

Be Happy

**Happiness is when
what you think, what you say,
and what you do are in harmony.
*Mahatma Gandhi***

This famous quote by Gandhi is so true. To live a truly happy life you have to be in a consistent state of mind where what you think, say, and do is in perfect alignment with who you are. I don't mean who you are trying to be, would like to be, or think you should be, I mean who you really are.

Portraying Images

In today's society we can do so many things to portray a certain image because we think that image will make us happier than just being ourselves. Tattoos are one of the simplest ways to portray an image. Just stamp a symbol or word/s on your body and it may give others the impression that it's something you're passionate about and makes you happy. Unfortunately, often this is not the case. For example, if someone has the peace symbol tattooed on their arm but they are serving life in prison for stabbing someone to death, then the peace symbol doesn't really suit them. Similarly, if someone has the band name Black Sabbath tattooed on their arm but they secretly prefer, and listen exclusively to, Bach and Beethoven, then the tattoo doesn't represent who this person is at all. Take the teenage girl from Nipawin who has a tattoo of a crocodile covering her chest and up her neck. Really?? What could this tropical swamp creature have to do with the life of this young girl who lives in Saskatchewan. What kind of image is she trying to portray? Why would her parents allow this?

There are so many other ways one can live a life trying to be someone they are not, ultimately, leading to an unfilled and unhappy life. Recently, the host of a party showed me his collection of books. Among many of the books were author philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, and Seneca. Not knowing this person very well, I immediately assumed that he was quite a reader and had, perhaps, formally studied philosophy at some point. When I asked how he could read so many heavy duty books on philosophy, he replied he hadn't actually read any of them and wasn't really interested in philosophy, he had a passion for Stephan King novels but didn't want those on his bookshelf for everyone to see. What a goof!!

You get my point, be yourself and surround yourself with the things you love that make you happy. If you love renaissance colours, books on Shamanism, and sitar music, don't paint your house blue, read Heather's Picks, and listen to Tom Petty. Live the life that makes you happy. Fine tune your life into your own frequency, not someone else, chances are you will be a far more interesting and happier a person for it.

**Today you are you!
That is truer than true!
There is no one alive, that is you-er than you!
*Dr. Seuss***

What Makes You Happy

Once you strip off the excess weight of trying to be someone you are not, you can really look at what makes you happy, what makes your spirit move, and what excites and inspires you. We all come into this world with specific likes and dislikes, we all have talents and personalities that are unique to us. Our role here on earth is to figure out how, given our unique talents, we can contribute to our society so that collectively our efforts all come together to create a better existence here on earth. In order to tap into the stream of consciousness of knowing what our purpose is, we must be happy and at peace with ourselves first.

So, what makes you happy? Do your friends make you happy? Do you find them interesting and inspiring? Do they help or hinder your growth? Can you laugh, learn, and be yourself with your friends? Do you like where you live? Does your neighbourhood offer the kind of vibe that you like? What do you like to do for your physical and mental health? Do you prefer hiking in the woods or running on a treadmill? Do you read books you enjoy or do you read what's recommended by a book club? Are you happy in your marriage or relationship? Do you have a career or a job you enjoy?

It's simple to understand if you like something or not, the thought of it or the involvement with it either makes you feel good or feel bad. Of course some feelings will be mixed. Even though I dislike most top forty music on the radio, I happily let my teenage daughter crank up the volume when we're together in the car because it makes her happy which makes me happy. Overall though, if you peel back all the layers of your day, your life, you can ascertain what makes you feel good and what makes you feel bad just by tuning into how you feel during any particular experience.

Make Changes

Here's a story about an experience I had that led me from a feeling bad path to a feeling good path in one area of my life. I took a position a few years ago that I was sure I was going to love and be at for a long time. It turned out that I did enjoy the work I did very much. I was happy with my new job and loved going to work each day. Early on though, I realized that the person I would be working with, as well as their right-hand woman, were both a bit on the discourteous side, so, as the months went by I made light of the way I was spoken to and treated at times. I would tell myself that they were the same to everyone, not just me. That's what we do, we justify things that make us feel bad in order to make things seem like they are okay.

As time went on various situations occurred that dampened my spirit but I continued to pretend to myself and others that I was happy at my job. The truth was, that in a matter of months, I went from a feeling of joy as I walked into the office each morning to a feeling like I was walking into a propeller each morning. Being decapitated is not a great way to start your day.

Pay Attention To The Signs

Life is funny, it gives you signs that you need to make a change and when you don't heed the warnings, life dishes out even bigger signs. The signs became crystal clear one week at work when things went quite badly for me. During one particularly upsetting conversation, I knew that I couldn't remain in that situation any longer and that I would leave the position. At the moment I knew I was going to leave, an incredible wave of happiness came over me. While the person was still talking at me, yes, I mean at me, I was so overwhelmed by a feeling like an energy full of joy was wrapping its arms around me, that I

couldn't even hear what the person was saying to me any longer, their lips were moving but I couldn't hear them. It was as though a divine intervention was taking place, or the beginning of a migraine, not sure, but in that silence I was happy. Oh, and trust me, I know I didn't miss anything good like praise and appreciation when I had my little happiness blackout.

Follow Your Feelings

Logically, leaving a job before you find another doesn't make any sense, but, when I made the unwavering decision that I would leave, I was over the moon with happiness. Once I had served my remaining time, I was giddy at the sheer delight that something that had made me so unhappy was over. Yes, there are consequences to achieve a state of utter bliss, not everyone can just give notice and leave their job, however, for me it was, without a doubt, the right thing to do. Being without a job and trying to find another is far less worrisome than trying to dodge that propeller every single day.

Intention

If you know you need to make changes in your life to be happy but aren't able to make major changes immediately, just have the intention to do something. Start to make a shift in your thinking and attitude about what it is that needs to change. If you are unhappy in your career start shifting your efforts and thoughts to what you might like to do. Read about interesting new careers that inspire you. Research what you would need to do to have that career. Start imagining yourself in the perfect job setting that would make you happy. If you want to lose weight start imagining things to do that would help you shed the pounds. Maybe you like dancing, hiking, rowing or boxing. Imagine different activities in your head and if you get a good feeling while imagining them then go and give them a try.

Feel Your Way To A Happy Life

Remember, a good way to determine if something makes you happy is to see how it makes you feel. If something makes you feel bad then you know you need to change it. If something makes you feel good then you know you need to incorporate it in your life.

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