

## Happiness

Something we all yearn for, yet how many of us can truly claim to be deeply and profoundly happy? Often when we do consider ourselves to be happy all we really mean is that we're not actually sad or angry or frustrated at that time. Sure most of us will have fleeting moments of happiness, but they usually don't last - why is that? The trick with happiness is that for it to be lasting and truly nourishing it has to come from within. Yes, there are lots of things in the external world that can make you happy, but they can all be taken away without warning. True, deep, lasting happiness is found within via understanding and acceptance and love of your true self. That is, via self-awareness.

That is not to say that you shouldn't seek the pleasures and enjoyment that the external world can offer, just that you shouldn't rely on external forces to make you happy. If your happiness is entirely dependent on a particular relationship or on your successful career then where does that leave you if you lose that person or your job? Having established a base position of happiness you will find not only that there are more external experiences that make you happy and that the happiness you experience from them is more profound, but also that when you experience loss and disappointment and sadness in your external life it will be less debilitating and you will be more accepting of the necessary role those experiences have to play in the balance of life.

It is natural and healthy to experience fear, sadness, anger, frustration and disappointment at times in your external life. It must be so for there to be balance in life and it is true that experience of the "bad" times is part of what helps us appreciate the "good". The problem that most of us face is that those unhappy emotions aren't limited to our outer worlds; they have made their way into our inner worlds as well.

It is an unfortunate fact that many of the interactions, exposures and experiences we have as we are growing up and forming our internal views of ourselves and the world are unhappy or unpleasant. This leads to many of us in our adult lives having negative and limiting views of ourselves and viewing the world with suspicion and fear. Often if we really drill down into our subconscious we will find beliefs such as "I'll never be happy" or even "I don't deserve to be happy". It is these sorts of negative and limiting beliefs that we need to get rid of to build our core happiness.

We also need to make sure that we actually understand what it is that really makes us happy. Many of our beliefs about happiness will be ideas that we have had thrust upon us by others, or learned expectations from our interactions in childhood. Many of us will never have stopped to examine whether the things we strive towards because we think they will make us happy are actually what we really want!

Everyone deserves to be happy and everyone can be happy. Start working on increasing your self-awareness, take stock of and eradicate the limiting and negative beliefs that are holding you back and identify your core personal drivers for happiness.

We'll be talking more in the coming months about self-awareness, tips to increase it and the multitude of benefits it can bring to your life.