a job or a relationship cannot be more painful than losing someone we love. The loss of a loved one is indeed a source of unhappiness and can result to a range of emotions that include sadness, grief, and uncertainty.

As these feelings sink in, harsh realities would confront the survivors. Death in the family can be emotionally draining. It can also put a strain on savings and finances especially if the deceased had a protracted bout with a fatal disease. Piled up hospital bills, doctors' fees, and skyrocketing cost of medication and funeral expenses could easily upset a family's financial standing.

Death in the family also entails major adjustments and adaptation in roles and in daily activities. It is a life-changing event that requires the bereaved to pick up the pieces and go on with life. Dealing with loss and grief could be very trying indeed. To overcome grief, we have to find ways that will best work for us.

- 1) Realize that time heals all wounds. It may take some time before the pain goes away; but eventually, it will subside.
- 2) Express and share grief. Talking to someone, a friend or a loved one, is one of the proven strategies for coping up with grief. In releasing our emotions, we are actually unloading the excessive burden we may be harboring inside us.
- 3) Accept the fact that death is inevitable. However painful it is, we must face the truth that everyone must die some day. No one is exempt from it.
- 4) Move on. Grieving is a natural reaction to death of a loved one. In fact, the grieving process is necessary in order to release the pain and hurt we feel inside. However, we cannot just focus on our loss and shut everything out. We must learn to count our blessings and try to move on with our lives.
- 5) Gain a new perspective. From a human point of view, a person may feel guilty from that loss. He may think that he could have done more to prevent the loss. On the other hand, if we will just look at things from a divine perspective, we would realize that everything happens for a reason. Death may be a respite for a relative who has suffered long enough from an incurable disease. Death finally puts an end to unbearable pain and sufferings brought about by an illness.
- 6) Consider seeking professional help. Doctors may prescribe some form of antidepressants, especially if the state of grief is prolonged and unrelenting.

#### ***Happiness During Trials***

Life is full of trials. For every trial that we go through in life, our faith, patience, and strength are tested. We may encounter some hardships, but we can always choose to fight challenges and face it with hope and conviction.

Trials are part of life. We simply cannot evade them; but if handled well, they can strengthen us, build our character, and strengthen our faith. Therefore, we should try to face them as courageously as we can. We should never give up or lose hope when nothing seems right. As with all other barriers to happiness, we must do everything possible to overcome trials that come our way.

#### ***Happiness Amidst Troubled Relationships***

Relationship gone sour is another cause of unhappiness. Problematic marital and family relationships impinge on our ability to enjoy almost anything. Individual differences and lack of communication and quality time together are some of the identified causes of relationship break-ups. However, the following are ways to patch things up and improve relationships:

- 1) Find a place where both parties can be alone and have a conversation. This way, both parties can discuss things without interruptions and distractions like TV or radio. Agree that the conversation will focus only on the issues concerned.
- 2) Refrain from verbal outbursts. Refrain from yelling or the civil conversation will lead to a shouting bout! Do not interrupt while the other person is talking. We must allow the other person to finish his or her piece before we give ours.
- 3) Avoid labeling or calling names. Personal attacks will only worsen the situation. We must be extremely careful with what we say. Do away with words that may hurt or put the other party down.
- 4) Discuss the problem rationally. We must learn to negotiate and compromise on things we want from one another.
- 5) Focus on re-building the relationship. This is especially true for married couples. Spend quality time together. Find time to do something together – like activities or sports.
- 6) We must let them know what we want or expect from them. In doing this, we must not demand our partner to change in order to meet our expectations. Focus on the other party's positive qualities rather than the negatives.
- 7) Give and graciously receive adequate support. This will help the relationship to survive and flourish.
- 8) Consider all possible options before deciding on one solution to the problem. However, never consider separation or divorce as an option.

Learn to forgive and forget. Give the relationship another chance.

### ***Happiness While Living A Solitary Life***

Leading a solo life can be very lonely. It is important to have someone to talk and relate to. It is always nice to have someone lending an ear to what we have to say. Unhappiness stems from not being able to share happenings in our life with others. In this case, we should keep in close touch with relatives and a small circle of friends and be prepared to give and receive love and support.

Robert Louis Stevenson advises people living alone to have many interests. This will enable us to meet new people. Furthermore, he tells people to keep busy at something, "A busy person never has time to be unhappy."

In addition, the following tips can be considered:

- 1) Flex the mental muscles. To avoid stagnation, we can attend seminars on different subjects.
- 2) Travel and seek new places. We should go out and travel to places we have never seen before. If we can afford it, we can take regular holidays in different countries and savor different cultures. One fascinating country is Bhutan. This remote Himalayan kingdom earned the distinction of being "the only country in the world which puts happiness at the heart of government policy."
- 3) Be adventurous. We can do something we have never done before, like visiting a particular art gallery or going to a ballet or pick new books. This will make our lives interesting and exciting.
- 4) Invest in relationships. Surrounding ourselves with supportive family and friends is one step leading to happiness. Understanding this encourages us to invest our time and energy in developing, enhancing, and maintaining close friendships and many acquaintances.

## ***Happiness in old age***

Some people lose their will to live when they start to see and feel the first signs of aging. They think they can no longer do the things they used to do when they were younger. Like all others previously discussed, this negative thought is all in the mind. To make our mature years happy and productive, consider the following tips:

- 1) Maintain a positive attitude. An elderly person who maintains a positive attitude in life is more likely to cope with any physical difficulty or limitation related to aging. Be productive members of society. Have a purpose in life - a reason to live! Stop entertaining negative thoughts such as "I'm already old, I only have a few years to live"; "I'm old that's why I'm sickly", etc.
- 2) Stay active and eat well. Instead of sitting around waiting to die, make the remaining years fruitful and rewarding by developing a hobby, traveling, or simply doing worthwhile activities. It has been estimated that 90% of age-related diseases are in fact, largely attributable to poor nutrition and lack of exercise. Therefore, maintaining a healthy body through exercise and nutrition is the best way to always be "alive and kicking".
- 3) Be watchful and cautious. There is a saying that "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound or cure". This is especially true when it comes to maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Elderly people should always be extra cautious for disorders related to aging such as depression, anxiety, senility, drug dependency, immobility, etc. When the first symptoms appear, address these before these get worse. Seek medical help so the doctor can prescribe the proper medication.
- 4) Nothing beats preparation. Roger Darlington states, "It is never too young to start planning our retirement. Regularly increase your mortgage repayments and pension contributions - this is a sensible use of the money you don't need for current expenditure and it will increase your longer-term and comfortable lifestyle options."

Indeed, the situations enumerated above are regrettable. Should these provide us the perfect excuse to wallow in unhappiness? When confronted with such situations, keep in mind that we can still make the best of our circumstances. Robert Louis Stevenson said, "No one has everything, and everyone has something of sorrow intermingled with gladness of life. The trick is to make the laughter outweigh the tears."

When all else fails, let us remember that we still have a Universal Force/God whom we can ask for help. He is a great comfort in times of crisis, a source of strength and inner peace. Without peace, there can be no happiness.

**Third key to happiness: Attitude, attitude, attitude! How we react and deal with life's challenges spell the difference between happiness and misery.**

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## Chapter 5

### Shortcuts To Happiness

One shortcut to happiness emanates from knowing that we have done something good and right – Isn't that simple?

Observe yourself. What did you feel when you have learned new skills? How about when you were able to touch someone through your generosity and kindness? How do you feel when you have done something heroic? What do you feel when you have done something that you truly love and enjoy?

The deep feelings of satisfaction, contentment, pride, fulfillment, and joy are some of the emotions which lead to lasting happiness.

We seek happiness practically every day of our lives. Despite our efforts, many of us are not happy. Everyone's life is spent in pursuit of happiness. We become too busy and preoccupied, working to ensure that our future will be secured and happy. We tend to let days, months, and even years slip by without realizing that "time is gold."

It is fine to work towards future goals, but do not forget that today will never come again. We only have twenty-four hours to enjoy it so we should take every opportunity to make ourselves happy, including the people we love.

How many minutes, hours, and days have we spent being happy from within? Those are the only moments we have really lived life. Perhaps, we were just kids then when we were completely happy and worry-free, or there were few moments when we were doing something we really love and enjoy.

#### ***Live In The Present Moment***

"Happiness is a journey, not a destination; happiness is to be found along the way not at the end of the road, for then the journey is over and it's too late. The time for happiness is today not tomorrow," said Paul Dunn.

Many of us spend much of our lives worrying about the future and a number of things – all at the same time. We allow past problems and future concerns to dominate our present moments, so much so that we end up feeling frustrated and depressed.

When our attention is in the present moment, we push away fear from our minds. Fear is the concern over events that might happen in the future. To overcome fear, the best strategy is to learn to bring our attention back to the present. We must practice keeping our attention on the present. Surely, our efforts will pay off in the end.

Live in the moment with joy, alertness, awareness, and compassion. The thought of being like a child again is exhilarating. This stems from being free and feeling at home with everybody. This emanates from living without barriers, judgments, and worries about what others might think.

Whatever they think, it is their opinion and is NOT PERMANENT. Keep in mind those opinions change all the time. Worrying takes a lot of toll on the body and mind. It is like a wind that takes us away from ourselves. Worrying leads only to fear and can paralyze us from taking appropriate actions.

We free our minds from worries by relaxing and doing some breathing exercises. A simple breathing exercise consists of inhaling deep breath through the nose and exhaling through the mouth. Do this three times consecutively. This will help put our minds at ease and has a calming effect. By doing this on regular intervals, we will then find so much peace and harmony around. Remember that the art of living lies in living at the present moment.

### ***Fill With Love***

Many of us aspire to live a life filled with love. For this to happen, the effort must start from us. Rather than waiting for other people to provide the love we desire, we must be the source of love ourselves. Our attitude, choices, acts of kindness, and willingness to be the first to reach out, will take us towards this goal. By converting our hearts to fountains of love, we are taking an important step in getting the love we desire. We will also discover that the more love we give, the more we will receive.

### ***Realize The Power Of Our Own Thoughts***

It is very important that we realize the relationship between our thoughts and the way we feel. Did you know that we are constantly thinking? Take breathing for example. Unless we feel that we are running out of breath, we simply forget that we breathe automatically.

Thinking works the same way. Since we are always doing it, it is easy to forget that it is happening. To think is to create. Everything starts in the mind. What precedes the feeling of anger? Angry thoughts precede anger. Have you tried getting angry without having angry thoughts first? Try feeling sad without sad thoughts. It is impossible!

In order to experience a feeling, we must first have the thought that induces that feeling. Happiness cannot exist alone. It is the result of positive thinking. This simple awareness is the first step in putting us back on the path towards happiness.

We should never underestimate the power of a simple thought. It may seem so innocent and fleeting; yet, it has energy that can cause great impact on our mind, body, and emotions.

Let us think of a lemon. Imagine cutting it in half and smelling it. Now, imagine squeezing the juice from the lemon into your mouth and feel those pulp bits bursting inside your mouth. Most of us will surely feel our salivary glands responding to the thought of lemon.

Indeed, what we are thinking can greatly influence our emotions. Think of someone you love. What do you feel? Now think of someone you hate. What do you feel? We do not have to change our emotions consciously – just change our thoughts and our emotions will immediately follow.

Notice that when we focus our mind on positive things, we feel better, whereas when our thoughts are focused on the negative, we feel bad. Positive thoughts yield positive results. These thoughts make us more loving and caring, resulting to good health, wealth, and happiness. On the other hand, negative thoughts produce negative results. These types of thoughts result to indifference, disease, fear and misery, etc. In other words, our thoughts create our reality.

**Fourth key to happiness: Happy feelings are results of happy thoughts.**

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## Chapter 6

### Essential Elements to happiness

We have already learned that happiness goes beyond material things. This is echoed by William Barclay when he said, "Joy has nothing to do with material things, or with man's outward circumstance. A man living in the lap of luxury can be wretched and a man in depths of poverty can overflow with joy."

Happiness can be induced by many ways and means. Some result to short-term happiness, while others have long lasting results. In a busy world where everyone and everything seem to be moving in a fast pace, we can do ourselves a great favor by taking time off for self-reflection.

Meditation is a powerful tool for inducing happiness. Through meditation, we can reach a level of mental clarity. Making meditation a regular part of our lives will lead us to new and exciting possibilities for our inner peace. This will enhance happiness as a result.

Several factors need to be met for us to achieve happiness. These prerequisites include:

#### ***Good Health***

Health is wealth. Good health is a very important factor in achieving happiness. It allows us to make life more enjoyable. On the other hand, an illness not only drains the pocket, but it also destroys our zest in life.

Therefore, the body must be treated well, pampered with love, and given the needed nourishment. We take good care of it by taking preventive measures. We can opt to engage in a healthy lifestyle by eating the right foods and doing regular exercise.

#### ***Sufficient Source Of Income***

Basic income should meet the family's basic needs. This frees us from worries about basic needs and concentrates on pursuing what we love best.

Basic needs vary from one family to another. What is implied here is income to provide for reasonable food, clothing, and shelter. What is reasonable and enough depends upon the family's needs.

#### ***Affection***

Love is the foundation of human existence. We need to feel loved to be happy. It is crucial that we have at least one person whose company we enjoy to share our life with. This does not have to be a romantic relationship. A family member or a friend can fill this need.

#### ***Productive Work Or Activity***

People feel a sense of achievement just by knowing that they can still contribute their skills and are needed by the people around them. Doing productive work or activity boosts our self-confidence and self-esteem, which eventually leads to happiness.

#### ***Good Attitude***

A person with a negative attitude in life can never be happy. A positive attitude is needed to ensure long and lasting happiness. A perfectionist would likely be upset when the world is not the way he wants it, but a person with a positive attitude would be tolerant and understanding with all kinds of people, events, and circumstances.

#### ***Defined Goals***

In achieving happiness, goals must be set for all aspects of life such as business, career, relationships, health, etc. After setting our goals, we must make an action plan on how to achieve

these goals. We then implement our plan and monitor the progress. Continuous progress leads to a sense of fulfillment and happiness.

Unless all of the above prerequisites are met, we cannot be truly and completely happy. Failing to meet any one of them is tantamount to forgetting one ingredient that makes a recipe completely satisfying! It is therefore very important that we are healthy in all aspects – physically, mentally, emotionally and financially – to be able to achieve lasting happiness.

**Fifth key to happiness: Happiness is a way of life.**

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## Chapter 7

### Simple Strategies to Create Happiness

Can we create our own happiness?

Yes because we are always in control. We are given free will to choose what we want in our lives. It is up to us if we want to drive ourselves to true happiness or to misery!

#### ***It's In Our Thoughts***

In order to be happy, we should concentrate on happy thoughts. Happy thoughts are special and memorable moments in our lives. These thoughts are available to us every single day. All we have to do is to recall these blissful moments. For example, we recall the times when we were in love, when we were overwhelmed with feelings of joy. It was during those moments that we were in love with life itself.

The problem with some people is that they tend to remember the negative things longer than the positive things that happened in their lives. They usually remember the compliments they received only for a few minutes and dwell on the insults they received for years! By so doing, they become garbage collectors who carry trash thrown long time ago. As a result, they suffer the consequences since they allow their mind to be occupied by bad experiences.

Remember, we are in control of our own mind and heart. We can choose to make happiness and joy the center of our world. These are always within us. We can always tap into moments of joy and absorb these into our present moment.

No one in his or her right mind would choose to be unhappy. If we take full responsibility for our emotional response to all events in our life, there is nobody else to blame if we are not happy! The choice is ours alone. Happiness does not depend solely on the things that come into our life, but on how we react when those things happen.

Mildred Barthel states, "Happiness is a conscious choice, not an automatic response." We can always create and build our lives around joy and happiness.

#### ***Never Set Conditions For Happiness***

According to Arthur Rubinstein, "Most people ask for happiness on condition. Happiness can only be felt if you don't set any condition." Before, I thought that if I graduate from college and get a good job, I would be tremendously happy. Later, I discovered that a job alone does not guarantee happiness.

Do you know someone who constantly says, "If I find the right partner, I will be happy"? Advise them to talk to newly married couples and ask them if they are happy. One of the possible things they may hear is this: "If we have a child, we will feel complete and happy."

Ask those who already have children if they are happy. They would say that unless their children have grown up, finished their studies, and can stand on their own, they simply could not relax and feel happy. Ask those who have accomplished their mission as parents if they are happy. They long for the days when they were younger!

Do you know of people who say any of the following phrases?

- I will be happy when.....
- I am unhappy because .....
- If only I have .... then I will be happy
- How can I be happy when ....
- Happiness for me is when ....

Sadly, these people will have difficulty in attaining true and lasting happiness for they place conditions on their happiness. They want guarantees for happiness but are unwilling to act first. For this reason, they set conditions on their happiness that can be translated into this: "We are not happy now and we won't be happy at least until our conditions are met."

On the other hand, we also hear the following phrases from unhappy people:

- You disappoint me!
- You make me unhappy!
- If it wasn't for him I'd be happy.
- She is the source of my loneliness.
- How can I be happy after what he did to me?

These people remain in constant state of unhappiness because of a single reason: the tendency to point the blame on others. Unhappiness begins in the mind. We are in charge of our mind and of what we think. If this is the case, how can we blame others for making us unhappy? We choose our thoughts and feelings. We choose to be happy or not. In this case, we made the wrong choice.

### ***Dislodge Negative Thoughts***

Like cancer, negative thinking can kill! It can kill and destroy our whole future. Negative thoughts affect the mind, body, and emotions. We have already discussed the relationship between our thoughts and feelings in the previous chapter.

Just to recap, our thoughts produce our feelings. We get angry by having angry thoughts. It is impossible to feel sad without sad thoughts. Unhappiness does not and cannot exist on its own. Unhappiness is the feeling that accompanies negative thinking.

So how do we overcome negative thoughts? Stop thinking about them! Our negative feelings are results of our own negative thinking. Apart from refraining to think about negative thoughts, we can turn negative thoughts into positive ones.

One effective technique is to learn a whole new set of happy words. These are words that evoke positive feelings. Other studies refer to these as "Positive Adjectives List" from The Apache Method (The Antidotal Positive Adjectives Character and Happiness Enhancement Method)

According to this particular study, which is based on Emmet Velton's classic paper, "There has been a body of research empirically validating our ability to positively or negatively change our moods by reading phrases like "I feel very good" or "I am afraid."

So, how do we go about dislodging thoughts of unhappiness?

- 1) Be aware. We have to catch ourselves when we are about to indulge in negative thinking. In the first few days, we have to be very vigilant.
- 2) The moment we feel the onset of an unpleasant emotion, we have to identify it as precisely as possible. Is it hatred? Hurt? Fear? Anxiety? Discontent? This is a very critical component of the process as related to the next step.
- 3) Search for the exact opposite of the negative emotion. Think of its antonym. For example, the moment we catch ourselves feeling "lazy," we would call to mind an opposite adjective like "energetic." We would then say to ourselves, "I feel energetic."

If we view ourselves as "pessimistic", we say "I am hopeful." If we feel we are "incompetent", we say "I feel ingenious." What do we say if we see ourselves as "unmindful"? We say, "I am grateful."

Can we use the same strategy even if we do not feel any unpleasant feelings? Of course! We are encouraged to think and say to ourselves statements like "I feel fabulous" to reinforce our mood, or statements like "I feel strong" or "I feel friendly" in order to enhance our character.

Other people have introduced variations to the said technique. Others say it aloud in front of the mirror every morning for ten minutes for twenty-one days. Saying it aloud increases its effectiveness as it represents emotional involvement. This is no different from expressing positive affirmations and doing self-talk. Others find it more effective by writing the statements on paper, as they become more "physically" involved.

Here are some of the happy words from the Apache Project. We just have to add "I feel" or "I am" to produce positive effects.

happy	fabulous
grateful	gracious
determined	goodhearted
professional	wise
sincere	philanthropic
focused	consistent
imaginative	dedicated
successful	persuasive
cheerful	amazing
inventive	calm
tidy	desirable
open-minded	studious
desirable	confident
fair-minded	decisive
courageous	hopeful
peaceful	big-hearted
stylish	genial
cordial	flexible
appreciative	terrific
spontaneous	democratic
impartial	impressive
sensible	charitable
relaxed	productive
loyal	good-natured
alive	awesome
charming	dependable
good mannered	prompt
grounded	splendid
truthful	energetic
gorgeous	amicable
practical	discerning
industrious	generous
mature	fashionable
reasonable	
powerful	

**Sixth key to happiness: Happiness is mostly created, and rarely given.**

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## Chapter 8

### Major Causes Of Unhappiness And Fail-Safe Ways To Overcome Them

Most people nowadays have indeed become very unhappy and miserable. With everything that is happening around the world – natural calamities such as earthquakes, hurricanes, tsunamis, etc., terrorism, and economic crisis – it would not be a surprise if people just give up hoping for a happy and bright future.

It is very easy to be unhappy when things do not go our way. We feel angry and irritable. However, we must not dwell too long on these feelings, for these can lead to problems that are more serious.

Keep in mind the prerequisites of happiness as discussed earlier. If any of these prerequisites is missing, then it becomes a cause for unhappiness. For example, how can a sick person be happy when he is in pain? How can a mother and a father be happy when they do not have enough income to provide for their children's needs? How can one be happy when he does not even have a shelter over his head? There are many causes of unhappiness and each of them must be addressed.

Besides having poor health and insufficient income, other causes of unhappiness include:

#### ***Burnout And Lack Of Productive Work***

The keyword is “productive” for it gives a sense of fulfillment. The lack of it leads to a feeling of emptiness and lack of purpose in life.

Getting physically and mentally active may help overcome unhappiness. Get involved with something worthwhile, something that will give a sense of fulfillment or achievement.

#### ***The Fear Of Rejection***

It hurts when people reject us. It leaves a feeling of sadness and lowers our self-esteem. The “X” mark represents rejection and it can be manifested in different forms. Some people express rejection by verbally saying that they do not like the person or his idea. Some express skepticism or ridicule the person presenting new ideas. Others try to form their own group and exclude those they dislike.

Rejection is also expressed non-verbally. Some adopt the closed and defensive stance and refuse to listen to ideas by re-directing the flow of conversation. The thumbs-down sign is universally understood as rejection.

If this is the case, we should try to associate with other people who will accept us for what we are. Rejection should not put an end to our efforts. We should take it as a sign to do a re-examination and try another approach.

#### ***Living According To Other People's Standards***

This is a very common cause of unhappiness. Those who are too conscious of what others might say about them usually cannot make their own decisions. They live their lives according to other people's will and expectations. It is very difficult to pursue happiness if all we do is please other people instead of ourselves.

We should be confident about ourselves. Cast fears aside. Just bear in mind that whatever anyone says or does mean nothing about our worth as human beings. Robert Louis Stevenson has this to say, “Don't let your neighbor set your standards. Be yourself.” We feel joy when our self-worth rests quietly within us, not on the lips of others.

#### ***The Fear Of Failure***

Failure to achieve important goals in life can lead to feelings of inadequacy and frustration. We should set realistic and doable goals in life. These goals should be meaningful to us; otherwise, we will only derive little happiness from achieving it. Goals should be set for the major aspects of our lives.

Start with a systematic plan to achieve goals. Begin implementing them and monitor the progress. As we see ourselves realizing our goals, we will find our happiness increasing.

If life is not the way we like it, let it not be a reason for us to be unhappy. Edward de Bono has this to say, "Unhappiness is best defined as the difference between our talents and expectations." Too many expectations can really cause unhappiness; therefore, we should try to live a simple life - with simple wants and simple needs. More importantly, we must try to rise above everything that pulls us down and get on with our lives.

### ***Sins And Crimes***

Nobody is perfect. All of us commit mistakes. Some people may have unknowingly committed mistakes. However, a few people consciously live their lives in sins and immorality. These people have not fully realized the serious consequences of doing sins.

Sins and crimes are cause of unhappiness. Crime does not pay. Criminals get caught and eventually, justice catches up with them. Violence begets violence. Truly, it is difficult to find a bright future behind bars or six feet below the ground. For some who manage to get away with their crimes, guilt will most likely haunt their conscience and can cause them to feel miserable for the rest of their lives.

### ***Alcohol And Drugs***

Some people think that happiness can be attained through alcohol or drugs. Consequently, they resort to these substances thinking they can escape from the troubles and worries of life. They are dead wrong! It is like escaping from small fire to hell.

Alcohol is a mood-altering substance and is a depressant. In fact, some doctors prescribe moderate amounts of alcohol as tranquilizer or sedative. A drink or two can actually improve health and help a person to relax. However, greater quantities can be fatal. Alcohol abuse ruins both the mind and the body. Anyone who drinks too much is risking the hazards of accident caused by loss of coordination, high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, liver disease and related disorders.

On the other hand, drugs play a role in destroying the mental health of the user. Today, we witness many examples of various forms of social disintegration and chaos due to the worldwide surge of drug addiction. Many of the suicide and homicide cases are related to drug abuse.

### ***Destructive Criticisms***

These are useless acts and seldom accomplish any positive results. If we have to give feedback, we must make sure it is constructive and useful. Criticism is one of the greatest causes of limitations in our lives.

We should learn to be tolerant of the behavior of others even if it does not fit the pattern of our opinions. Learn to savor the differences between people. Imagine how dull the world would be if we all thought, spoke, and acted the same way!

If we are on the receiving end of destructive criticisms, it is normal to feel upset but we should evaluate the purpose or motive of the person who expressed his thoughts. If we are upset with people who do not have anything good to say about us, we might as well avoid them. Let us try to associate with people that naturally please us. More importantly, always keep in mind that we cannot please everybody; hence, we should not let destructive criticisms be a cause of worry and sleepless nights.

**Seventh key to happiness: Learn to avoid or overcome factors that contribute to unhappiness.**

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## Chapter 9

### Blueprint For Overcoming Barriers To Real Happiness

Everything, either good or bad, happens for a reason. Therefore, we should be thankful of the good things. More importantly, we should learn to accept and cope with the bad things that happen in life. Barriers to happiness are factors that cause unhappiness to most people. Among these barriers are the following:

#### ***Disappointment***

At some point in life, we have felt discouraged. Everyday stresses and pressures can easily drain our strength and make us throw our hands up to surrender. Instead of giving in to discouragements, we can consider the following tips to overcome them:

- 1) Do not stop too soon. We get easily discouraged if something does not turn out the way we want it to be. We have to be patient. Without patience, life can be extremely frustrating. Likewise, we should be persistent. If at first we do not succeed, let us try another approach until we reach our goal.
- 2) Turn failures into something positive. Failures are part of life. It may hurt at first, but we must keep in mind that there are lessons to be learned in all failures. We must never let failures bring us down. Instead, we must use these as opportunities to rise up and emerge as better persons.
- 3) Do not be frustrated by negative circumstances and people. If we know how to take praises and compliments, we must also learn to take criticisms, be it constructive or destructive. We must never let negative words spoken by other people discourage or defeat us. We know ourselves better than anyone else does. Focus on what we know is true, that is, we have the capacity to pursue happiness and fulfillment.
- 4) Never think or say, "I can't." If we keep on thinking that we cannot do a particular task, chances are, we will never be able to do it. Many people never discover their true potential because they are too afraid to try. All we have to do is believe in ourselves.
- 5) Be determined and persevering. We have to be persistent and enduring to be able to reach our potential. These are the most important factors in overcoming disappointments.

#### ***Rage***

Rage or anger is a strong feeling of displeasure. It is an uncontrolled emotion when we feel hurt or aggrieved. If not handled appropriately, it can cause unhappiness. We should deal with anger quickly before it turns into bitterness and hatred.

First, we should determine the cause of our rage. After that, we may consider sharing our emotions with a friend or counselor. Do not keep anger bottled up within; we will feel better just by talking about it and having someone listen to what we have to say.

Another way to deal with rage is by simply asking for help. We can ask help from people around us. Other people deal with anger by seeking help from the Universe/God. They seek assistance to be able to imbibe the virtue of humility to be able to forgive the people who have wronged them.

We must realize that none of us is perfect. We are bound to commit mistakes at one point in our lives. Forgiveness is a virtue. It is a reward for an honest healing process. Letting go of any resentment and grudge pulls us away from loneliness.

The act of forgiveness allows us to get rid of excess emotional baggage that may have been holding us back and weighing us down. Indeed, forgiveness is a priceless virtue that can only be realized through an honest reconciliation with one's past and a genuine openness to welcome life anew.

## ***Worry, Anxiety, And Stress***

Worry is one component of anxiety, which is the broader term used to describe internal restlessness. Stress is a physical, mental, or emotional factor that causes tension. When left unchecked, these three may result to a more serious disorder.

To overcome these three barriers to happiness, we may consider the following:

- 1) Change our outlook in life. We should always have a positive attitude. Reading the scriptures and uplifting books may alter our perception in life since these materials are full of inspiring verses that will surely lift our spirits and encourage us to fight our way through life.
- 2) Initiate some changes in lifestyle. Start small. Small and meaningful changes can cure boredom and burnout that can cause stress and anxiety. Small changes provide a fresh perspective or outlook. We can change the route going to the office or start to eat at different dining places or meet new officemates from other department. We can also go on vacation to give ourselves a break.
- 3) Get enough sleep. Adults are advised to get 6-8 hours of sleep. When we are sleeping, our mind and body get their much-needed rest. Worries, anxiety, and stress can keep us awake; and lack of sleep results to restlessness. If sleepless nights persist, consult a doctor right away. Since worry, anxiety, stress, and insomnia often co-exist, anti-anxiety drugs as prescribed by the doctor may help.
- 4) Have adequate exercise and relaxation. Like sleep, exercise and relaxation also release chemicals that help decrease anxiety. They free our minds from all worries and cares in life.
- 5) Live each day as it comes. We must leave the past behind, not worry too much about the future, and focus on the present. Yesterday is past and gone forever. Tomorrow is yet to come and no one knows what it holds for us. What matters is today because we can live only at the present time.
- 6) Listen to relaxing music. Some types of music have a calming and soothing effect on our minds and soul. Listening may help us take our minds off things. A variation of this is to surround ourselves with pleasant smells. This can be achieved by having fresh flowers, potpourri, or scented candles in most rooms of the house or office.
- 7) Consider medications and counseling. Seeking professional help can change our lives completely. A physician can prescribe medications for relief and a counselor can offer encouragement and support.

## ***Envy And Jealousy***

Envy stems from dissatisfaction. Envious people feel that they are getting a raw deal and that others are much better off than they are. Envy can make us go for unachievable goals for ourselves as we keep our focus on what others have instead of appreciating what we have.

Jealousy, on the other hand, is another source of dissatisfaction and one form of “self-torture.” Having low self-esteem causes envy and jealousy. These can only be resolved when we trust and believe in ourselves. Moreover, we should be appreciative of our blessings in life. Self-motivation guru Wayne Dyer said, “Simply put, you believe that things or people make you unhappy, but this is not accurate. You make yourself unhappy.”

## ***Pessimism***

Pessimism is synonymous with skepticism. Observe skeptics. They always anticipate negative events and often, this thought paralyzes them from taking action. Benjamin Disraeli once shared, “Action may not always bring happiness, but there is no happiness without action.”

Pessimistic persons are extremely cautious that they hold back from enjoying a normal life or achieving their objectives. Pessimism starts with negative thoughts.

Counteract pessimism by being optimistic. As we become more optimistic, we become happier. The age-old question on whether our glasses are half full or half empty relates to optimism. Optimistic people always hope for the best and expect that things will turn out well.

Overcome pessimism by having the discipline to look at the good side, the will to improve, and conviction that recovery is possible by following certain guidelines.

These guidelines are:

- 1) Have strong faith. Trusting a power greater than us may be helpful to see the brighter side of things. We must revitalize our spirituality and faith in Universal Power.
- 2) Surround ourselves with optimistic friends. Listening and opening ourselves to positive ideas about life may help jumpstart a change in attitude and point of view.
- 3) Cultivate an open mind. Understanding that there is some value in criticism may help us open our eyes to the fact that happiness in life is worth pursuing.
- 4) Do a self-assessment of our behavior. We start by comparing our behavior with that of our family members, co-workers, and friends. Learn to objectively identify productive and healthy behaviors. Decide to have more of this type of behavior. We must realize that pessimism affects our capacity to feel happy emotions to the fullest.
- 5) Seek empowerment. We should learn to focus on our goals and the things that we want in life. We must constantly tell ourselves that we can succeed. Never let other people drag us to negativity and pessimism.

Whatever barrier comes our way, always remember that for every problem, there is a solution and we keep forgetting that the solution is in our hands. It is all up to us to decide how to deal with it. Bear in mind that we have complete control of our lives - our feelings, thoughts, behaviors and attitude. We can overcome all barriers if we just trust and believe in ourselves. Do not allow anything or anyone ruin our chance to be happy. Only we can determine the course of our life. Take responsibility for it.

**Eighth key to happiness: We take responsibility for our own happiness.**

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## Chapter 10

### Happiness-Enhancing Techniques

How do we go about enhancing happiness and pursuing it whole year round? We know happiness is far more than just money, fame, or power. Many people have all three but are not completely happy. What are the secrets to long-lasting happiness?

According to Margaret Bonnano, "It is only possible to live happily ever after on a day-to-day basis." If we want happiness all year round, we have to start small by having a good day every day. Small efforts build up through the day. Norman Lear teaches us, "Life is made up of small pleasures. Happiness is made up of those tiny successes. The big ones come too infrequently. And if you don't collect all these tiny successes, the big ones don't really mean anything."

How do we accomplish this? There is a simple way that we can do at the start of our day. As we wake up each morning, we decide that our day will be as happy and stress-free as we hope it would be. The first thing to do is we ask ourselves, "What do I wish for today?" Feel the desire and then remember that whatever we wished for, we will surely get it as long as we try to make it happen. Ask from God/the Universe and we can never go wrong.

#### ***Master The Boomerang Principle Of Happiness***

Ever considered using a boomerang to explain how to spread more happiness?

The Boomerang Principle is based on the idea that a smile is always returned. Try doing this activity on a busy location. Establish eye contact with a person (choose non-aggressive persons!) and just flash those pearly whites. Most of the time, that person will smile back.

There is wisdom in smiling. Smiling always stirs pleasant feelings. A simple smile effectively communicates our happiness to others. It also makes people to feel good about themselves and encourages them spread the pleasant feeling. Rabbi Nachman puts it this way, "Always wear a smile. The gift of life will then be yours to give."

#### ***Live A Life Full Of Love***

Everybody wants to love and be loved by others. If we want to have a happy and harmonious home life, we have to get along well with the people around us and earn their trust and respect.

We can get involved in social and community affairs, and this can result in having happy interactions with other people. Making a difference in the lives of people, who are virtual strangers, can give us a deep feeling of happiness. We can do this by volunteering our time, effort, and money in various causes.

#### ***Engage In Enjoyable Work***

Work does not seem a burden when we are having fun. Working, while having fun, is most rewarding. If we love what we do, it will not feel like we are working at all. If we are not satisfied with our job, we look for more interesting and challenging work. Of course, we all want to make a good living but more than that, we truly have to enjoy our occupation or profession to be able to do it on a sustained basis.

Research findings from the Claremont Graduate University pointed out, "Life satisfaction occurs most often when people are engaged in absorbing activities that cause them to forget themselves, lose track of time, and stop worrying." In fact, they have coined the word "flow" to describe this phenomenon.

This phenomenon is described as "People in flow may be sewing up a storm, doing brain surgery, playing a musical instrument or working a hard puzzle with their child. The impact is the same: A life of many activities in flow is likely to be a life of great satisfaction .... And you don't have to be a hotshot to get there."

University of Pennsylvania psychologist Martin E. P. Seligman and author of the book *Authentic Happiness* have this to say, "Flow stretches someone but pleasurably so, not beyond his capacity. People feel best when doing what they do best."

### ***Achieve Financial Independence***

Being financially independent means being free from money worries. Likewise, it means not having to depend on others for livelihood. It is having enough money in the bank that can support our lifestyle once we decide to retire. The act of saving and efficient management of our investments throughout our working lives will eventually bring us to happiness. For some this is the point where they will never have to work again.

### ***Go For Inner Peace***

Peace of mind is essential for one to be happy. Inner peace is reflected in the face. We become more relaxed and stress-free. Having peace of mind also means better over-all health. When we are healthy -- physically, mentally, and emotionally -- our relationships with the people around us tend to get better. The greater our over-all peace of mind, the more likely we will achieve happiness.

### ***Focus On The Trio Of Happiness***

The trio of happiness: **GRATITUDE, FORGIVENESS, and ALTRUISM.**

Current trends show that more and more people engage in writing "Thank You Journals". Psychologists explain that daily expressions of gratitude have a lot to do with life satisfaction. "Talking and writing about what they're grateful for amplifies adults' happiness," they report.

We can try one simple activity with our journal. Select a blank page and write on the first line "My Strengths (Things that I am Thankful For)". In the succeeding lines, write down as many positive things as we can think of about ourselves and about circumstances surrounding us. This activity need not be completed in one sitting. We should keep the list to read over and continue adding to it. The journal is one effective tool which keeps our focus on what is positive about ourselves, others, and life in general, instead of dwelling on the negative.

Another option is to keep a diary, which is a wonderful way to reminisce good times. More importantly, it is a reminder that bad times don't last. Some people include photos in their diaries and journals. Looking at happy times and old friends induces the feeling of joy.

Another trait strongly associated with happiness is forgiveness. It is associated with feelings of inner peace. University of Michigan psychologist Christopher Peterson says, "It's the queen of all virtues, and probably the hardest to come by."

Altruistic acts boost happiness in the giver. This need not come in the form of donating money. It can be as simple as volunteering our time, service, and skills for notable causes. There is joy in giving.

**Ninth key to happiness: Happiness is enhanced by the feelings of love and appreciation!**

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## Chapter 11

### Learn the Six Secrets of Happy People

Marilyn Elias of USA TODAY wrote in one of her articles that psychologists have discovered what makes people happy. This emerging research on behavioral science that focused on happiness is known as "Positive Psychology".

The article states, "The happiest people surround themselves with family and friends, don't care about keeping up with the Joneses next door, lose themselves in daily activities and, most important, forgive easily .... The happiest people spend the least time alone. They pursue personal growth and intimacy; they judge themselves by their own yardsticks, never against what others do or have."

If we want a happy life, we should study the lifestyle, attitude, or behavior of happy people. Observe and understand what they do, then adopt their behaviors and attitudes. Here are some things habitually happy people do:

- 1) They always choose to be happy. They never give themselves the option to be unhappy. They have a terrific sense of humor.
- 2) They try to have a good time as often as possible. They go out, and have fun with friends and loved ones.
- 3) They choose only the attitudes that can help them succeed and be happy. Happy people have complete control over how they want to think and feel.
- 4) They follow the Golden Rule, "Do not do unto others what you do not want others to do unto you." Habitually happy people are kind, caring, and compassionate. They do not speak ill against anybody. Having a clean conscience gives them long-lasting happiness.
- 5) They have fighting spirit. They do not let other people control their emotions and actions. Likewise, they stay away from those who try to drag their spirits down.
- 6) They never dwell on the past. Contrary to what others say, happy people are realistic as they accept the fact that life is not a bed of roses. Storms of life come and go; it is part of life. They never let bad and sad experiences ruin the rest of their lives. Remember that there is always a rainbow after a storm. They always move on with life and let time heal the wound. Joyful people face the future optimistically.

Being habitually happy takes a lot of practice and effort. We have to develop certain attitudes and behaviors to be able to achieve happiness all year round. We can do this gradually by becoming more disciplined and determined in choosing to make happiness part of our lifestyle.

**Tenth key to happiness: Happy people celebrate and appreciate life every day. Happiness is theirs for keeps.**

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## Chapter 12

### Keys to Living a Longer, Healthier, and Happier Life

"If you want to be happy, be," said Leo Tolstoy

It is as simple as that. In addition to what we have read in the previous chapters, we just have to keep in mind the following helpful tips in order to have a continuous long, healthy, and happy life:

#### ***Keep a Positive Attitude***

It has already been proven that having a positive attitude will not only lead to improvements, but it also guarantees a healthier and longer life. Two American universities have studied 1,500 people for seven long years. All 1,500 were in good health when the study started. Researchers observed how they aged by measuring their weight loss, walking speed, exhaustion, and the strength of their grip.

They discovered that people who maintained a positive attitude were significantly less likely to show signs of aging. They were less likely to become weak and more likely to be stronger and healthier than those who have negative attitude.

What else did these researchers discover?

They also found out that beliefs have a direct impact on health - because our beliefs actually alter our body's chemical balance.

So let us start thinking positively! Change the way we think and believe. We alone have the power to improve our lives by having a positive attitude and a positive belief system. We can start by believing in the power of God/the Universe and prayer. Trust that whatever we ask of Him, He will surely give it to us knowing that we have pure intentions.

Researchers have also proven that a positive thinker is more likely to succeed in life because positive thinking boosts self-esteem and self-confidence.

#### ***Perk It Up***

Understandably, life can be boring sometimes. Our daily routine becomes very monotonous when we do the same old things every day. We can try to add new things into our lives, among these are the following:

- 1) Visit new and exciting places. Doing this keeps life very exciting.
- 2) Try to do something new - something never done before, like taking up a new sport or hobby.
- 3) Do enjoyable things. These will not only give us pleasure and excitement, but also keep our worries away. A worry-free life means a longer, healthier, and happier life.
- 4) For a change, we should try out the things we dread to do. Overcoming our fears is the only way to free ourselves from limitations. By doing this, we will gain more confidence and feel greater happiness.

#### ***Love Life***

Love makes the world go round. The need for love lies at the very core of our existence as human beings. Love brings us the greatest happiness because we treasure it over and above everything else. We cannot and will not survive if we are left alone by ourselves.

The foundation of human existence is love. The expression of love is the primal factor for the normal, physical, and mental growth of children. Love can be expressed in many ways like hugging, kissing, cuddling, and caressing.

If a child does not get any of these, then his or her development may be impaired. A well-loved child grows up into a confident, secure, and happy adult. In this age, many children grow up in broken and unhappy homes. Unhappiness in childhood may lead to a serious problem in later life. A child who does not receive the affection he or she needs will find it hard to love others.

Aside from children, we can extend love to sick people. Patients feel at ease when the doctor is especially friendly and displays a sincere concern for their well-being. Inevitably, the patients' feelings and reactions will make a difference to the quality of their recovery.

This is the theory of the famous Dr. Hunter Patch Adams, who built a hospital where love and laughter are integral parts of the healing process. In this hospital, The Gesundheit Institute, doctors and patients relate to each other based on mutual trust. Patch Adam's theory on healing is based on his belief that laughter is the best cure.

### ***Appreciate Blessings***

Happiness is learning to draw satisfaction and contentment from whatever available resources we may have. Consider these as our blessings!

However, there are people who find it difficult to be contented. In most cases, the problem lies in their nature. These are the kind of people who always think negatively and take life so seriously. Rather than being content and grateful for what they have, they are focused on what is wrong with their lives and on their obsessive need to fix problems.

The very act of focusing on imperfection and negatives pulls us away from our goal to be happy. The solution here is to catch ourselves when we fall into the habit of insisting that things should be other than what they are. Conditioning the mind to reject negative thoughts, which later turn to negative emotions, requires a lot of determination. There should be an inner desire to remove such thoughts. As we begin to eliminate the negative thoughts in all areas of our life, we will begin to discover the positive side of life itself.

We appreciate our blessings by:

- 1) Maintaining an optimistic attitude
- 2) Living our dreams
- 3) Understanding that failure is not the end of the world
- 4) Welcoming new challenges and experiences
- 5) Working on important goals
- 6) Thinking about our past successes and not failures
- 7) Trying to find goodness in everything and every person

A long, healthy and happy life is what we all aspire for. However, there is no single absolute way to arrive at this kind of life. We can consider tips and guidelines to hasten our journey and to make it smoother. Put these into action and be pleasantly surprised by their inherent power of life transformation!

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## Chapter 13

### Happiness and the Purpose of Life

“People spend a lifetime searching for happiness and looking for peace. They chase idle dreams, addictions, religions, even other people, hoping to fill the emptiness that plagues them. The irony is the only place they ever needed to search was within,” said Ramona Anderson.

Almost all people long and seek for well-being, contentment, and a state of tranquility we call happiness. The search for happiness starts and ends within us. In all of these concerns, one great question exists: What then is the purpose of life?

“The purpose of life is the expansion of happiness,” according to Maharishi Yogi. If we stop and think about it clearly, the purpose of life is to be happy. From the very heart of our being, we simply desire complete and lasting happiness. This does not only mean we should be contented with life, but we must also appreciate life itself. It is also important to discover what will bring about the greatest degree of happiness.

People often forget that the primal source of life itself and happiness is God/ the Universal Force. Breakthroughs in science and technology led people to gradually lose confidence in God and eventually glorify human knowledge instead.

How many of us struggle to survive and work hard to attain prosperity and achieve happiness? With these as our goals, we labor for better times ahead. Through hardships and misery, we push ourselves to improve the quality of our lives. In the course of our pursuit, we forget the Higher Force who is all too willing to give what we desire. We just have to trust that He knows what is best for us.

In summary, here are the ten keys to happiness:

- 1) Learn to appreciate simple things and manage desires.
- 2) Happiness is found within us. It is in the choices that we make.
- 3) Attitude, attitude, attitude! How we react and deal with life's challenges spell the difference between happiness and misery.
- 4) Happy feelings are results of happy thoughts.
- 5) Happiness is a way of life.
- 6) Happiness is mostly created, and rarely given.
- 7) Learn to avoid or overcome factors that contribute to unhappiness.
- 8) We take responsibility for our own happiness.
- 9) Happiness is enhanced by the feelings of love and appreciation!
- 10) Happy people celebrate and appreciate life every day. Happiness is theirs for keeps.

End

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