

Mankind's Goal: Happiness!

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Abstract

How does one become happy, stay happy and contribute when war, poverty, poor educational systems plague society? This paper will mix theory with action! This scholarly work comes from a viewpoint of educational psychology noting the importance of a positive mindset. Daemons can torture one's soul to the point of exhaustion, illness and/or depression until the individual is plagued with turning to alternative means: drugs, alcohol and/or both! Problems become insurmountable and the thought of one's ultimate happiness escapes into a vapor of doubt. How does one give purpose to a life filled with service, fulfillment and happiness? One chooses! This paper will enlighten readers to solutions, strategies and suggestions how to conquer daemons residing in one's inner most thoughts and find the ultimate pathway to mankind's most important goal: happiness!

Keywords: Happiness, cognitive psychology, stress, choice

According to Jon Meachum (*The Soul of America*, 2018), guest panelist on Real Time with Bill Maher, a controversial hour-long program on HBO; there is “No once upon a time” or “Happily ever after”. So how does one move from the pain, struggle, strife of reality to achieve mankind’s ultimate desire: happiness?

The Greeks professed taking care of mind, body and soul was the ultimate way to achieve happiness. They were the first Olympians to foster the strength, and beauty of the human body. The mind was cultivated by the Socratic method, ever questioning one’s pathway in life. The soul was owned by the gods. Deities, rituals and sacrifices kept the soul in check from demons, maniacs and evil soothsayers.

What does it take to be truly happy? How does one achieve happiness? Is it written in the stars one will live a life of strife or bliss?

The stars cannot answer. The answer lies in the human element. It is not the will of the Stars, but the will of the individual to cultivate the mind, body and spirit for ultimate happiness.

“The mind is a terrible thing to waste”, touted decades ago to cultivate the importance of education for African Americans! It follows suit when one uses alcohol, drugs, or other psychotropic medications, the mind is altered. Once the mind is altered, clear thinking becomes impossible. It is a perfect time for demons to enter the mind, shouting a deprecating inner voice which cripples, also, the body and soul!

A pathway back to restoration of the mind is cognitive psychology. Albert Ellis first coined the term, “stinkin thinkin” to help individuals dismiss disparaging thoughts. Miguel Ruiz, (*The Four Agreements*, 1997), set the groundwork for personal interactions not only among

individuals, but with one's self. Be impeccable with your word; don't take anything personally; don't make assumptions; and always do your best are the "Four Agreements". Following is the author's link of each agreement to achieving the goal of happiness.

Be impeccable with your word opens the flood gates for doing what you say you're going to do. Interactions with others is meaningless unless there is integrity in what one says. A sense of well being overcomes one when communications are conducted with integrity. Others learn to trust but most importantly one has trust in the self ultimately leading to simply being happy with one's self!

Don't take anything personally may be the hardest of the four agreements to keep! During a day, a person is often confronted with the "slings and arrows" of defeatist insults, stabs to one's pride, or plain insulting language, if not directed to oneself, but sometimes observed among other people. Reflecting the "bad language" back on the source and bring insight into what the other person is experiencing that day, or struggles the individual is working through at that point in one's life.

Don't make assumptions involves obliterating the "stinkin thinkin" coined by Albert Ellis (1962) the father of Rational Emotive Therapy. When one makes assumptions, thoughts fly from one incongruent thought to another! Perseverating on thoughts backed only by assumptions, rather than reality, can cause the mind to follow a downward spiral leading to feelings of dismay, depression and when severe, even suicide! The only way to propel one from the mind's abyss is to replace the negative thought with a positive. Think of the thought swirling tumultuously in one's head as "baggage" which must be packed up in an old worn out bag and toss them into the nearest proverbial garbage!

Always do your best to give one self-satisfaction ultimately leading to happiness. No matter what the task, or how difficult, as long as the individual puts forth one's best efforts, self-satisfaction results. Happiness comes when there is a feeling of accomplishment!

Stress is a major block to one's happiness. A dear friend reminded the author recently, "it's not the water that caused the pipes to break, but the *pressure*" (Senter, 2018). The simile refers to the extreme tolerance (or so it seems) the outwardly calm individual exhibits, only to be experiencing inner turmoil each time he/she suffers a derogatory slur, a harsh word, and or a piercing insult. Rather than addressing each instance with open communication ("use your words") the individual allows one action to pile upon another allowing uneasy feelings to foster to a boiling point. Then the explosion erupts taking the form of high blood pressure leading to stroke and frequently, an untimely death. The forgoing is an example of inward pressure building within one's psyche. The insurmountable pressure caused by negativity can result in the individual taking the pressure outward. Unfortunately, the media has been covering far too many events of mayhem against society, school shootings and attacks on others "different from oneself".

Combatting stress leads to happiness. Tools such as cognitive psychology, release, positive outlook, such as a mindset that defuses failure, and maintaining a healthy life style (Keough, 2017), combine to thwart stress which interferes with happiness.

Carol Dweck, (2006) explains why positive self-talk is healthier than dwelling on the negative in her book *Mindset*. "It can lead to a more fulfilling life style in that one is no longer hampered by a negative mindset that often sets one up for failure before even attempting the task" (Keough, 2017).

How do cultivating relationships contribute to one's happiness? Communication is a major factor in keeping a relationship vibrant and alive! True friendship is a treasure to be honored. A sincere relationship brings benefit to both individuals. When one presents a "false self", pretends to be something they are not, too much effort goes into one side of the relationship and it becomes doomed. "To thine own self be true" rings true in a relationship even though Shakespeare coined it in the 15th century.

Relationships can be a tenuous balancing act between two people. If it begins with falsehood (one pretending to be something juxtaposed to the true self) it will be a struggle. Chris Rock, the comedian once said, "When you meet somebody for the first time, you're not meeting them. You're meeting their representative!" (Pasricha, 2016, p. 257).

On the other hand, being "too nice" in a relationship, always putting the other before oneself, can set turbulent waves in the sea of friendship, partnership, or marriage. After a time, "being nice" turns into a burden and the person takes on the role of the "victim". "Honor thyself" (Vanzant, 1998), otherwise, anger ensues against the one person he/she has made a commitment to. According to Vanzant (1998), anger ... is the response to built-up frustration. A rebellion against authority. The experience of having one's sense of personal power denied or infringed upon" (p. 189). The relationship crumbles and the "too nice" person wonders "How could this have happened; I have him/her everything desired!".

Carl Rogers, best known for Client Centered Therapy (1951) viewed being in a relationship as a "gentle way of being":

The way of being with another person which is termed empathic means temporarily living in their life, moving about in it delicately, without making judgments. To be with another

in this way means that for the time being you lay aside the views and values you hold for yourself in order to enter the other's world without prejudice. A complex, demanding, strong yet subtle and gentle way of being (unknown).

Rogers (1951) does not purport to giving up oneself in a relationship, but to be "gentle". His therapeutic element of "congruence" applies to the intricate dance between partners in a relationship. "People who lack congruence between their real selves and their conscious self-concept develop psychological tension"(Atlas, 1999, p. 90). Much like showing up as one's own "representative" at the beginning of a relationship, it becomes too difficult to continue the "act" for an enduring and meaningful partnership.

So, what does it take to be happy? This paper has touched on a few concepts leading to mankind's goal: happiness! The concept will be further explored in the author's upcoming book, *Ethical Problem Solving and Decision Making for Positive and Conclusive Outcomes* (Keough, in press). Suffice to say, simple principles such as the Golden Rule; "Do Unto Others as You Would Have Them Do Unto You" (unknown) remains a constant.

This paper has explored cultivating the mind, body and spirit; getting rid of "stinkin, thinkin", avoiding mind-altering substances, and nourishing the spirit through four agreements. Avoiding stress compels one to reach deeply into the soul for positive affirmation and condemning negative thoughts to an old, worn-out knap-sack! Cultivating relationships brings much joy to the individual when it is a "gentle way of being" (Rogers, 1951).

What remains to be seen is choice: it is in the hands of the individual to choose to be happy!

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