

DISCOVERY OF HAPPINESS



BY A B MEHTA

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PREFACE

Who doesn't want to be happy? All our actions are oriented towards this goal. However, most of us struggle during our entire life trying to be happy. Probably the highest level of happiness is experienced when we become free of an illness or get relief from pain. We also feel happy when we receive some good news or when our boss, friends or family members compliment us for something we have achieved in our life. But most of us miss simple day-to-day opportunities to experience happiness.

My childhood was generally happy with caring parents and a reasonable school and college performance. The only period that could have given unhappiness was during my long illness as a child. But I would not have, probably, realized it, as it is the parents who undergo tension and worry about our health in the childhood.

The first real testing period came during my adult life in 1963 when my son had an attack of polio. He struggled between life and death under life support system as a six-month old child. My wife and I found our selves helpless. When he survived and was discharged from the hospital the happy feeling we experienced could not be described in words even though all his four limbs were paralysed. The very fact that he was alive was enough to give us happiness. We never thought even for a moment as to how we will look after him. Today he is 47 years old, largely confined to his bedroom but we feel unmitigated happiness by the simple fact that he is with us.

I am an engineer and a soldier, having served in the Indian Air Force. By nature I derive great satisfaction when I am able to help someone even at the cost of some inconvenience to myself. After retirement from service, I decided to settle in the city of Bhopal. The availability of my two brothers-in-law, who are doctors there and could attend to my son, was the main reason for this. The city, being the capital of the state of MP, has provided me a lot of opportunity to be usefully occupied in tune with my nature. I joined the local Senior Citizens Forum whose activities are oriented towards helping the less fortunate elder citizens and bring happiness in their life.

While searching for information on topics of interest relevant to the senior citizens and sharing the same with our members, as a part of forum discussions, I became

aware of the problems of elders, how they can remain useful to the society and what makes them happy. This led me to think about compiling the information in a book form to cover most of the topics of concern to elders. I felt very happy when my book “60+”, the first written by me, was printed and released during the 6th National Convention of Senior Citizens held in Bhopal on 8th October 2006. A friend asked me that if one followed the suggestions and took precautions as given in the book would one lead a happy life. While my answer was that the book only tries to tell one how to get over the problems that we are likely to face after we cross the age of 60, it did trigger the thought process in me to learn more about what causes us to be happy.

I critically observed people who seemed happy, particularly those with no clear reasons for their happiness. I studied what is happiness from different viewpoints and in different situations. I read a number of books, browsed through Internet articles, read stories in the newspapers covering incidents causing people to be unhappy or making them express their happiness and discussed these with my friends. I also tried to find out the reasons from those who looked unhappy although superficially having all the comforts and no known reason for unhappiness. The result of this introspection is this book. The book primarily covers those aspects of happiness that are universally known but are ignored or forgotten, hence I have given it the title “How to Discover Happiness”.

The objective of writing this book is to share with the readers as to where and how in our day-to-day life could we find happiness through our actions and responses to situations. It is however for the readers to find it in their own way within their environment. In my earlier compilation ‘Dialogue with God’ I had made an attempt to present an imaginary ‘friendly dialogue’ with God based primarily on the contents derived from Gita. Gita is the most read spiritual text of Hinduism that has also been analysed by many non-Indians. I wrote it tailored for Indian readers in the style of a series of three books by Neale Donald Walsch titled ‘Conversation with God’. In addition books like ‘The Monk who sold his Ferrari’ by Robin Sharma, ‘Awaken children’ by Swami Amritaswarupananda of Mata Amritanandmayi Mission and many more provided me the input for the contents of this book. The messages contained in these books continue to be the cornerstone for understanding what constitutes happiness, particularly spiritual happiness. More words of wisdom by many learned persons and contents of numerous submissions by surfers of the many Internet Forums also provided me with

inputs for the book. A few of these I have included without modifications. **These are all acknowledged with gratefulness and included in the Reference chapter**

I will derive happiness if the suggestions contained in the book trigger the readers to view life in a way that makes them, as well as others with whom they interact, **HAPPY**.

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A UNIVERSAL DESIRE

Swami Chinmayanandji said... The tragedy of human history is decreasing happiness in the midst of increasing comforts.

How to be happy and contented in life? Can we find happiness when there is so much poverty, illness, death and destruction in this world, so much evil, murders, rapes and hatred. One is usually advised to not watch TV news or read newspaper if one wants to live a stress free life. But can we avoid these? Day in and day out we have to face personal problems, family concerns, job related disappointments, unjust society and nation wide corrupt environment. We just can't run away and hide. Within ourselves there are conflicts and emotional experiences, (both positive and negative) anger, hatred, jealousy, sadness, resentment, love, elation, excitement and so on.

Among all this confusion and chaos, we are often advised to remember that life on earth is a temporary existence. Yes one fact that no one can deny is death. Death is the only thing in life that is guaranteed. No one is going to live forever. Life is a journey we all take, for some it is short, for others long, but ultimately it is a journey that will one day come to an end. What happens after that can also be debated and discussed, but not the reality of death. But as long as it lasts we have to face the ups and downs in life. So

the only course left to us is to catch the instances of happiness, make conscious effort to avoid or quickly get over the negative moments and deliberately search for experiences that can give us happiness.

George Bernard Shaw said, “Life is a splendid torch which I have got hold for the moment and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generation”.

Most of the religious scriptures define the path to happiness through prayer of God, doing one’s duties in the best possible way, being truthful, detachment from desires and above all through love of every living being. Hence happiness and religion and/or spirituality are interrelated. Even the Atheists have some ethical considerations to derive happiness from their daily activities.

It is also important to keep in mind those aspects of our daily behaviour and reactions to situations that could make us unhappy or happy. Many of our acts that may give false sense of happiness can make us unhappy in the long run. Similarly many of our acts of omissions and commissions that we may find troublesome or unimportant could make us happy later on. Simultaneously the impact of our actions on others has also to be taken into account before we embark on those actions. There could be conflicting situations where either we or the other person would become unhappy. It would be individual decision in such cases to choose the path that may be of larger family/community/national interest.

What is Happiness?

Every person defines happiness in the context of a situation. We all have different goals at different times. In early student life these can be in relation to our performance in studies, our job as an adult, meeting the needs of our family, our financial security for future and finally our search of enlightenment if we are religious. But the reason why we want to reach these goals is ‘because we want to be happy’. A similar action or reaction may cause happiness at one time but may not do so at another time. Since everyone wants to be happy but is unable to find it all the time, the learned men when approached have given practical or philosophical definitions for the guidance of

common people. I have given below a few of these to enable us to appreciate the meaning of happiness in different context.

Happiness is when what we think, what we say, and what we do are in harmony. **(Mahatma Gandhi)**. Vashi Ram Chandi puts it across simply as “This is being in harmony with ourselves; being in harmony with the environment; being in harmony with nature; being in harmony with the universe”.

Just material things or comfort alone do not make us happy. We may have a good bed but may be unable to sleep. **(Sri Sri Ravishankar)**

Happiness is not getting what we want but it is in wanting what we've got. **(Albert Schweitzer)**

A feeling of contentment created when all of one's physical, emotional, psychological, intellectual and spiritual needs have been gratified. **(Mark Twain)**

Happiness is not in having or being—it is in the doing. **(Socrates)**

The best way to cheer you up is to try to cheer somebody else up. ~**Mark Twain**

Nobody really cares if you're miserable, so you might as well be happy. **(Cynthia Nelms)**

Happiness - state of well being characterized by emotions ranging from contentment to intense joy. Happiness - emotions experienced when in a state of well being. **(Thesaurus Definition)**

People are as happy as they decide to be - **Swami Sukhobananda**

Many others have identified happiness, as they understand from their experiences of life. All of us go through such experiences and we can benefit by knowing how they have interpreted them.

- Happiness is an inner state of well being that enables us to profit in our life from our highest thoughts, wisdom, intelligence, common sense, emotions, good health and spiritual values.
- Happiness is the meaning and the purpose of life, the whole aim and end of human existence.

- Happiness is not a thing in itself—it is only a contrast with something that is not pleasant.
- Happiness: An agreeable sensation arising from contemplating the misery of another!!
- Happiness is mostly a by-product of doing what makes us feel fulfilled.
- Happiness is not a destination we arrive at but a manner of traveling.
- Happiness is a state of the mind where the individual feels that “life is good”. Very little is needed to make a happy life; it is all within yourself, in your way of thinking.
- The dictionary definition of happiness is “feelings of joy and pleasure mingled together”
- Happiness is not merely a life lived by accumulating moments of pleasure. On the contrary, happiness is a long lasting and enduring enjoyment of life; it is being in love with living.
- Happiness is more a state of health than of wealth.
- Happiness is not a reward-it is a consequence. Suffering is not a punishment-it is a result.
- Happiness is not in our circumstances but in us. It is not something we see, like a rainbow, or feel, like the heat of a fire. Happiness is something within us.
- Until you are happy with who you are, you will never be happy with what you have.
- You cannot get happiness just by following others like sheep.
- Happiness is based on the will to change from a situation that is making you unhappy.
- It is not a goal to be gradually achieved; you are either happy or not.
- You have to be tolerant, learn from mistakes, active, focused on your strengths and aware of what is good for you.
- You have to learn to say NO for being happy.

(Some of these are taken from <http://lifehappiness.org/>)

A practical concept of happiness

Happiness is not something that happens. It is not the result of good fortune or random chance. It is not something that money can buy or power command. It does not depend on outside events, but, rather, on how we interpret them. Happiness, in fact, is a condition that must be prepared for, cultivated, and defended privately by each person. People who learn to control their inner experience will be able to determine the quality of their lives, which is as close as any of us can come to being happy. *The inner life and the practice of its skills are the keys to living happily.* –Tony Wilkinson

Rational approach tells that Happiness is probably the balance of pains and pleasures, fortunes, sacrifice, love, cooperation, harmony, justice, truth and decency. Happiness stands for forgiveness and justice. Without happiness, life is dry and meaningless. With happiness, life immediately becomes fulfilled and wonderful. Happy people keep themselves happy because they know how they tick; they know the little ways to appreciate themselves and to see the humour and magic in each moment.

True happiness lies in the rough road between wishes and their fulfillment, and not in the absence of struggle for satisfying wishes (**Swami Sukhbodhananda**).

Happiness is the name of compromise with unpredicted life. Happiness is the name of struggle and courage. Happiness may be founded in seeking of true knowledge and rule of wisdom. Happiness may be shared in service and duty. Happiness is also the name of success; happiness may also be founded in the progress of humanity. Happiness may be seen in the laughs of small kid, tears of a mother, and genuine concerns of a trust worthy companion. This life is combination of joys and sorrows and honest efforts should be made to make this life a journey of happiness, love, peace and harmony because LIFE could be a play/game of one innings -**Mehmood-Ul-Hassan Khan**

PERCEPTIONS OF HAPPINESS

It is unique for each

Each one of us has his own set range for happiness, which is largely inherited but subsequently modified through his experiences and influences in life. When we identify our highest strengths and virtues, the things we're best at, we are better prepared to achieve lasting happiness. It's a discovery within us. It's not doing something external. It's finding what we're really best at and doing it more. Unfortunately Most of us spend our life physically, intellectually and morally utilizing only a small part of our potential. As soon as we become slightly happy, we become lazy and do not follow up our dreams and thus waste a large portion of our life. To live life to the fullest, we have to throw away 'garbage' of data and actions and allow only the best information to enter our mind and take up only meaningful actions. Even a single negative thought can lead us to a path that would make us and/or others unhappy. Instead of being consistently miserable one should be habitually optimistic.

Inaction can never lead us to happiness. When we are inspired by some great purpose, all our thoughts break their bonds and expand in all directions in search of a new, better and wonderful world. Dormant forces and talents become alive and we discover a greater person than we ever were in the past. Mind is a wonderful servant but a terrible master. Exercise it the right way; use it all the time under our ethical control so that it follows the right path and does not become our master.

There's been evidence for a long time that people who are seriously religious are less depressed and more optimistic and hence happier. This is because they do not spend that much time thinking and striving for meeting their physical desires. Secondly, people who are seriously religious are at a tremendous advantage if they choose to lead a meaningful life. They use their spiritual strengths in the service of something much larger than they are, and that is a tried-and-true route to satisfaction in life. By seriously religious we mean a person who does not consider religious rituals as everything but who practices ethical living and has true faith in God.

Some of the many misconceptions or **Myths** concerning the pursuit of happiness are:

(One) Money brings happiness. False. It may help or it may hinder. Some men have sold their happiness, but no one was ever able to buy it.

(Two) That pleasure is the same as happiness. False. You can wear yourself ragged in pursuit of pleasure and still wake up in dull despair.

(Three) That fame brings lasting happiness. False. They may not show but it is true that most of the famous people were not really happy all the time.

(Four) That happiness must be found in far places. False again. We carry the seeds of happiness within ourselves.

(Five) We should renounce the world to be truly happy. False. We must carry out our duties with efficiency participating in the progress of the world and welfare of our family and friends and search for happiness.

Changing Perception with age

The perception of happiness changes with age. A child can be happy as soon as his guardians attend to a few of his needs. As we grow older we want to get many more things, many more successes and independently try for them. The following paragraphs indicate some of the changing perceptions with age.

As a Child

When you were born, you were crying
And everyone around you was smiling.
Live your life so at the end,
You'll also be smiling.

Very often, we consider childhood days to be a period of happiness. In reality, as children we do not understand what happiness is. Under the protection of our parents, we pass our days in a perpetual round of enjoyment, which undoubtedly gives us pleasure. It is a common sight to see a small child crying and the grand mother telling the new mother to feed the child as he has become hungry. The moment his hunger is satisfied with mother's milk, he gives out a satisfied belch and either goes to sleep happy and

contented or shouts out in pleasure ('kilkari'). The child's needs are limited but these must be met immediately to make him happy.

What makes slightly grown up children happy? 'That's easy,' you might say, 'a new toy, an ice cream or a trip to the amusement park.' While these things bring an immediate smile to many children's faces, they are probably not the things that will keep them happy day by day, or turn them into happy adults. After all the elders control what is supposed to be 'good for them'. When they are happy playing we call them back for studies, mud that they enjoyed playing with has to be washed off. They must have their glass of energy drink whether they like it or not. Every time they are being prevented, interrupted or corrected in the name of good behaviour! "We believe the behaviour of happy children is a result of unconditional love and straight, consistent, caring parental instructions and demonstrations of how to think and solve problems." **We give many "don't" messages to them but very few "do" messages to them.** (From the famous book 'Staying OK')

As we enter adolescence, changes take place in the mind and physical body causing us to become aware of the existence of the opposite sex and we begin to experience a new kind of attraction giving rise to disturbing emotions. At the same time, curiosity drives us to find out about the facts of life, through peer discussion and book reading.

What makes Children Happy?

Even though we might all like to know the key to happiness, there is actually relatively little psychological research on this topic. In the past psychologists have tended to focus on how disorders involving negative mood can be prevented rather than how happiness can be achieved. However, more recently psychologists, notably Professor Martin Seligman, have developed what they call 'positive psychology': the study of happiness and well-being.

Research, time and again, has shown that good relationships are necessary for lasting happiness. This brings us directly to children, because children's relationships with their parents (or other primary caregivers) are the starting point for happiness. Professor John Bowlby, a pioneer in the study of parent-child attachment, believed that

this relationship has enormous influence in shaping a child's self-esteem, his/her expectations of other people and view of the world in general.

Professor Mary Ainsworth was the first to develop a way of formally classifying the different types of relationships that exist between parents and children. Her test, called the 'Strange Situation', involves observing toddlers' reactions during a series of separations and reunions with the parent. Securely attached toddlers protest when the parent leaves but are quickly comforted when they return, whereas insecurely attached infants continue to cry or avoid the parent when they return. It is seen, as can be expected, that securely attached toddlers typically go on to have more positive, less troublesome relationships than insecurely attached toddlers, including relationships with friends, with romantic partners, and even their own future children. A happy note is that having a bad childhood does not necessarily doom children to repeat the same negative pattern with their own children. If a parent has reflected on their own bad childhood, attempting to make sense of past events, they are less likely to repeat the same negative pattern on their children.

While relationships are extremely important for children's happiness, another important ingredient is called mastery. This means that children are happy when they have something they are 'good at', and when their family and other important people in their lives notice and appreciate these skills. However, children should not be so focused on goals that they feel their happiness depends directly on achieving them. For example, a child who enjoys playing football for the game is likely to be made happier by the experience than one who can only feel happy if the team achieves a win. The tendency to feel that happiness is dependent on achieving particular goals is called 'conditional goal setting'—'If I score a goal in the game, then I will be happy'.

Genetic and Physiological Factors

Up until now we have been considering how life events and circumstances contribute to happiness. However it is important to keep in mind that a large part, perhaps even more than half, is dictated by genetic factors. For example, studies have found that children of the same parents who were raised in different families show striking similarities in the level of happiness, whereas unrelated children living in the same families do not. These types of findings may partly be attributable to the link between personality, known to be quite heritable, and happiness: people with extroverted personalities tend to be happier than those with more introverted, 'neurotic' personalities.

Research does show that some basic aspects of the brain circuits involved in emotion are in place from very early in life. Professor Richard Davidson, an expert in the brain bases of emotion, has shown that people whose brains are more active in the left frontal area tend to be more positive, outgoing, and smile more; by contrast people who show the opposite pattern of more activity in the right tend to report more negative thoughts, be more shy, and smile less. While this basic pattern can change as peoples' feelings change from moment to moment during the day, it is estimated that about 60% of the variation between adults reflects the stable characteristics of the person.

Professor Davidson and his colleague Professor Nathan Fox have shown that a similar relationship between brain activity and emotion is seen even in newborns. They gave newborns either a sweet taste or a sour taste to induce positive or negative emotions, and then measured brain activation using the electroencephalogram (EEG). Newborns showed greater left frontal brain activation while smiling for the sweet taste but greater right frontal activation when showing disgust for the sour taste. Studies of older infants show the same type of results: at 10 months of age infants displaying right frontal brain activation are more likely to cry when their mother leaves than those displaying left frontal activation.

Do these types of studies mean that a child's level of happiness is 'set' from the very beginning of life? The answer to this question seems to be 'no'. Life events and circumstances contribute as well. Moreover, particularly during development, the aspects of happiness reflected in the EEG measures are changeable. While this study does not tell us what factors led some children to remain very shy and others to become less shy, it does suggest that it is possible to change a child's basic emotional outlook. What, then, makes children happy? In the long term, the basic ingredients that make children happy during childhood seem to be the same ones that help them to become happy adults: a secure relationship with parents gives the base to confidently explore the world and develop a sense of mastery and recognition, all important components in the recipe for happiness. However, in the short term, the new toy might provide a smile too!

Forcing Children for Your Happiness

When someone says "happiness?" Usually, what comes to mind are things, or outcomes. Happiness can be in owning an independent bungalow in the suburbs, a high-paying job, an expensive new car, or a child who becomes a successful professional. We have a tendency to externalize happiness. It becomes something intimately involved in a

thing or event. It becomes a goal. Unfortunately, the path to that goal is often ignored. The new car could only be purchased if you denied yourself simple pleasures over two years in order to afford your new status symbol. And what about your child? What would he be required to do in order **for you** to feel happiness about what he or she achieves academically, socially, or professionally?

Once you associate happiness with goals, both you and your child are primed for a fall. The goals, many of which are unobtainable, become traps; if they can't be reached, neither can your happiness. And by focusing on the goal, the path is often ignored. Often we want our children to achieve those aims that we could not achieve. Everyone wants his son to be Sachin Tendulkar in cricket or Abhinav Bindra in shooting. Who would not want his daughter to be Saina Mahiwal. We force him or her without taking into account his interests, capabilities and environment just to satisfy our expectations that may be only linked to fame and fortune.

“I love my kids dearly and genuinely want the best for them. But already I have ideas about what I think is best for them. So even without intentionally wanting to... as they grow up, I'll be influencing them to do the things that I think will be best for them. Unfortunately I really do not know what is really for their best, as I do not know what is best for ME!” - Most parents.

Radhika Nagrath describes how difficult it is for us to live like a child. “To live like a child and be happy like him, one should forego the obsession to please others. Everybody appreciates truthfulness as compared to superficial ways of impressing others. Experiencing chilled like joy has unfortunately become a rarity. A child is a born optimist and experiences joy in every act, as he is oblivious of the result. He is always in the PRESENT and enjoys simple joy of ‘being’. We tend to brood over the past or worry about the future, letting slip the present moment that is lost forever. Let us be happy like a child with less inhibitions, spontaneous in laughing heartily and taking the life as not a burden or chore but as a journey of discovery and the resulting joy of coming to know and experiencing new things.”

As a Teenager

In any house having a teenager, particularly a boy, the usual spectacle is to see him rushing in, probably opening the door by his foot and allowing it to bang shut. He then invariably moves to his room and switches on the music playing loud disco song. The elders pull him up for the noise but this is what makes him happy apart from passing his examination or getting a motorcycle in gift.

It is very common to get into a mode where you think, "If only I had object X, my life would be perfect and I would be happy." First you REALLY want something: a new TV, a new car, and a special pair of shoes, whatever. Then you buy it and you LOVE having it for a few days. But over time you get bored or it wears out. You can see this pattern repeated constantly in your own life. For example, your parents and grandparents may have spent thousands of rupees on toys for you as you were growing up: Trucks and dolls and video games and electric cars and on and on and on. All of those toys got boring or broken or outgrown eventually. They brought happiness for a moment or a week, but over time they became worthless and your desire turned to a new object.

The Coffee or The Cup

The following story tells us what really is important in life.

A group of alumni, highly established in their careers, got together to visit their old university professor. Conversation soon turned into complaints about stress in work and life and the consequent unhappiness.

Offering his guests coffee, the professor went to the kitchen and returned with a large pot of coffee and an assortment of cups - porcelain, plastic, glass, crystal, some plain looking, some expensive, some exquisite – telling them to help themselves to the coffee.

When all the students had a cup of coffee in hand, the professor said: "If you noticed, all the nice looking expensive cups were taken up, leaving behind the plain and cheap ones. While it is normal for you to want only the best for yourselves, that is the source of your problems and stress. Be assured that the cup itself adds no quality to the coffee. In most cases it is just more expensive and in some cases even hides what we

drink. What all of you really wanted was coffee, not the cup, but you consciously went for the best cups... And then you began eyeing each other's cups.”

He then said: “Now consider this: Life is the coffee; the jobs, money and position in society are the cups. They are just tools to hold and contain Life, and the type of cup we have does not define, nor change the quality of life we live. Sometimes, by concentrating only on the cup, we fail to enjoy the coffee God has provided us. God brews the coffee, not the cups . . . Enjoy your coffee!”

The happiest people don't have the best of everything. They just make the best of everything.

As an Adult

For adults, achieving something professionally or getting a promotion or completing an important project in time and being complimented by the boss are some of the examples of causing happiness. Success of children is another area that makes them proud and happy.

Let us look honestly at our own life. Are our days and nights spent doing things that are meaningful and make us smile? Or do we spend the majority of our time doing things that are wasteful? When our life is over, will we wish we had spent our time differently? If we had only few years to live, what would we change?

Are we happy? Is there something we think needs to happen before we can be happy? Are we sure that if that something occurred, we would truly be happy then? Would it be enough? Looking back at our life would we be able to state that we have allowed ourselves to enjoy many moments. If yes then we have lived a good life.

Adult life is full of worries and tensions, praises and criticisms, rewards and punishments, successes and failures and periods of good health and sickness. Just examine each of them, ignore the trivial and analyse the important ones to enable you to learn from the possible mistakes and you will find ways and means to avoid mistakes and repeat the success stories in future thus making you happier. Be prepared for failures but do not give up an effort if you think it will make you more satisfied and happy.

As an Adult you are responsible not only for your happiness but also of others who are dependent on you. These are family members as well as your subordinates in job. You also shoulder responsibility as a member of the society and your organization (including the department if you are a government servant) to provide happiness to those who are affected by your actions.

As a Senior Citizen

Happiness in old age have more to do with attitude. Optimism and effective coping styles seem to be more important to successful aging. A positive self-perception about aging can get over even the low level of health and the presence of diseases. It was also found that people who spent time each day socializing, reading or participating in other hobbies rated their aging satisfaction higher.

'We do not stop playing because we are old; we grow old because we stop playing. There are only four secrets to staying young. These are being generally happy, achieving success in our endeavor, to laugh and find humor every day and finally to have a dream. When you lose your dreams, you die. We have so many people walking around who are dead and don't even know it! There is a huge difference between growing older and growing up. If you are nineteen years old and lie in bed for one full year and don't do one productive thing, you will turn twenty years old. If I am eighty-seven years old and stay in bed for a year and never do anything I will turn eighty-eight. Anybody can grow older. That doesn't take any talent or ability. The idea is to grow up by always finding opportunity in change. Have no regrets. The following lines, sent by a friend to me, indicate this vividly.

First I was dying to complete my schooling and go to a college. And then I was dying to finish college education and start working. Then I was dying to marry and have children. And then I was dying for my children grow old enough and get on with their life. But soon enough I was dying to retire. And now I am dying and suddenly I realized that I FORGOT TO LIVE.

The elderly usually don't have regrets for what he did, but rather for things he did not do.' - ROSE

Short advice for those who are due to retire and wish to lead a long productive and happy life is "don't". Don't retire, that is. Keep at least an element of work in your schedule - paid or unpaid. It is vital to maintain a sense of purpose and worth that only work can bring. **But remember it should not happen that we add years to life not life to years.**

Research in the West suggests that people actually get happier as they age. According to one analysis happiness follows "a U - shaped age pattern" - it starts off relatively high in young adulthood, then falls, bottoming out on average around age 45, and then rises after that year and on into old age. This could be a result of people getting better at handling challenges and lowering expectations as they age, making success and happiness more likely. The extra time to nurture relationships, hobbies and lifestyle pursuits provides more occasions to be happy.

As against this, studies in our country indicate that greater percentage of silvers are pessimistic and feel they have "missed the bus". Since we believe in reincarnation, the older persons some times start leading a dull and predictable routine awaiting death and waiting for the next birth. To live a full life one must expect every future moment to give a new experience. Dr Aruna Broota, clinical psychologist and professor in the Department of Psychology, Delhi University in her study found that of the 300 lower and upper middle class silvers interviewed, only 40 participants (about 13 per cent) had a positive attitude towards growth and ageing with most other suffering from discontentment and depression.

To become happier, elders should have something to look forward to. This 'something' is a second opportunity to relive their dreams. Himanshu Rath, founder and chairperson of Agewell Foundation, which runs Aadhar, a help line in Delhi states "There are many contented elders who, after a lifetime of work, have no more responsibilities, no more pressure," he says. "This lack of responsibility can make them euphoric. Whatever they do, they enjoy it."

Dr Sudhir Khandelwal, professor of psychiatry at Delhi's All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) feels that age is not a criterion for happiness. Rather, three main dimensions influence it, for everybody. The first is undoubtedly physical and mental health. The second is environmental and involves a person's financial resources with adequate security and shelter. And the third, spiritual dimension is equally important where a person needs to have the time and resources to enjoy his faith and spiritual beliefs.

“When each of us faces our final hours, pondering our life... we won't care less what other people thought of us. Nor will we care about how much money or toys we amassed.” -From *"Healthy Aging"* by Andrew Weil

It is Simpler to be Happy in old age

You can, probably for the first time in your life, become the person you always wanted to be. There is no use to despair over your body, the wrinkles, the baggy eyes, and the sagging butt. You just can't trade your friends, your wonderful life or your loving family for less gray hair or a flatter belly.

With age you become kinder to yourself, and less critical of yourself. You become your own friend. You can eat that extra sweet, or not make your bed, or buy something silly that you liked. Yes you are now entitled to a treat, to be messy, to be extravagant.

Great freedom comes with aging. Whose business is it if you choose to read or play on the computer until 4 AM and sleep until noon? Yes your wife would warn you but it is your decision and she would still love you if you ignore her comments! You can dance or sing with those wonderful tunes of the 60&70's.

You can walk the beach in a swimsuit that is stretched over a bulging body, or you can go to the local market in your night suit in the morning to buy something for your grandchild. Let people comment. Remember those commenting too will get old. So many have never laughed, and so many have died before their hair could turn silver. Yes you may be sometimes forgetful. But there again, some of life is just as well forgotten.

You will eventually remember the important things. Sure, over the years you may have been sad. How can your heart not break when you lose a loved one, or when a child suffers, or even when a car hits your beloved pet? But broken hearts are what give us strength and understanding and compassion. Without being sad you will never know the joy of being Happy. As you get older, it is easier to be positive. You care less about what other people think. You have even earned the right to be wrong. You are not going to live forever so do not waste time lamenting over what could have been, or worrying about what will be. Just eat that sweet (If you feel like it) and be happy
-(Anonymous)

SCIENTIFIC APPRECIATION

Happiness is the meaning and the purpose of life, the whole aim and end of human existence.

--Aristotle

Evolution through ages

Science over the ages has evolved based on hypothesis, experiments, analysis, interpretation of observations and results and revisions due to better methods and instruments becoming available. In medical circles, the experience of being happy can be ascribed to having a proper abundance of the chemical neurotransmitter serotonin in our brain.

However seeking refuge in "chemical happiness" alone can be quite a challenging and balancing act in the long-term. Other scientists have theorized that human beings have actually evolved by being dissatisfied, suggesting that early humans who were dissatisfied were apt to try a little harder to acquire the necessities and comforts of life. Perhaps this trait of dissatisfaction would inspire them to hunt a little better, to stash away more food, or to find a way to keep a bit warmer -- practices that would have increased the likelihood of a longer life. With this longer life, came more opportunities for passing on their "dissatisfaction gene" for generations to come - and here we are.

Just think, the root of our present feelings of dissatisfaction may stem from the genetic DNA patterns of our "great, great, great, great, etc." grandpa, who wasn't content with having mere berries to eat, and was thus inspired by his dissatisfaction to take a course on *Hunting*, or to figure out how to sow and irrigate the fields, or to plant a greater variety of food sources. Even with this "hereditary dissatisfaction" theory in mind, even if we *do* feel dissatisfaction with certain elements in our life, this does not mean that we have to consider ourselves to be "unhappy".

Scientific Hypothesis themselves are usually based on the interpretation of the latest observations or experiences. This is important to contemplate, because our experience of happiness is generally dependent on how we interpret things. Basically, if we think we're unhappy, we are unhappy, and if we think we're happy, we're happy. If we experience certain dissatisfactions and interpret them to mean that we must be unhappy, then we are unhappy. An alternative approach would be to assume that our feelings of dissatisfaction might be a helpful and positive signal that we are meant to *improve* our life. With this perspective, we can be happy, even amidst our dissatisfactions. With a positive frame of mind, we can also work more effectively to alleviate the sources of our dissatisfactions, whether those sources are outer circumstances, or our own inner habits.

Psychology of Happiness

Psychological definition of happiness covers three elements, **feeling good** (pleasure and contentment), **thinking good** (satisfied with past, well prepared for the present and not unduly worried about the future) and **NOT feeling bad** (physically and emotionally)

Most of its history, psychology had concerned itself with all that ails the human mind: anxiety, depression, neurosis, obsessions, paranoia, and delusions. The goal of practitioners was to bring patients from a negative, ailing state to a normal and then to a positive happy state. It is found that a high IQ paves the road to happiness. Further older people are more consistently satisfied with their lives than the young. And they're less prone to dark moods. Married people are generally happier than singles, but that may be because they were happier to begin with. On the positive side, religious faith seems to genuinely lift the spirit, though it's tough to tell whether it's the God part or the

community aspect that does the heavy lifting. Friends are one of the biggest sources of happiness but bad friendship could also lead to disaster. It is important to work on social skills, close interpersonal ties and social support in order to be happy.

Of course, happiness is not a static state. Even the happiest of people feel 'blue' at times. And even the poorest, sick, depressed and those dissatisfied with their life have their moments of joy. What has presented a challenge to social scientists trying to measure happiness is the simple fact that happiness is inherently subjective.

About 50% of one's satisfaction with life comes from genetic programming. (Genes influence such traits as having a sunny, easy-going personality; dealing well with stress; and feeling low levels of anxiety and depression.). Lykken found that circumstantial factors like income, marital status, religion and education contribute only about 8% to one's overall well-being. He attributes the remaining percentage to "life's slings and arrows", the ups and downs.

Lykken also proposed the idea that each of us has a happiness set point much like our set point for body weight. No matter what happens in our life—good, bad, spectacular, horrific—we tend to return in a short period to our set range. Some post-tsunami images showed smiling Asian children returning to school underscoring this amazing capacity to right themselves. A study of lottery winners done in 1978 found, for instance, that they did not wind up significantly happier except during the initial period when the news is received. Even people who lose the use of their limbs to a devastating accident tend to bounce back, though perhaps not all the way to their base line. One study found that during the week after the accident, the injured were severely angry and anxious, but after eight weeks they had returned more or less to their set point. Psychologists call this adjustment to new circumstances adaptation.

"Everyone is surprised by how happy paraplegics can be," says Kahneman. "The reason is that they are not paraplegic full time. They do other things. They enjoy their meals, their friends. They read the news. They watch their favourite programme on TV. It has to do with the allocation of attention." Oprah, the famous anchor of social programmes in USA, was asked how she runs five miles a day, and she said, 'I recommit to it every day of my life.' Happiness is like that. Every day you have to renew your

commitment. Hopefully, some of the strategies will become habitual over time and not a huge effort.

But other psychologists are more skeptical. Some simply doubt that personality is that flexible or that individuals can or should change their habitual coping styles. They say “If you’re a pessimist, who really thinks through in detail what might go wrong, you can hardly remain happy for a long time even if you make an effort.”

Role of Brain’s Chemistry

Human beings were designed by the Creator such that all functioned the same way. A good analogy is the hardware of a computer. What most individuals don’t realize is that the power of our brain or computer’s hardware varies according to the chemistry of our brain. It is critical to conceptually understand that our brain actually secretes chemicals corresponding to our positive and negative thoughts. The resulting chemistry of our brain’s cranial fluid influences all of our natural abilities and functions. This, in turn, determines how well we perform in everything we do because our brain is like a powerful computer. The power and efficiency of our wonderful personal computer can be increased dramatically by optimizing the chemistry of our brain’s cranial fluid. The mathematician John von Neumann once calculated that the human brain could store up to 280 quintillion (280 multiplied by ten raised to 18 zeros) bits (binary digits). Brain is estimated to function at the rate of ten thousand times the latest fastest computer.

Contrary to expectation, genius children need not show it in their school records. Many come out as difficult, moody, average and so on. Even Einstein was slow, particularly with languages. He attributed his discovery of the Theory of Relativity to his belief that one could stimulate ingenious thought by allowing one’s imagination to float freely without inhibitions. Geniuses are little more than ordinary people who have stumbled upon some knack or technique for widening their vision or channel of attention thus making subtle conversion of even unconscious perceptions to practically feasible reality. With few exceptions, the great discoveries in science have been made through intuitive experiments.

Similarly dreams have inspired rulers, artists, scientists, inventors, and philosophers and so on to achieve great success. There are 'lucid dreamers' who can by and large dream as near as possible to what they want to dream. Their control comes through experience and effort.

We are all thus similarly wired. What makes us different from each other is the way we think, feel and act, which is our software. This fact is very easy to demonstrate in the world of sports with athletic performance because of the mind/body connection. Positive emotions cause chemical changes that help heal the body of any physical or emotional ailment that may be the cause of unhappiness. Our mind and body function together. Athletes live and die by the performance of their bodies. From their own personal experiences, they easily relate to the concept that their negative thoughts cause their brain to secrete chemicals that immediately impair their performance. This awareness helps them to be more objective and positive when dealing with challenges. It helps them to control their emotions and increase their performance. Success in any sphere of life automatically brings happiness but even in defeat or failure one can be happy if he or she has performed to the best of abilities.

Our brain receives input through our five senses. Whenever we 'see', 'hear', 'feel', 'taste', and 'smell' something (stimuli), it enters our nervous system as an electrical impulse through a neuron (nerve cell). Once the electrical message reaches the end of the neuron (called a synapse) the electrical impulse/message converts into a biochemical (called a neurotransmitter). Then, this chemical message is converted back into an electrical impulse/message when it reaches the next neuron. This process repeats itself over and over until the message reaches the brain and is acted upon.

In reality we have an electrochemical nervous system. As the chemicals change, the messages change and our brain's performance varies accordingly. When we are positive and operating on instinct, our brain, metaphorically, runs on super high-octane chemicals. Our performance excels and we feel at our best.

It is important to realize that our electrochemical nervous system is an alternating electrical current that generates an electromagnetic field, which is virtually infinite in

nature. Those around us feel the strength and quality of our electromagnetic field. As our awareness increases we will realize that we can't hide our feelings from those we interact with and they can't hide theirs from us. That's why we have good chemistry with people we enjoy being with and bad chemistry with those that we don't. It is even more important to realize that the electromagnetic field that our thoughts create in turn cause attractor fields and that affects our life and cause happiness.

The "Happiness Equation"

It has been suggested that there are several factors that contribute towards our happiness. The 'equation for happiness' suggested by Martin Seligman, an American psychologist is:

$$H = S + C + V$$

H = Happiness, S = Set range (determined primarily by genetic information: about 50%), C = Impact of circumstances (8-15%)

V = Voluntary Control (past, present, future)

This all looks very scientific, and is actually based on research findings, but can be explained quite simply:

Set Range Genetics - There is some evidence to support that we are all born with a certain "set-point" of happiness, determined by our genes. This is supposed to change only slightly, if at all, as we get older. This contributes towards around 50% of our level of happiness.

Circumstances - There is no doubt that the circumstance we live in influence our level of happiness. You don't always have a lot of control over your circumstances (for example, we can't all live in mansions and drive new cars, if that is what gives us happiness). Evidence suggests, however, that this accounts for only around 8-15% of our happiness levels, which really isn't that much.

Voluntary Control - This third factor is the most important factor in the equation, because you can control it, and in the process control your happiness. It includes all aspects of your life over which you have a relatively high degree of control, including your thoughts and actions. This includes the way you choose to think about and act on the past, present, and future, and seems to have quite a significant impact on how happy you are - if you do the math, it could be up to 42% !

Past - When thinking about the past, people who are happier pay attention to what is 'good' about the past, rather than focusing on the unhappy times. They are grateful, forgiving, and don't believe that the past will determine what happens in the future.

Future. When it comes to thinking about the future, happy people are flexibly optimistic - what this means is that they are optimistic (in a realistic sense) about how their future is going to be, but if it doesn't turn out that way, they know it's not going to be the end of the world either.

Present. The way you think about and act in the present is also essential in determining how happy you are. This might include things such as taking pleasure in life and your surroundings, building and being in meaningful relationships, and the way we react to things in life, good and bad.

Controlling Factors

So we can see that we do have some control over thinking and actions to create long-term impact on our routine with the aim of being happy. We should therefore focus on those areas that we can control. We can increase our natural abilities and happiness by consciously adjusting the chemistry of our brain's cranial fluid. The following factors directly affect this fluid.

THOUGHTS: As previously discussed, our positive and negative thoughts cause our brain to secrete chemicals. These chemicals, in turn, affect all our natural abilities and functions. Our thoughts have two components: facts and emotions. Every stimulus we receive through our nervous system is nothing more than a fact. However, we attach emotions to these facts.

It is imperative for us to realize that negative emotions cause adverse chemical secretions and hinders our natural abilities. We should increase our awareness of the profound influence negative emotions have on our brain's chemistry, performance and happiness. We should become more objective and restructure any negative emotional attachment we have to certain facts. Facts are merely facts. However, we can choose our emotional response to them.

According to one concept thoughts are magnetic vibrations being transmitted by our brain in the open universe. They have a frequency of transmission and attract similar thoughts of the same frequency. These updated thoughts then return to the source. The current thoughts affect our future life. Nothing can come to our experience without our persistent thinking about it. Thoughts affect our feelings and the resulting emotions are valuable tools that tell us about what we are thinking. When you have good thoughts you feel good and attract more good thoughts. This is the source of happiness.

DIET/NUTRITION: Everything we eat and drink is a chemical, which affects our performance and how we feel. If we doubt this, observe how a person's behavior changes when they drink some alcohol. Better yet, ask them how they feel the next day if they drank too much.

In the early cave dwelling days there were no factories and no processed foods. Humans are designed to live on natural foods with the proper amounts of protein, carbohydrates and fat. Doctors always advise us to eat wisely and in moderation (although they themselves may not do the same!) Also, do not become neurotic about what we eat. Our emotional state is far more important than what we eat, even though what we eat is important.

EXERCISE: A boxer, swimmer, runner or any athlete who has to push himself to higher levels of physical exertion already has a punishing routine. However for most of us, who are out of shape, it is necessary that our daily routine include some physical conditioning. In the early days of time, humans engaged in many forms of physical activity just to survive. Our body is designed to function properly with physical exertion so it can remove toxins and secrete beneficial chemicals. If you do not believe this,

exercise the next time you are depressed. Notice how much better you feel after exercising.

For our body and mind to function at their best, it is important to exercise to make up for the lack of physical activity resulting from today's modern conveniences. Is 20 minutes of aerobic or similar exercise three times a week too great a price to pay for a healthy body and an alert mental state?

REST: Sufficient rest is necessary for the body to eliminate toxins and rejuvenate itself. Have we ever noticed that we sleep more when depressed than when we are excited and happy to be alive? While we sleep, our brain is busy processing all the information it received during the day so that it can make spontaneous decisions when we're awake.

ENVIRONMENT: When I refer to environment, I'm not just talking about the air we breathe and our physical surroundings. I am more concerned with the people around us. The electromagnetic fields they generate, as well as their thoughts and actions, can adversely affect us. Associate with positive people, or keep to yourselves. The only time we should associate with negative people is when we are trying to help them. Our stronger electromagnetic field and positive thoughts and actions will have a positive effect on them. Researchers have found that emotions, positive and negative alike, are nearly as contagious as colds and flu. We can catch feelings of elation, euphoria, sadness and more from friends, family, and colleagues, even strangers. Mood "infection" happens in milliseconds, says Elaine Hatfield, a psychology professor at the University of Hawaii in Honolulu and a co-author of *Emotional Contagion* (Cambridge University Press, 1994).

When interacting with a negative person, take extra steps to remain positive. Otherwise, we may be influenced by his or her negativity.

PHYSIOLOGY: Our body reflects our emotional state. When we are positive and confident, we stand erect with our chest out and a smile on our face. If we just won

Rs 1,000,000 in the lottery, imagine how we would feel and how our physiology would respond. We would feel on top of the world. Everyone watching us will see it by the way we carry ourselves. Imagine how we would feel and look if we lost our winning lottery ticket. If this depressed us, our eyes would be down and our shoulders slumped. Some individuals would probably feel like killing themselves for losing their winning ticket.

Our physiology works both ways. Our body reflects our feelings. However, how we carry our body affects our feelings. One of the quickest and easiest ways to improve our chemistry is to change our physiology. By taking slow deep breaths, standing tall and sticking our chest out, we automatically increase our chemistry and immediately feel better. Raise our eyes to the sky and smile right now. Do we feel a change in our energy and alertness? If we always carry ourselves like a winner, we will feel like a winner.

Since our thoughts have the biggest impact on the brain's chemistry, that's where one should focus. When we have positive thoughts, our brain secretes positive chemicals and increases the power of our brain. When we have negative thoughts, our brain secretes negative chemicals and decreases the power of our brain. This is a simple, but profound concept to realize. Our happiness depends on it. In the world of sports, this is very easy to demonstrate because the mind/body connection provides us with immediate feedback. When we are positive, our performance excels. When we are negative, our performance is adversely affected.

However, when it comes to our personal, social and business behavior, the feedback may not be as obvious or as immediate. It may take us days, weeks, months or even years, to see or feel the repercussions from our negative thoughts and actions. I'm sure that if we reflect on our life, we will know exactly what we feel. We should, however, not confuse short-term pleasures from external sources with happiness. True and lasting happiness always comes from within. External pleasures never last.

EMOTIONAL FACTORS

Our thoughts from outside stimuli have two components: facts and emotions. While we may not be able to control the facts we encounter in our life, we can choose how to respond emotionally to these facts. If we choose positive emotions, we will be happy. If we choose negative emotions, we will become unhappy. Our happiness depends on what emotions we choose to experience and how we live our life. Our own life experiences will prove this to us if we are honest with ourselves.

Our brain starts working at a very early age. Approximately six months after conception, our brain starts recording all of our mother's thoughts and actions while we are in her womb. Our brain continues recording all our thoughts and actions throughout our entire life. While we are reading this book, our brain is busy recording and comparing the information that I'm sharing with you to your past thoughts and actions. We will call the recording process of our brain – *our tape*. This tape is a conceptual representation of the entire history of all our previous thoughts and actions. The importance of our tape is that our brain or computer is programmed to make similar decisions according to what is in its database (our past tape). On our tape is a record of all our positive and negative thoughts and actions that make up our life or comfort zone.

These recordings make our database of experience, right from childhood to the present time. This in turn defines our 'feelings' in a similar situation in future. Feelings are primary, personal knowledge. We come in this world with our own particular genetic coding. We handle situations based on these two. Hence what causes us to be happy or otherwise is also unique.

Ethics and Psychology of Happiness

Ethics and psychology are bound together. Ethics is a science that teaches a man how to live and achieve happiness. Psychology teaches him (or should teach him) how to integrate what he knows by reason - with his subconscious and to correct wrong subconscious ideas and methods, and as a result to be able to experience the correct emotions in response to his environment and to himself.

We humans are built to use emotions as motivation force. Emotions not only tell us if something is "for" or "against" us, they also suggest and "push toward" a certain course of action. Every emotional reaction arises quickly in response to a given situation from the huge bank of subconscious knowledge collected from childhood.

This makes emotion a highly valuable tool for survival. Therefore, to be closed to your emotions and treat their satisfaction as secondary or meaningless is to pursue something other than your own happiness. Of course this has to be done in such a way that it does not harm you or anybody else.

When we face a conflict about appeasing the desires or acting selfishly, we experience conflicting emotions. On one hand, we want to do what's right. On the other hand, we feel the pressure of guilt to act like we have acted in the past - not to be bad, not to hurt anybody's feelings. If left unsolved, we are bound to either act against our emotions and feel guilt, or act according to our emotions and again feel guilt for not doing what we consciously know is right. However, pursuing emotions blindly can be bad for one's long-term happiness.

Quality of our lives is dependent on our emotions. Happiness is based on pleasant emotions and moods. Unfulfilled desires can be disastrous to our happiness, if we indulge them. Sometime desiring things motivates us to work on acquiring them, and working to do so can be a great source of happiness. However, when desires for more things, more accomplishments, more money, a better job, a better mate or other such prizes in life dominate our thinking, they can dramatically limit our happiness.

We should focus on the feeling of happiness. The more we work on becoming happier, the happier we will become. This is the force of attraction as mentioned in 'The Secret'. You attract what you want by believing in it and being confident about your success. Gently smiling throughout our days is also a great way for us to become happier and continuously remind ourselves that happiness is something we should strive to feel always.

Getting away from our work and daily routines for a few days or weeks of leisure and enjoyment is a great way for us to quickly get happier.

Emotional experience can be understood in terms of **six basic**, or universal, emotions. These six emotions are happiness, sadness, fear, anger, surprise, and

disgust. Of these six, happiness is pleasant, sadness, fear, anger and disgust are generally unpleasant, and surprise is neutral, leaning toward the unpleasant side. Since these emotions, and the moods they create when sustained, will ultimately determine our happiness, we should strive to minimize the five unpleasant emotions, and to maximize happiness. Out of these six four basic emotions are Anger, Sadness, Fear and Happiness. Disgust and frustration are symptoms of anger. Depression, unhappiness, hurt, guilt, shame and disappointment are symptoms of sadness. Panic, anxiety, nervousness and confusion are the expression of fear. While happiness can be recognised by delight, love, enthusiasm, pride, calmness, trust, relief, expression of hope and excitement.

Although happiness is dependent on our thoughts we do not have to keep thinking unpleasant thoughts simply because they come into our minds. We can choose to think pleasant thoughts instead. The more we practice stopping our unpleasant thoughts and thinking pleasant ones, the better we will become and the happier we will feel.

If we must compare ourselves to others, it is wisest to compare ourselves to those whom we believe are less happy, or less advantaged than we are. Comparing ourselves to those who are less happy can feel good, but we should also try to become happier by helping them feel happier. We should strive to like ourselves as well as others more and more, seeing the best in everyone as much as possible.

Happiness research shows that worry is the number one enemy to happiness, and as we become more optimistic, we become happier. Having or making more money will not make anyone happier if one is already above the poverty level.

Anger Management

As George Carlin says, “We have taller buildings but shorter tempers.”

People who are chronically angry should try to manage anger to avoid unhappy situations. This can be done as follows:

- a) Look for another explanation that may not have been revealed due to fear, mistrust or due to a presumption about how you will react.
- b) Distract yourself to cool down to enable you to reason out without anger.

c) Look for humour in the situation. Humour is incompatible with anger and can help us in recasting the situation to realise the absurdity of the points causing anger.

d) Determine what normally triggers our anger and either avoid it or try and understand the illogical reaction and thus be able to stand the situation.

e) Learn to recognise that life is not always fair.

f) Remember however that anger suppression is a greater risk than anger expression

Behaviour Management

Human behaviour is a complex phenomenon but is usually influenced by two factors, personal characteristics and the effect of the environment. Sigmund Freud, the well-known psychologist, divided the human personality in three parts: ID, EGO and SUPER-EGO.

ID is concerned with pleasure seeking, a basic human motive. The pleasure could be in getting a desire met or getting rid of an obstruction coming in the way of satisfying a desire.

EGO is the executive part of the human personality in relation to others in the society, to achieve the desired aim in every transaction.

SUPER-EGO is concerned with the prescribed norms of the society, which a human being is expected to follow in terms of rules, procedures, customs etc. either to be rewarded or appreciated; else to be punished or criticised.

Personality is a set of traits, characteristics, habit patterns and conditional responses to certain stimuli that formulate the impression that an individual makes on others. Personality dimensions can be specified as extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability and openness to experience. There are individual differences like gender, social status, characteristics of parents, religious or cultural peculiarities etc. However basically a person is either an extrovert or an introvert. Extroverts are characterised by high degree of sociability, impulsiveness, physical activity, liveliness and changeability. Introverts tend to be less sociable, less impulsive, less active and more stable in their responses to the external environment.

Positive Thinking

Let's take a quick look at the major positive and negative emotions. Anytime we have any degree of love, generosity, praise and bravery or multiple combinations of these emotions, our brain secretes positive chemicals and enhances our natural abilities. Positive emotions make us happy.

Anytime we have any degree of hate, greed, jealousy, and fear or multiple combinations of these emotions, we immediately lower our brain's chemistry and our ability to reason and function at a high level. Our negative emotions are the cause of most of our bad decisions, actions and unhappiness we experience in our life. The rest is caused by ignorance or lack of self-awareness.

Positive thinking involves waking up to or discovering that we already are happy only we have to create situations for it. It includes the following main components, each capable of providing relaxed response to any situation.

- Positive Beliefs that is accepting an opinion without full personal knowledge about it. This is the basis of learning from discourses, particularly religious discourses.
- Positive attitude helps us to cope more easily with the daily affairs of life. It is the main source of optimism in any situation.
- Positive Values that really matter to each of us. Caring for others, for example, is a value; so is the freedom to express our opinions. Most of us learn these in our childhood.
- Positive Memories are another component that provides us periodical 'doses' of happiness.
- Positive Judgments enable us not to jump to wrong conclusions and thus be unhappy or make others unhappy. It is necessary that we *judge* according to our own standards rather than by what *others* tell.
- Positive Methods of providing relaxation like listening to soft music, meditation, walking in the garden, laughing with friends and change of

routine during a particularly stressful period like going for a short vacation with family.

Remember that most things work out better than you fear. If you experience certain dissatisfactions and interpret them to mean that you must be unhappy, then you are unhappy. So imagine that your fears are ungrounded and success is real. Rather than thinking of the problems and getting desperate, imagine the best outcome and then work out what you need to do to make that happen. Follow your instincts. Alternatively think of the worst that can happen and discount it by being prepared for it. If the thoughts you are thinking are not giving you that 'good feeling', then think about something else that will make you feel good in that moment. Observe your thoughts and ideas consistently throughout the day (diary/journal if possible). Sometimes this may not be as easy as you think if you are stuck in a "negative" train of thought and your brain chemicals are getting fired up and forming "anxiety or anger" thoughts. Anxiety, fear and anger patterns can be interrupted by focusing on something else. Go back to picturing scenes/remembering things/imagining, planning stuff that makes you feel 'good'

How to have Positive Feelings

Begin by asking yourself these questions: What is behind my current feelings? How do I want to feel? What do I want to experience?

Take a long breathe in and exhale slowly. Just be yourself for a few seconds.

Think about how you feel in this moment. Whatever it is, accept the feeling by either hugging yourself while feeling it or mentally wrapping your arms around the emotion, as if it were a ball of light.

Pay attention to any impulses that come up, like a desire to go outside.

Go outside. Look at the tree tops. Notice how the breeze or wind moves them and if they have any birds in them. See the clouds and note the direction and speed of the wind. Touch something in the natural world, like a smooth stone or a plant. Notice its texture and temperature.

Play with a kid as if you were still that young. Keep a sense of responsible awareness, but go ahead and feel the wonder of everything; try fun things like moving

your body to mimic the poses the kid is striking, and let her or him in on it by pointing out stuff to laugh about together.

Spend five minutes to write a journal. Write about anything. Save what you wrote and read it later. You'll enjoy it and gain insights into yourself.

Listen to the music you like and then plan a drive (if possible) or short walk in a park or shaded road. Go into the country for a picnic. Invite all ages!

Relax about the pressures you perceive in the world for a moment - consider the differences and similarities between what is assumed and demanded by the post-modern world around you and what is necessary and desirable to YOU.

Consider having fun every day, real fun that touches your deepest self.

Deliberate Control of Thoughts

Our minds affect the world around us because thoughts have energy, and this entire universe is made up of energy. Our minds affect the world through our thoughts, feelings, and actions, in obvious and subtle ways. To state it simply happy thoughts equal a happy world; sad thoughts equal a sad world. Fearful thoughts equal a fearsome world; angry thoughts equal an angry world. Benevolent thoughts equal a benevolent world; generous thoughts equal a generous world.

Choosing happiness helps us to think good thoughts, and thinking good thoughts helps to create even more happiness. Instead of waiting for all your desires to be met before you can feel happy, just choose to be happy right now - as is. Simply decide, "I am going to be happy," regardless. Then, even if you're going through some discomforts or troubling times, you'll find that spiritual happiness remains alive like a fresh stream flowing within you. (Alexander Humboldt)

There is never a moment when you are not thinking. Anil Bhatnagar suggests the following simple steps to help you manage your thoughts and achieve success and happiness in life.

Start watching your thoughts, without identifying with them. Watch them as a detached observer. Your thoughts may even carry you away. What you need to do, whenever you detect this, is to take yourself out of your thoughts immediately and get

back to the process of thought-watching once again as a detached observer. Do not get perturbed by your thoughts. Don't condemn or justify them. Don't try to control them. Just watch them. After some time, you will come to know what your negative thoughts are about. Now concentrate on all the positive thoughts that you can replace these thoughts with, in order to switch over to a more positive attitude towards them. Our attempt should be to cut down the quantity of unnecessary thoughts and to improve the quality of the necessary ones. Keep yourself busy. Simple food, deep breathing and relaxation exercises also help manage your thoughts easily. Expect less from others.

Identify Negative Thoughts

Take note of your thoughts and happenings of the day. Were they positive, appropriate and adequate or were they confused, superfluous and negative? Could you notice the interval between the happening and your response? Could you foresee your negative thoughts? Was there any discrepancy between words and thoughts? Was it justified—could you find a better way of harmonizing your words and thoughts? Was the verbal response necessary, appropriate and adequate?

Sometimes we talk to others, or simply to ourselves, or think about something just like that. Ask yourself what provoked you to take the initiative to start a conversation. Was it essential? What was the purpose? Did it serve the purpose? Did it use any unnecessary and emotionally charged negative words? Were the words used in thinking, inner dialogue or in talking to the other person, precise, appropriate, adequate and positive? Did you feel happy or satisfied after the interaction with the other person or with your inner self? Can you find ways of improving your performance as a thinker or a speaker?

Keep in mind that noting your thoughts and responses is primarily for the purpose of identifying your negative thoughts. It is far more important, however, to be aware of these thoughts when they are just taking birth, rather than leave them for later analysis. **Use this mental 'sunshine' to kill your negative, undesirable thoughts, emotions and images as and when these are detected.** Take this 'sun' as a mighty weapon which is always on the alert and which automatically chases any negative thought and kills it with a flash and then withdraws. Don't forget to imagine that this sun is your faithful friend and is extremely kind to you.

Keep a note of how many times you need to call the sun for its services. There will be a gradual increase, followed by a drastic fall. This is so because initially the number of times you call on your mental sunshine increases gradually as your awareness of your thoughts grows. The drastic fall is because what we do not use (the negative thoughts, in this case), we tend to lose.

A vital step in this process is the immediate replacement of all negative thoughts by the positive ones. The shorter the interval between the disinfecting and the replacing stage, the better it is. Longer intervals between these two events weaken the impact of the positive thoughts. Our success and happiness depend on identifying our goals precisely and chasing them effectively, both of which, in turn, depend on how well we manage our thoughts. The quality of our thoughts decides the quality of the outcomes we land up with. Thoughts have the power to materialize themselves because they are instrumental in channeling energy towards the physical or mental condition they are about. As a general rule of maximizing the happiness in your life, only allow negative thoughts in your life to the extent they can be used to better your life (by motivating you or helping you to correct a problem) - but do not dwell on them when they arise from a situation you can do nothing about. If negative situations appear, you must use your will and refuse to lower yourself to negative thoughts, words, actions, and emotions. Use your will and decide that not only will you focus on the positive, but also you will ramp up the positive in every thought, word, and action of your day.

But positive thinking has to be natural and not forced under all circumstances. There are situations in life that one should allow the flow of negative thoughts to clear the impact of the situation. It would be unnatural and even harmful to forcefully oppose the negative thinking. What is necessary is not to have negative thoughts even in a naturally happy situation. Once again Rhonda Byrne says, "You plant good thoughts by making it a daily practice to appreciate all the things in your day. Appreciate your health, your car, your home, your family, your job, your friends, your surroundings, your meals, your pets, and the magnificent beauty of the day. Compliment, praise, and give thanks to all things. Every time you say "Thank you" it is a good thought! As you plant more and more *good* thoughts, the negative thoughts will be wiped out. Why? Because your focus is on good thoughts, and what you focus on you attract."

External situations and the remarks of others can harm us through our thoughts—but only to the extent our thoughts allow them to. So think positive. Talk positive. Read positive quotable quotes of great people. In young age you could even surround yourself with posters and cards bearing positive messages (instead of the posters of glamorous celebrities!!!). Keep them on your table. Hang them on the walls. Paste them near the bathroom mirror and on the doors. Stick them on your watchstrap. Keep them on the refrigerator. Have them on the dashboard of the car. Slip them under the glass of the table in front of you. Slide them in the inner side of the briefcase you carry. Find other suitable places where you are bound to look at them every day.

This way you will be in a position to remember and use them appropriately in response to specific negative thoughts. The replacing thought must be positive in every sense. Apart from being inspiring and assuring, it should also be suggestive. For example, if you confront a negative thought, "I can never succeed", it will not suffice if you replace it with "Attack! I can succeed". This kind of replacement may not be effective, for it sounds like wishful thinking and lacks assurance, depth and penetrating certainty. It is better to break your replacing thought down into more definite and specific steps or instructions.

The replacing thought in this case may be: "I can succeed. By earlier failures I have become rich in experience and have come to know specific areas that require special attention. I will jot them down and systematically think of the ways in which I can improve. I shall plan. And then stick to it. There is absolutely no reason why I should not succeed. I will assess, plan, execute, monitor, modify and carry on with the plan, and finally succeed. In fact, I think that success has already been achieved and only time separates my thought of success and its transformation into reality. I am committing myself to all that is required to achieve success. I shall find my way anyhow—and if there is none I shall make one."

Mature person can avoid unhappy situations

There are many situations in life where you feel lost or helpless. A mature person is able to face such situations better. Further maturity helps one to easily work with others

and create an environment of happiness. Maturity involves changing, progressing towards something better. It involves facing sad and difficult situations and replacing them sooner with better alternatives to eventually make others and us happy. Be encouraged when you fail, by the thought that you can only strive for perfection because you aren't.

God did not promise days without pain, laughter without sorrow, sun without rain, but God did promise strength for the day, comfort for the tears, and light for the way. So be happy. Disappointments are like road humps, they slow us down a bit but we enjoy the smooth road afterwards. Do not stay on the humps too long. Move on! When we feel down because we didn't get what we want, just sit tight and be happy, because God is thinking of something better to give us. When something happens to us, good or bad, consider what it means. There is a purpose to life's events, to teach us how to laugh more or not to cry too hard. As Rhonda Byrne says, "**you are magnificent and that you have all of the power within you to create your life the way that you choose.**"

Personality Traits

The following categorization can help us in identifying our faults or limitations in responding to difficult situations and to make an effort to improve wherever possible. People can be placed in different categories based on the way they respond and the ease with which they can improve their response.

(a)Artificial

I am too busy (Are you busy in useless tasks or have plenty of free time but want to impress others)

I have such a poor memory (Do not ignore your friends)

I am just not sociable (Do not try to avoid company)

If only I had more time (In fact you can spare time)

I will never be able to do it (Do not shirk your responsibility)

I am not interested in money (Actually loves money)

I can do this thing better than others (Do not boast, have humility)

(b)Rude

I intend to do it but am very busy right now

(Being a compulsive talker and not a good listener)

I can't help it if you do not like my work

I am too tired

I just can't speak in public

I am sorry, I am afraid to handle money

They expect to be entertained all the time

They try to be the centre of attraction

They love publicity and do not want the credits to be shared.

(c) Immature

Their response to even a justified criticism is "I know what I am talking about". They can't take criticism and easily get angry

They constantly tell others what and how to do and suppress initiative

They thinking that just material gifts can create strong friendship

They refuse to deal with a person just because they don't like him

They rarely admit their mistakes

They always want to have the last word in any argument

They always expect to be respected and thanked

They say that they don't need anyone's help

Any idea that succeeds is their idea!

(d)Difficult to Adjust

Desiring to have everything you want

Worrying because you have a worrying nature

Brooding over disappointments

Having a drive for perfection in everything and by everyone

Always wanting to have your own way

Troubled by somebody else's success

Can't sacrifice comfort for a meaningful objective

Finding it difficult to trust anyone

I feel Happy when

Every day in our life we have numerous instances when we feel happy, even under adverse circumstances, for small gestures and remarks made by others.

1. I feel happy when I am praised.
2. I feel happy when someone allows me to cry without running away.
3. I feel happy when someone really hears and understands what I am saying.
4. I feel happy when someone remembers my birthday.
5. I feel happy when I am angry and someone gives me a hug knowing that I am really feeling hurt.
6. I feel happy when I get mail that is useful and not junk.
7. I feel happy when I get a surprise gift ... no matter the cost.
8. I feel happy when I am accepted as an individual who is trying to do his best.
9. I feel happy when someone offers to help me without my asking him to.
10. I feel happy when someone treats me to a movie, theatre, museum, sports event or dinner.
11. I feel happy when I look up at the stars at night.
12. I feel happy when it is raining for the first time in Monsoon.
13. I feel happy when I am in the presence of an animal, a flower, or a child.
14. I feel happy when I love somebody.

15. I feel happy when I accomplish something or move past a fear.
 16. I feel happy when somebody smiles at me ... and if a stranger does it ... I feel overwhelmed with love.
 17. I feel happy when someone tells me I am beautiful /smart. (Even when I don't feel or look it!)
 18. I feel happy when I listen to music.
 19. I feel happy when someone laughs with me.
 20. I feel happy when another person has the same problem as I do (and neither of us can find a solution!)
 21. I feel happy when someone says thank you.
 22. I feel happy when someone thinks that my voice and what I have to say is valuable and important.
- (Partly based on a submission in 2004 by 'Aquarian' in beliefnet.com)

CURRENT ENVIRONMENT

We are built to conquer environment, solve problems, achieve goals, and we find no real satisfaction or happiness in life without obstacles to conquer and goals to achieve.

As we realize all the time, life is becoming faster day-by-day. Even when we sleep somewhere across the globe developments are taking place that will affect our life. Marketing personnel are devising new means to impress upon us to buy items that we really do not need or participate in activities that eventually will not give us the happiness that we wanted. All that they want is to make us spend money so we have to work harder to earn more money for these so-called 'happiness-giving experiences'. The demands would naturally also come from our family members.

So when we wake up we find new things, new theories, new statistics and new requirements that we are prompted or even forced against our will to play catch up. And each day in our life becomes more and more complex. To meet new demands we try to

earn more money but work harder, sleep less and thus be more effective to keep up with these developments. This is what people across the world are doing now in an attempt to get ahead in the '*rat-race*'.

There is so much suffering in this world; many people don't seem to be as happy as they'd like to be. Those who don't have enough are struggling just to survive, while those who have all the comforts of life may find themselves becoming self-absorbed, spoiled, or worried about losing what they have. Many people are living frantic lives, with little time available for simpler pleasures, such as appreciating the beauty of nature, sharing blessed moments with loved ones, or quietly enjoying the peaceful throb of being alive.

The main finding of well-being studies, however, has been people's remarkable ability to adapt, even to extreme changes such as war or bereavement. Happiness and unhappiness seem to become neutralised over time. In turn, this is linked to people's aspirations – pleasure or pain is evaluated against one's hopes and dreams. –Expatica.com

Large multitudes are rushing through cities and towns around the globe, getting themselves in all kinds of messes. Some are trying to dig their way out of financial debt (now with the global financial crisis even the governments are involved in finding solutions to the huge losses and debt of private companies), while others are making arrangements for a marriage or a divorce - or perhaps a second or third marriage or divorce. Parents are speeding home from work so they can get the kids to the coaching or dance class on time, and perhaps picking up some bags of fast food on the way home. Many find themselves barely making it through each day in time to get a few hours of sleep before getting up to do it all again. With so much to do, who has time to find out what real happiness is? You do not become happier just by working harder. Nor by being a smart worker because with better performance you are bound to join a more competitive race. As the quote says, 'Even if you win the rat race, you are still a rat'.

World is Seldom Fair

The world is not unduly concerned about our dreams. Everything else is looked from the perspective of an individual or a group whose aims may have nothing in common with us. Our boss wants us to do his bidding. The employer wants to take all he can from us, for as long as he can, to make his organisation stronger and more powerful. We alone are responsible for our hopes and fears. It is for us to nurture our potential in the direction we desire. We have the power to attract the events for us to achieve what we like and will bring us happiness. For this we have to first ASK; ask not anybody but ourselves. The rest of the universe can know about it through our thoughts and feelings. There should be no doubt in our mind about what will make us happy and satisfied. Jack Canfields says that most of us have never allowed ourselves to want what we truly want, simply because we are not clear how we will get it. Next we should have BELIEF in ourselves that we will get it. We will be guided about how to get it by suitable thoughts once we are confident that we will get it. This confidence is another name for FAITH. Sincerely think about how and what you want and you will see that you are creating your own future.

Unfortunately we have become used to getting all our needs through others' efforts. Every politician, every employer, every religious leader and every crusader gets his position, power and authority from the group they lead. And so their concern is for the good of the group and not about the desire for happy living of the individual or the real good of the world. The present world environment is not harmonious but hurts many and is also harmful for most of us in the long run. It is so artificial and laughable that for the sake of a few minutes of publicity every one tries to find his concept of achievements of his life and thus be 'happy'. It rewards those who do not make an effort to improve their future and brings suffering to those who plan for their happy life.

Unjust media

The situation is well described in the following satire that is a modified version of an article I happen to read on Internet. Direct or indirect reference to familiar names has been made just to highlight the sad reality about the unjust attitude of our modern media influenced society, with a touch of humour.

“The Story of ANT and GRASSHOPPER”

The Factual Position: The ant works hard in the withering heat all summer long building his house and laying up supplies for the winter. The grasshopper thinks the ant's a fool and laughs & dances & plays the summer away. Come winter, the ant is HAPPY, warm and well fed. The grasshopper has no food or shelter so he dies out in the cold.

Modern TV Version: Come winter, the shivering grasshopper calls a press conference and demands to know why the ant should be allowed to be warm and well fed while others are cold and starving. Pictures of the shivering grasshopper next to a video of the ant in his comfortable home with enough food to last in the winter season are shown throughout the day until the death of the grasshopper and after. Comments of those supporting the ant's effort during warmer months are cut short for advertising.

The death of the grasshopper stuns the intellectuals around the world. How can this be that this poor grasshopper is allowed to suffer so?

Protestors stage demonstrations in front of the ant's house calling for subsidised housing for the all the houseless grasshoppers. The protest is widely covered by the media that was intimated in advance.

'Protectors' of underdogs go on a day's fast demanding that grasshoppers be relocated to warmer climates during winter. TV news shows the lying protestors in their news reports.

Many NGOs criticize the Government for not doing enough for upholding the fundamental rights of the grasshopper and providing undue support to ants and not applying anti hoarding measures against the ants.

The Internet is flooded with online petitions seeking support to the grasshopper. Messages on websites criticise the environmental policies of the government

SMS polls are conducted to get the support of the public.

Opposition MP's stage a walkout criticising the policies of the government and demand a billion houses for grasshoppers. Some call for "Bandh" particularly in states where they are ruling.

Judicial Committee drafts "Prevention of Injustice against Grasshoppers Act "[POIGA]. It is introduced in the winter session and passed. It has a clause of special cess

on houses built by ants to be paid within a specified period after completing the construction so that those without houses are provided free or subsidised houses.

The ant is fined for failing to comply with POIGA and, having nothing left to pay the fines, his home is confiscated by the Government and handed over to the grasshopper by a Minister in a ceremony covered by Local TV Channels. Thus a lazy grasshopper is made HAPPY. The ant is driven to commit suicide ending its short-lived HAPPINESS.

FAST Lifestyle

Today we are all very busy people so even happiness has to be of instant variety!

No city dweller lights a *chulha* these days. People don't even have time to light gas stove anymore. It takes just too long to heat up a meal. It takes just too much patience. I'm hungry now, not 40 minutes from now. That's why God gave us microwave ovens. Just pop the food in and whirr –BEEP- out it comes, nicely warmed for immediate consumption. That's how I want my happiness – tasty, warm and right now!

Take another example. We want to get the latest sensx figures (the current craze for getting rich instantly) through Internet connection. Five seconds pass, and still no site response. Our instant gratification cells have been offended. We surf to another site. We switch on our mobile and send SMS to a number and the response is instantaneous. We are now happy.

We want the happiness to be like television. If we don't get instant gratification, we should be able to change channels with a zap. After all we have more than 100 channels in the TV. Remember the olden days when we had to get up from the couch to change channels? That took such a monumental effort that most people sat through whole television shows without changing channels. Of course, that might have been because there were no other channels. Now we flip through 100+ channels, which keeps us busy while wishing for something worth watching. Thanks to the remote control we can flip channels at a relaxed pace of 15 to 20 per minute without even breaking into a sweat. Imagine our life without a remote!

Unfortunately happiness is neither like a microwave oven nor like the Television/Internet video. Happiness does not run on the instant gratification system. We

cannot change the situation like channels of TV. Happiness takes patience. Is that so?
God please grant me the patience I lack. (And I want it now!)

George Collin the famous comedian who died in July 2008, has summarized the impact of modern life style brilliantly as follows:

- The paradox of our time in history is that we spend more, but have less; we buy more, but enjoy less.
- We have bigger houses and smaller families, more conveniences, but less time.
- We have more degrees but less sense, more knowledge, but less judgment, more experts, yet more problems, more medicine, but less wellness.
- We drink too much, smoke too much, spend too recklessly, laugh too little, drive too fast, get too angry, stay up too late, get up too tired, read too little, watch TV too much, and pray too seldom.
- We've learned how to make a living, but not a life. We've added years to life not life to years.
- We've been all the way to the moon and back, but have trouble crossing the street to meet a new neighbor. We conquered outer space but not inner space. We've done larger things, but not better things
- We've cleaned up the air, but polluted the soul.
- We've conquered the atom, but not our prejudice.
- We write more, but learn less.
- We plan more, but accomplish less.
- We've learned to rush, but not to wait.
- We build more computers to hold more information, to produce more copies than ever, but we communicate less and less

Remember; spend some time with your loved ones, because they are not going to be around forever. Remember, say a kind word to someone who looks up to you in awe, because that little person soon will grow up and leave your side.

Remember, to give a warm hug to the one next to you, because that is the only treasure you can give with your heart and it doesn't cost a cent. Remember, to say, ' I love you ' to your partner and your loved ones, but most of all mean it. A kiss and an embrace will mend hurt when it comes from deep inside of you. Remember to hold hands and cherish the moment for someday that person will not be there again.

Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take but by the moments that take our breath away.

Happiness Shifters

According to a theory defined beautifully by Bob Proctor and explained in the book written by Rhonda Byrne 'The Secret', we can change the feel bad or down environment for the better by just switching on what he calls 'secret shifters'. These are nothing but those things that make us feel good. They can be good music, either listening

or simply humming or singing, OR thinking some fantastic experience we had, a joke we have read, OR meeting after a long time a person we like, OR imagining a beautiful natural site that we may have visited, OR a recent success like winning an award, publishing a story in the newspaper, or a complement given by somebody to us or our family member. Whenever you feel down, just think of these happiness shifters and start reliving those happy moments.

It has also been suggested that we should have written down happy experiences in short, something like the revision chit that many of us prepared for examinations. These could even be jokes, part of joyful songs, episodes of comic serials and so on. They should be kept in our small diary or purse that we always carry. Whenever we get in a negative mood we can glance at these and just get away from the current unhappy situation for a few moments. They may even give us an inspiration to remove the cause of unhappiness to some extent.

While this may sound as escaping the reality or fear of failure, it is primarily to change the mood for the better and return to solve the problem or face the situation with renewed vigour. Simultaneously one should not brood over bad experiences beyond learning from them. Sri Sri Ravishanker, the Art of Living Guru, suggests that one should try to throw away the memory of bad experiences and incidents by realizing that

Nothing is permanent and change is natural

Past incidents have no existence in the present

One has to accept the past and move forward

We have to remember our life's objective

Get involved in service to others

Acquire situation-handling capabilities

Contact with saintly people gives us guidance to achieve happiness

For a moment forget everything and enjoy nature or even fantasize

WHAT GIVES US HAPPINESS?

Happiness from Within

We all lead two lives, the external life and the inner life. The external life includes apart from recorded or observed facts about us the things that we do in private that no body may come to know. The inner life comprises of our inner experience. All our thoughts, feelings, sensations, perceptions, beliefs, emotions, desires, judgements and imaginations form part of our inner experience. This inner life is what exercises greater control on our happiness. Whatever external triumphs and disasters we face, if the inner life is steady, calm and peaceful we live happily. How you 'take' things matters more than what happens to us. (Lost art of happiness-Tom Wilkinson)

That happiness primarily comes from within becomes clear when we discover that certain situations that had once brought great happiness no longer create the same effect. Time and time again, each of us is given opportunities to learn and remember that it is not outer things that bring happiness, but the interactions of our inner thoughts and feelings with those things. Our inner thoughts and feelings are the basis of both our happiness and our unhappiness.

Because happiness comes from within, even when things don't appear to be going perfectly well outwardly, it is still possible to experience sincere happiness. It is our inner feeling that creates happiness, along with how we interpret the events of life. Happiness is ultimately all in the interpretation. Any outer situation can be either a source of happiness or unhappiness.

“Since happiness is primarily a state of mind, why do we look for it outside? It means we do not have full knowledge about ourselves. We are thus looking for happiness at wrong places. All of us are full of happiness but it becomes dormant, as we do not distribute it. It is a treasure that can grow only by proper utilization. Our acts while pleasing to us can sometimes make others unhappy. This is not true happiness. It is true only if all get some element of happiness or remove some element of unhappiness.”- Vichar Vishnu Maharaj

All living beings aim to achieve happiness through their daily routine, rituals and activities. Our goals may be different but ultimate aim is to remain happy. We search for happiness in various spheres of life. Sometimes we temporarily leave our permanent surroundings and try to achieve it in adventure. Whatever imparts pleasure gives us happiness. For this we have to have a positive view of our life. We have to be aware of the consequences of our actions. This in turn depends upon how mentally mature we are.

Have we the will to face difficulties and still be happy. Finally are we aware of situations and actions that may make us unhappy and we make a conscious effort to avoid them.

We all have within us the power to discriminate between what will bring happiness and what will bring misery and this power is the only thing worth having. If a man has wealth and has not discrimination, he will not know how to spend his money intelligently and it may only make him miserable. If a man has learning and lacks discrimination, he will not know how to use his knowledge wisely. But, if a man has the discriminate faculty and nothing else, he is still the most fortunate of men, because through it he may attain the loftiest ends. As long as we work for any reward whatever, even to go to heaven, we cannot attain freedom, for we are still under the sway of ego. Egotism is the real culprit that makes us unhappy.

Some find happiness in receiving, some in giving, some in accomplishing, and some in wealth, health, love, inner peace, respect, power, beauty, talents, or a loving and harmonious family life. You may experience happiness from your work, from physical sports, from lovemaking, from a restful evening, from exciting movies, from a good book, from every possible kind of music that you can imagine, or from achieving a particular goal that you've been earnestly working toward.

There is no better time to be happy than right now. We should be happy in spite of challenges of life. There are always some obstacles along the way, some ordeal to get through, some work to finish, some time to be given for other activities or some bill to be paid. Do not wait for all these to be over.

When the door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we don't see the one, that has been opened for us.

“ When you are inspired ... dominant forces, faculties and talent become alive, and you discover yourself to be a greater person by far than you ever dreamed yourself to be.” – Patanjali

Even if our experience of happiness appears to be coming from an outer source or experience, the actual happiness is coming from within us. Recognising that true happiness lies inside us we should not waste time and effort searching for peace and

contentment and joy in the world outside. Finding happiness is like finding ourselves -we don't find happiness; we make happiness. We choose happiness. Self-actualization is a process of discovering who we are, who we want to be and paving the way to happiness by doing what brings us the most meaning and contentment to our life over the long run. –(David Lunhardt)

“True happiness is not attained through self-gratification, but through fidelity to a worthy purpose.”-Famous quote on happiness by Helen Keller

The bestseller book “The Secret” by Rhonda Byrne describes this in a unique way. It says that everything that comes into our life is due to it being attracted by us. Whatever is going through mind gets attracted to us. It is this law that determines the complete order in the universe. It does not matter who you are or where you are, the Law of Attraction forms our entire life’s experience. This is done through our THOUGHTS. Whatever is our predominant thought it comes into play at that moment. That is why one recommends having positive thought all the time. If you fear the worst to happen (Murphy’s law talks about these routine negative thoughts associated with fear about their happening) it usually does and if it is avoided it is only due to contradictory thought taking over.

“From the beginning of time, all we have wanted is to love and be loved and that could make us happy. Unfortunately we have created moral restrictions, religious taboos, ethical rules of the society, so called family traditions and so on. All these tell us to deal with whom, when, where, how and not to deal with others in that way. This is the cause of conflict that makes us unhappy.”-Neale Donald Walsch

“Remember that there is less or no happiness in having or in getting, but only in giving. Reach out. Share. Smile. Hug. Happiness is a perfume we cannot pour on others without getting a few drops on ourselves.”

-Og Mandino

The touching story below (taken from website of Society for Service to Senior Citizens) shows that one can give happiness to others even in the most adverse condition.

“The View from the Window”

Two men, both seriously ill, occupied the same hospital room. One man was allowed to sit up in his bed for an hour each afternoon to help drain the fluid from his lungs. His bed was next to the room's only window. The other man had to spend all his time flat on his back. The men talked for hours on end. They spoke of their wives and families, their homes, their jobs, their involvement in the military service, where they had been on vacation.

Every afternoon when the patient in the bed by the window could sit up, he would pass the time by describing to his roommate all the things he could see outside the window. The man in the other bed began to live for those one-hour periods where his world would be broadened and enlivened by all the activity and color of the world outside.

The patient in the bed next to the window described that it overlooked a park with a lovely lake. Ducks and swans played on the water while children sailed their model boats. Young lovers walked arm in arm amidst flowers of every color and a fine view of the city skyline could be seen in the distance. As the man by the window described all this in exquisite detail, the man on the other side of the room would close his eyes and imagine the picturesque scene.

One warm afternoon the man by the window described a parade passing by. Although the other man couldn't hear the band - he could see it in his mind's eye as the patient by the window portrayed it with descriptive words.

Days and weeks passed.

One morning, the day nurse arrived to bring water for their baths only to find the lifeless body of the man by the window, who had died peacefully in his sleep. She was saddened and called the hospital attendants to take the body away.

As soon as it seemed appropriate, the other man asked if he could be moved next to the window. The nurse was happy to make the switch, and after making sure he was comfortable, she left him alone. Slowly, painfully, he propped himself up on one elbow to take his first look at the real world outside. He strained to slowly turn to look out the window beside the bed. It faced a blank wall.

The man asked the nurse what could have compelled his deceased roommate who had described such wonderful things outside this window? The nurse responded that the man was blind and could not even see the wall. She said, 'Perhaps he just wanted to encourage you and make you happy'

Epilogue:

There is tremendous happiness in making others happy, despite our own situations.

Shared grief is half the sorrow, but happiness when shared, is doubled.

If you want to feel rich, just count all the things you have that money can't buy.

'Today is a gift, that's why it is called the present.'

“Do It Anyway”

At every step in our life we find that the attitude of people around create a situation such that you do not enjoy what you want to do. By nature people do not want others to be happy unless they are also happy and that also without making an effort for it. The following well-known set of guidance clearly defines the situation around us but rightly advices us to ignore them and do whatever we consider right.

- People are unreasonable, illogical and self-centred; *love them anyway*
- If you do, good people will accuse you of being selfish or having ulterior motives; *do good anyway*
- If you are successful you will win false friends and true enemies; *succeed anyway*
- Honesty and frankness makes you vulnerable; *be honest anyway*
- The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow; *do good anyway*
- The biggest people with the biggest ideas will be shot down by the smallest people with the smallest brains; *think big anyway*
- People favour underdogs but follow only the top dogs; *fight for some underdogs anyway*

- What you spend years building may be destroyed overnight; *build anyway*
- Give the world the best you've got and you get kicked in the teeth; *give the world your best anyway*

Wealth and Happiness

Are rich people happier? To a modest extent, yes, rich people are happier. Especially in poor countries, such as India, being relatively well off does make for greater well being. We need food, rest, shelter, and some sense of control over our lives.

But in affluent countries, the link between wealth and self-reported well-being is “surprisingly weak,” notes researcher Ronald Inglehart. Once able to afford life's necessities, more and more money provides diminishing additional returns. One somewhat surprising finding is that research disproves the common notion that being rich makes people happy. While it is true that living under very deprived circumstances is related to being unhappy, once people's income exceeds the poverty level further increases in wealth do not lead to corresponding increases in happiness. A recent windfall from an inheritance, a surging economy, or a lottery win does provide a temporary jolt of joy. But as soon as one adapts to the new wealth, the euphoria subsides.

One example to illustrate this point is that, if wealth did lead to happiness, we might expect people in today's society to be much happier than in the past decades as we are earning much more. However, studies across the globe have shown that, in spite of great increases in income since the 1950s and 1960s, levels of happiness have remained pretty much the same.

Why have these improvements in life circumstances not resulted in lasting changes in happiness? There seem to be two reasons why wealth does not lead to any lasting change in happiness. One is people's changing aspiration: once you have more, you also want more. The other reason is social comparison: once you see what other people have you are less satisfied with your own possessions. This last point is well put by Marx: ‘A house may be large or small; as long as the surrounding houses are equally small, it satisfies social demands for a dwelling. But if a palace rises beside the little

house, the little house shrinks into a hut.' These same reasons explain why the happiness of the child's new toy is often short-lived!

Money can buy the husk of things, but not the kernel. It brings us food but not appetite, medicine but not health, acquaintances but not friends, servants but not faithfulness, days of joy but not peace or happiness.

--Henrik Ibsen

Money to some extent helps, more so by removing the causes of unhappiness. But money alone cannot give us happiness all the time. Some of us have this false notion and spend the entire life only in increasing our income, by any means. Money can't buy happiness but it sure makes misery easier to live with. It provides us with a margin of comfort that all of us seek. But again, comfort alone is not well being. Ultimately, happiness is elusive due to misguided ideas about what happiness truly is, and how it can be nurtured. After all, how many of us have really contemplated what happiness is? We put so much time and effort - first into years of schoolwork, and then into toiling long hours for our households and workplaces. Yet, how much time have we actually put into contemplating what thoughts and actions will create greater happiness in our lives and in the world? When is the last time we really sat quietly and contemplated what happiness means to us?

The vast majority of us are raised to think that obtaining material things will make us happy. Food clothing and shelter are not enough to satisfy. For example, once we purchase the house we've been saving for, we start thinking about furniture we want to buy or how the landscaping needs to change. Each desire, once satisfied, gives birth to new desires in an endless progression. The more we buy into the idea that we'll be happy when we have enough of the right sort of possessions, the more trapped we become. We become jealous of people who have more than us, and we risk bankruptcy to pay for things with credit we can't afford. The more 'stuff' we desire, the less happy we are. The following well known story would indicate how even a happy individual can become unhappy if by just a little incentive he is shown the mirage of being more wealthy. Be pleased that you don't have everything you want. If you did, what would you hope for?

“The 99 Club”

Once upon a time, there lived a King who, despite his luxurious lifestyle, was neither happy nor content. One day, the King came upon a servant who was singing happily while he worked. This fascinated the King; why was he, the Supreme Ruler of the Land, unhappy and gloomy, while a lowly servant had so much joy. The King asked the servant, 'Why are you so happy?' The man replied, 'Your Majesty, I am nothing but a servant, but my family and I don't need too much - just a roof over our heads and warm food to fill our tummies.'

The king was not satisfied with that reply. Later in the day, he sought the advice of his most trusted advisor. After hearing the King's woes and the servant's' story, the advisor said, 'Your Majesty, I believe that the servant has not been made part of The 99 Club.'

'The 99 Club? And what exactly is that?' the King inquired.

The advisor replied, 'Your Majesty, to truly know what The 99 Club is, place 99 Gold coins in a bag and leave it at this servant's doorstep.' When the servant saw the bag, he took it into his house. When he opened the bag, he let out a great shout of joy... So many gold coins! He began to count them. After several counts, he was at last convinced that there were 99 coins. He wondered, 'what could've happened to that last gold coin? Surely, no one would leave 99 coins!' He looked everywhere he could, but that final coin was elusive. Finally, exhausted he decided that he was going to have to work harder than ever to earn that gold coin and complete his collection.

From that day, the servant's life was changed. He was overworked, horribly grumpy, and castigated his family for not helping him make that 100th gold coin. He stopped singing while he worked. Witnessing this drastic transformation, the King was puzzled. When he sought his advisor's help, the advisor said, 'Your Majesty, the servant has now officially joined The 99 Club.' He continued, 'The 99 Club is a name given to those people who have enough to be happy but are never contented, because they're always yearning and striving for that extra 1 telling to themselves: 'Let me get that one final thing and then I will be happy for life.'

We can be happy, even with very little in our lives, but the minute we're given something bigger and better, we want even more! We lose our sleep, our happiness, we hurt the people around us; all these as a price for our growing needs and desires. That is what happens when we join the **99 club**.

**The happiest of people don't necessarily have the best of everything
They just make the most of everything that comes along their way.**

The thing about "wealth" is that there is more than one way to measure it. Traditionally it is measured in rupees, but there are many other scales. You can be "rich" in ways that have nothing to do with money. For example :

Rich in friends—A person who cultivates friendships and who is a joy to be around can have hundreds of good friends and can be rich beyond the wildest dreams of others.

Rich in health—A person who spends time eating right, exercising and relaxing from stress can be extremely healthy, and this health can be far more valuable than any amount of money.

Rich in strength—A person who works out with weights every day, runs, swims, etc. can be rich in strength and will have an attractive body.

Rich in family—A person who devotes time to his or her spouse and children will have a strong and happy family that is rewarding throughout life.

Rich in knowledge—A person who reads and studies will become rich in knowledge.

Rich in skill—A person who practices anything daily (a skill, a sport, prayer, whatever) will become excellent in that skill area. Excellence has its own rewards.

Rich in character— A person who works hard at being honest and truthful in all situations will become rich in character and will be trusted by everyone.

One funny thing about all of these different areas is that none of them are taxed. You are taxed on the money you earn, and that is it. There is no knowledge tax, for example. You can learn freely throughout life and acquire a huge "bank account" of knowledge. No one can steal it or diminish it in any way. Presumably, knowledge is the one thing you might be able to take with you to Heaven.

All of these alternative types of wealth are different from financial wealth, and yet all of them can be equally rewarding in their own ways. The point is that the act of buying things by itself, despite what television tells you, may not be what will bring you maximum happiness in life. Things like good friends, a loving spouse, well-raised children, a home built on love, a good relationship with God, a clear conscience, a worthy goal and a job you truly enjoy bring you contentment that lasts and has meaning. These things are often very hard for some teenagers to understand, but as you mature they become more important.

As you look at the world around you and come to understand what is important to you, keep these things in mind. Think about what it is that you enjoy and what makes you truly happy. See what you find. In thinking about it consciously, you might be surprised by what you discover. Money is incredibly important—you need it to survive. But it is not the *only* thing you need, and money itself will not bring lasting happiness to most people. Man does not live by bread alone.

The fact is that possessions and money don't make people happy, except when there isn't enough of it to purchase the essentials of food, clothing and shelter. Studies examining the relationship between family income and happiness show that money is only related to happiness when there really isn't enough of it and real deprivation occurs. No relationship has been measured between money and happiness for any family living above poverty wages, suggesting that once basic needs are taken care of, further happiness cannot be bought at any price. As a result of these types of findings, researchers now consider happiness to depend less on people's actual circumstances and more on how people choose to respond to their circumstances.

Our happiness is not dependent on whether we drive the right car, live in the right neighborhood, or wear the latest clothes. Instead, how happy we are depends on how we approach our life and the people around us. True satisfaction is not about getting what we want but rather is about wanting what we have. Learning to be content with what we have is the true path to happiness. Those things that make for the genuinely good life—close relationships, a hope-filled faith, positive traits, engaging activity—are enduringly sustainable

Health and Happiness

During our life we do fall sick. Sometimes we have to be hospitalized. Good health is more important to be happy than wealth. For this we should try to focus on perfect health and not on illness or symptoms of illness. Beliefs about aging are more in our minds. Instead we should be talking about being as young as a child. Laughter attracts joy and releases negativity that is the sole cause of ill health. Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease.

Happier thoughts lead to essentially a happier biochemistry, a happier, healthier body. Negative thoughts and stress have been shown to seriously degrade the body and the functioning of the brain. – Dr John Hagelin

Disease is held in the body by thought, by observation of the illness, and the attention given to it. Try not to talk about feeling unwell. Change the conversation from illness and their details to good things in life for good health. - “The Secret”

If You Do Not Want To Be Sick

Speak your feelings. Emotions and feelings, that are hidden, repressed and not expressed in time, end in illness as gastritis, ulcer, lumbar pain and so on. If repressed repeatedly the illness can be serious. The dialogue, speech, the spoken or written word is a powerful remedy and excellent therapy.

Make Decisions. The undecided remains in doubt, in anxiety and in anguish. Indecision accumulates problems, worries and makes you angry. To decide means wrong or right the event is out of circulation. Indecision loses the initiative to others who can take advantage of the situation.

Find Solutions. Negative people do not find solutions to the problems confronting them. They prefer lamentation, gossip and pessimism. It is better to light a match than to regret darkness. Negative thoughts generate negative energy and that causes illness.

Do Not Live by Appearances. Who hides reality, pretends, poses and always wants to give an impression of being well but in fact is sick. He wants to be seen as perfect, the best, easy going and so on but in reality is short of confidence.

Accept. The refusal to accept reality makes us alienate ourselves with others and results in loss of self-esteem. Those who do not accept become anxious, jealous, imitators, ultra-competitive and destructive. Be accepted and rejoice that you are accepted. Accept criticism. It is wisdom, good sense and fine therapy.

Trust. Who does not trust, does not communicate, is not open enough, is not related and does not create deep and stable relationship. He does not know real friendship. Without confidence in the person you want to relate to, there can be no lasting relationship. Distrust is lack of faith not only in others but also in you.

Be humorous. Do not live life in sadness. Good humour, laughter and rest replenish health. Being humorous improves the environment around you. Humour and laughter are excellent happiness therapy. **George Carlin** appropriately says, “We laugh too little but drive too fast.”

Create an Environment for Happiness

The environment around us includes our family, our friends, our job or business, our nation, our means of entertainment, the associations with which we are involved including our gurus if any and of course the nature around us. All these are involved in making us happy or otherwise. They also are hoping to get their happiness from us. This is especially relevant within a family.

The first step is in ensuring that we are **healthy**. Good health is needed for our body, mind, intellect and atma. Thus not only we should have a body free of major diseases but also have a stress free mind. In addition we should have an obsession free intellect and above all a soul free from sorrow. Remember we are not here to be sad, we are not here to blame others, we are not here to be miserable for trivial matters, we are not here to worry about small or inevitable things, we are not here to show off or being judged by others and we are not here to make ourselves happy by making others unhappy but by making them happy along with us.

Stop worrying about small and insignificant things like ‘Why that person said this to me?’ or ‘How should I teach him a lesson for humiliating me in front of my friends?’ Keep our mind in peace in all situations. Think like this. He had some garbage that needed to be thrown out and we happened to be there at that moment to catch it. Don’t catch it with so much seriousness. Get rid of it without throwing back or throwing on others and we will get back our peace of mind and thus be happy.

Learn to smile. As per a study, a baby smiles 400 times a day, a teenager 17 times and an adult only occasionally smiles. The more successful we are the more stiff face we keep. I am not talking here of the artificial tough or upset face that one may keep to be appeased or cajoled by his loved one!

Meditation gets back our smile as it makes the mind free of agitation. It is training us to accept every moment and live it totally with depth to be really happy. It enables us to know a little bit about all layers of our existence- body, breath, mind, intellect, memory, ego and the self. This is also called the ‘Art of Living’.

Gaining knowledge also makes us happy. For this we should be like a child and keep our ears and eyes open for learning from someone who knows more than us on the subject, irrespective of his status.

Being creative makes us happy as we create only when it is about a subject that we like. Solitude helps in creativity, as we are relaxed and undisturbed.

We cannot avoid misery all the time. So the best thing is to be aware of universal misery when we are overcome with personal misery. Similarly we can expand personal joy by sharing it with universal joy. This we can do by not thinking “what about me?” or “what I can gain from this world?” but by thinking “what can I do for the world?” You must believe in yourself. You can be happier if you shift from non-believing to believing attitude. Remember ‘**you are magnificent and that you have all of the power within you to create your life the way that you choose.**’

Prayer usually happens either when we feel grateful about something or when we feel utterly helpless. Prayer improves our life. It gives us hope. It gives us strength to face adverse situation by having faith in God. Prayer is that moment when we come in touch with our limitations, our boundaries. It is thus an essential ingredient of happiness.

Humour is essential to reduce seriousness of life that has many problems. However humour without wisdom or without sensitivity can boomerang and create unhappiness.

It is necessary to **dream** to achieve big things. We should have the determination and courage to achieve the dreams that are dear to us. While people have many and varied goals that they pursue, there is an almost universal underlying goal to virtually all pursuits: the goal to be happy. People who spend a lot of time making money generally do so because they believe that the money itself will make them happy, or will guard them against things that will make them unhappy. If the focus isn't on the money, but on the jobs that bring the money, those jobs are generally thought to make people happy. People strive for that perfect relationship, the perfect house, the beautiful body, and approval of others, all in an attempt to be happy. Sometimes these things make us happy; other times, we stress over not having reached our goals, or we reach them and find that we're still not happy. Other times, we focus so intensely on one goal that's thought to bring happiness that we don't have time for other things in our life that will make us truly happy

So what are the things in life that are correlated with personal happiness? Some of them are the things that you would expect: money, friends, health, living conditions; others are things you may not think of in your daily life, such as your neighborhood, spirituality, community involvement, and sense of meaning in life.

Live in the present moment: the past is dead (like a cancelled check) and the future is a promissory note, it may or may not arrive. You'll feel so much more joy when you can actually use the opportunities you've earned. Don't be too careful, but don't be too careless either! Just enjoy yourself. Play! Live every day like it's your last! Life's too short to be miserable!

When we pursue limited, superficial or false goals, it is very easy to lose happiness. Another reason for not having sustained happiness is that we expect happiness to come from the outside, from relationships, from food, from possessions, from travel. Yes, these are forms of limited happiness, yet they are only temporary.

Domestic Happiness

From time immemorial, man has been preoccupied with the pursuit of happiness in life, from the cradle to the grave. He works and struggles very hard to attain happiness, very often without knowing exactly what happiness means because of his ignorance of the nature of life. Although all religions provide advice and guidelines for their adherents to practice in order to attain happiness in life, more often than not, these advices and guidelines are ignored owing to man's craving, hatred and illusion. Many people who experienced frustrations and sufferings hope and pray to find happiness for present life and here after; others, though enjoying a large measure of happiness on earth, are still not contented and crave for eternal bliss in heaven after leaving this world. For the ordinary man, as for the child, it is difficult to make a distinction between happiness and pleasure. To him, that which gives pleasure gives happiness, and to be happy is to experience pleasure.

Before long, we find ourselves on the threshold of adulthood, the crucial time in our life when we look for a suitable life-partner to begin a relationship that will put to the test all the qualities that we have acquired earlier in life. Love, sex, and marriage then become matters of great importance that will determine the quality of the married life we will have. People today are exposed to a large variety of "Western" influences which are disseminated through the mass media such as books and magazines, television, video cassettes and movies, resulting in the acquisition of distorted ideas regarding love, sex, and marriage. The age-old "Eastern" moral virtues and values are being gradually eroded in the face of these influences. Practices unheard of and never carried out by the older generation have become commonplace among the people today. Are the "Western" influences really responsible for this state of affairs or should the parents be blamed for the misdeeds of their children for not exercising proper control and supervision over them?

The key to successful family relationships is giving time to others. Give your time and give yourself up for friends, family and others who may be in need. Spend time with your family and other positive people in your life, and recognize they are your most valuable worldly asset. The happiest days of our lives, when we really dig down deep, is when we see the smile on the face of a child who has nothing and you have given them something of immense value to them such as reading them a book, it means you love them enough to give of your time. Your kids would remember the time you spent with them, not the money you spent **on** them.

A home can be sweet if there are no disturbances and agitations in the family? Such disturbances can broadly relate to behaviour of the members, their education, the routine they follow, health condition, choice of profession based on their strengths, weaknesses and training, the financial position and the effort made to maintain peace of mind of all members. **George Carlin** again says, “We love too seldom, and hate too often.”

We want to prevent or minimize the problems arising out of the infantile actions or inaction of other members of the family. For this we have to give ourselves enough and then think trying to solve the problems of our family member. Vastu Shastra defines the right and legitimate place for the various aspects of house and its different elements. These not only seem to be convenient but also can be scientifically explained in most cases.

For example the room selected as master bedroom should enable us to sleep with our head to the south. South polarity is induced in the head. This simple principle applies to everyone in the northern hemisphere. When the head is placed to the geographical or magnetic north, the blood circulation is stable and hence will ensure us better health. As a result, it will help the head of the family to examine family issues justly. Once we are able to review matters appropriately, we will be able to take the right decisions. This way, we will be able to understand the grievances of our family members and communication between our siblings and us are likely to improve. When it does, we have peace of mind.

Education (or lack of it) is another important aspect in life that invariably adds (or lessens) to the happiness in a family. We see children doing extremely well and parents are delighted about it. We also see children not faring well in spite of their own hard study and the constant coaxing of the parents to study. Vastu recommends certain location for the children room that can make them study better? They can have their beds in the Southwest corners of their rooms

Contentment and happiness in our profession is another contributory factor to family happiness. Apart from looking into the placements of our room in our office and arrangement of furniture in that room, it recommends that we face east. The East sector ruled by the Sun is synonymous with health - physical and mental. We will be able to think properly and take fair decisions on anything related to our profession. Financial stringency is another factor that contributes to family unhappiness. We find people complaining that the inflow of revenue does not match their hard and sincere effort. Vastu recommends certain position for the storage of money and jewelry.

Happiness in Marriage

"Marriage is not an institution of nature. The family in the east is entirely different from the family in the west. Man is the servant of nature, and the institutions of society are grafts, not spontaneous growths of nature. Laws are made to suit manners, and manners vary. Marriage must therefore undergo the gradual development towards perfection to which all human affairs submit."

-Honoré de Balzac

No marriage is Perfect

The perfect partner you dream of in your head, is only perfect because they're in your head. In real life we love in spite of imperfections.

Modern life is full of tension and stress. Very often it is tension and stress that creates problems in many a marriage. If a proper analysis is made into the root causes of such social problems as pre-marital sex, teenage pregnancies, unhappy marriages and

divorces, child-abuse and wife-battering, we inevitably discover that it is due mainly to selfishness and lack of patience, tolerance and mutual understanding.

Among human beings, the institution of marriage has come about so that society guarantees the perpetuation of the human species and also ensures that the young would be cared for. This is based on the argument that children born through the pleasure of sex must be the responsibility of the partners involved, at least until they have grown up. And marriage ensures that this responsibility is upheld and carried out. A society grows through a network of relationships, which are mutually inter-twined and inter-dependent. Every relationship is a whole-hearted commitment to support and to protect others in a group or community. Marriage plays a very important part in this strong web of relationships of giving support and protection. A good marriage should grow and develop gradually from understanding and not impulse, from true loyalty and not just sheer indulgence. The institution of marriage provides a fine basis for the development of culture, a delightful association of two individuals to be nurtured and to be free from loneliness, deprivation and fear. In marriage, each partner develops a complementary role, giving strength and moral courage to one another, each manifesting a supportive and appreciative recognition of the other's skill in caring and providing for a family. There must be no thought of either man or woman being superior -- each is complementary to the other; marriage is a partnership of equality, gentleness, generosity, calm and dedication.

One of the major causes of marital problems is suspicion and mistrust. Marriage is a blessing but many people make it a curse due to lack of understanding. Both husband and wife should show implicit trust for one another and try not to have secrets between them. Secrets create suspicion, suspicion leads to jealousy, jealousy generates anger, anger causes enmity and enmity may result in separation, suicide or even murder.

If a couple can share pain and pleasure in their day-to-day life, they can console each other and minimize their grievances. Thus, the wife or husband should not expect to experience only pleasure. There will be a lot of painful, miserable experiences that they will have to face. They must have the strong will power to reduce their burdens and misunderstandings. Discussing mutual problems will give them confidence to live together with better understanding. Man and woman need the comfort of each other when facing problems and difficulties. The feelings of insecurity and unrest will disappear and

life will be more meaningful, happy and interesting if there is someone who is willing to share another's burden.

One should try to understand the nature of the worldly life. By knowing that we have to face problems, we will be able to strengthen our mind and be more prepared to face the problems that could arise if we get married. Religion is important to help us overcome our problems. Whatever we learned about religious principle when we were young can be adopted to avoid misunderstanding, disappointment and frustration. At the same time, certain good qualities such as patience and understanding, which we learned through religion, are important assets to help us to lead a peaceful married life.

Marriage is a partnership of two individuals and this partnership is enriched and enhanced when it allows the personalities involved to grow. Many marriages fail because one partner tries to "swallow" another or when one demands total freedom. According to Buddhism, marriage means understanding and respecting each other's belief and privacy. A successful marriage is always a two-way path: "humpy, bumpy" -- it is difficult but it is always a mutual path.

Do we Really know our Partner

In the early stage of marriage the man and woman try to understand each other in a relationship that's different and special. The very company of each other is enough to make them happy. But many 50-plus couples wake up one day and wonder if they really know the person sleeping next to them in bed. This is often the period when children have reached their teens and are flying the nest. The 'empty nest syndrome' is when couples tend to question their purpose and the future of their life together as a happy couple. The woman may also be going through the physical and emotional aspects of the menopause.

All of these changes can cause a couple to feel they don't know each other very well. After so much effort put into family and work life, they may suddenly discover that they are unhappy in each other's company. Before we attempt to rectify this situation it is necessary to clearly understand that there are basic behavioural difference between the two sexes.

In a lighter vein it can be said that,

“Woman worries about the future until she finds a husband. A man, on the other hand, never worries about the future, until he marries.”

“A mother takes 20yrs to make a man out of her boy. Another woman makes a fool of him in minutes”.

We are all the time comparing the characteristics of men and women and wanting them to be same. It is no surprise that most of the health related problems of women have been given names that start with MAN.

MANopause

MANstrual pain

MENtal illness

HIStechtomy

GAYnochologist

What Women Want?

- Women want men to be sensitive to her feelings but strong and tough otherwise.
- Women want to be liked through conversation.

What Men Want

- Men want to prove their ability all the time
- Men want to dominate and resist any hint of women being in control.

Men usually find women too complex to understand. While women mistakenly expect them to react exactly like their woman friends. One has to realize that women evolved as child bearing and home defender- hence nurturing, loving and caring while men evolved as hunter (chaser!), protector, provider of essential items and problem solver. They are ‘hardwired’ for different functions.

We are different (not inferior or superior)

Men and women are not inferior or superior to each other. They are different. Their operational environments are different. Their experiences in life are of different kind. They are different physically as well as emotionally. Their responses to situations are different because they have been brought up in a different manner. Some of the differential features are as follows.

- Our brain features are different. A male brain weighs about 12% more than female brain. Male brain has more gray matter while the female brain has more white matter.

- Men are strongly built, prefer visual to audio inputs, loaner, aggressive, risk- taking. Women are delicately built, have strong auditory sensing, sociable, patient, and caring.
- The false belief of men to have all the power to take advantage of women's weaknesses is the root cause of them feeling oppressed and getting angry.
- The weaker sex (female) is the stronger because of the weakness of the stronger sex (male) for the weaker sex.
- Men complain of her nagging; but she is just extending her care-taking job that irritates men.
- It is said that a wise woman puts a grain of sugar in everything she says to a man but takes everything he says with a pinch of salt.
- Men have to appreciate that girls have to shift their loyalty from a woman to a man, from mother to husband. Boys just replace their mother with another woman, his wife.
- Men are involved in power equations, women in personal relationships
- Even if she is right, man feels insulted to do as per her bidding. (Hence the need for women to make a loving request rather than an order)
- They can better absorb the stress and strain of the job. Other reason is that they are better listeners, have better self-control and emotional maturity and stability.
- Men have 'adversarial approach'. They start immediate argument if the other is taking a side different from him. They are concerned with who is on top.
- Women have a 'believing approach'. For them the aim of any talk is problem sharing. They want support not necessarily solutions. Listening to details is the primary aim.
- Woman may suffer in many ways but never in silence. A man may suffer in silence but cannot hide this from a woman.

Men and women have different *habits, likes and dislikes, priorities, skills, aptitude and behaviour*. These result in conflicts, as we do not understand the logic of the partner. For example women like to remind us about tasks assigned or pending because men are prone to

forget. They like shopping. They want to watch soap operas. They tend to cry on the smallest provocation and so on. Men, on the other hand, feel embarrassed to ask for directions. They like to joke. The path to a good belly laugh may be strikingly different between women and men. When men watch TV they don't want to see what is on TV but rather 'what else' is on.

Happily married Couple

At a later stage of our married life when we have spent decades in the company of each other, there are moments when we remember the stages and elements of common feelings that caused the gradual building up of a bond with our partner.

While most of us in India still have a family selected partner, with some sort of approval from us, we usually do not spend sufficient time in each other's company before marriage. Still as soon as it becomes clear that one has to pass the rest of the life with a person, there develops some form of Love. This realization usually is in the simple form of feeling good in his or her company and sad when there is even a short time absence. One becomes aware of love when one starts missing someone. Where the choice of the partner is self-made, this realization comes suddenly when we meet each other. It may occur at first sight or after some time and long interaction.

In simple terms there are four types of bonds between two individuals in love. These bonds are based on Body chemistry, Emotional chemistry, Intellectual chemistry and Spiritual chemistry. A failed love is usually the one that primarily depended on body chemistry. This chemistry is important to start with but is short lived. Soon one starts losing interest in each other if other bonds do not develop. Live-in relationships, unfaithful partners, marriage and divorce in quick succession indicate fragile alliances based only on body chemistry without serious attempt to develop emotional and intellectual bonding. Naturally one starts searching for bond based on body chemistry with another person.

The emotional bonding becomes important as soon as we start matching our mental outlook and emotional reactions to various situations. Our sensibilities may not fully match but they have to be respected by each other for a happy life together. Most of the differences between husband and wife are as a result emotional intolerance. As against this emotionally complementary couples have a better life together if one accepts and compensates for the emotional strengths and weaknesses of each other.

The intellectual bonding has become important now when the nuclear family is the rule and not an exception. In joint families the intellectual interaction between couples is minimal as most of the time they are handling different tasks. While the man has very little to do with house hold functioning, the woman has very little to contribute to his job related activities and outside routine. Today in many cases both have to work either because of financial constraints or specific intellectual competence that they want to utilize for self-satisfaction. It is seen that two such partners develop sufficient expertise in each other's area of working to be able to provide useful suggestions when asked.

The spiritual bonding, and this is more relevant at a later stage of marriage, is sometimes confused with 'vanaprastha' and 'sanyas'. One never goes through this physical separation from family anymore. But this bonding acts as a guidance on how we should handle the family relationships after we have got our sons and daughters married. Spiritual bonding also does not deal with visiting some temple or 'Teerthsthan" together. Spiritualism is not directly concerned with rituals. Spiritual bonding means having somewhat similar views on materialism, wealth, social responsibilities, charity, meditation, yoga and the need for detaching from desires towards real happiness. Loving someone means we are able to understand and appreciate the feelings of the person we love. Detachment does not mean that we are not involved in their happiness. It means we are not totally dependent on them for our happiness. The spiritual bond also means total trust in each other and the readiness to sacrifice for the happiness of each other. The seven vows that the couples take during the marriage ceremony are a pointer to this spiritual bonding that is essential for a happy and successful married life.

Sex and Happiness

In Indian context to talk about sex is considered bad. This is in spite of the fact that in one of the annual issues of Kalyan, the most respected and well known magazine of Hindu religion, there are detailed description of how a woman should behave and act to provide pleasure, including sexual satisfaction to her husband. Unfortunately many men are known to not reciprocate this act since they consider wife to be just a means for their own sexual pleasure. The institution of marriage is no longer just a means to propagate the dynasty. It is the most important and critical relationship

wherein the two partners are required to share happiness and sorrows and provide a true companionship to each other. Sexual satisfaction is an essential element of this.

Another misconception is that women are not supposed to show their sexual desire or enjoy sex. They are there just to ensure that the biological needs of the husband are met! Apart from that, a woman must cease to consider herself as the object of a man's lust. With proper education and interaction with more open society there is definite change in the views although elder ladies continue to hold on to the old views. (Women like intimate relationships. In sex they would prefer direct contact, but the fear and worry aspects take away most of their sexual happiness)

Sexual happiness for both partners ensures that a happy atmosphere prevails, problems of life are jointly faced with greater sacrifices for each other, the responsibilities in the office are cheerfully handled and the most important aspect is that husbands are less prone to link up with other women and expose themselves to serious social and medical problems.

Sex by itself is not "evil," although extreme temptation and craving for it invariably disturbs the peace of mind, and hence is not conducive to spiritual development. While excess of any thing is harmful and this is very much true for sexual involvement, deriving pleasure by both the partners from sex is considered by many, including some spiritual teachers, as the highest form of happiness.

The media and Internet have unfortunately made sex a saleable item through exposures in serials, movies and videos. These may provide some sort of release to sexual frustration but may be harmful if indulged in excess. The short-term happiness based on titillating dances, exposures, pornography etc have no comparison to the real happiness that is experienced by a couple that are in love and respect each other.

Tips for husband to make wife happy

Love and respect yourself then only you can make your partner happy

Occasionally serve breakfast in bed

Compliment freely and often. Recognize the good quality and taste of food cooked by her.

Write unexpected love letter or send flowers or just a card when away.

Accept and genuinely like each other's relatives realizing that no body is perfect.

Sit together often to enjoy first rain, sunset, full moon and so on

Read common mail together.

Be forgiving.

Let her cry in your arms if there is some sad situation.

Tell him you really understand when he has to go out with friends or attend some outdoor activity.

Occasionally do his or her routine job as a surprise, like making morning tea, or buying fruits and vegetables, cleaning car etc.

There is nothing wrong in subtle public display of affection occasionally.

Calm each other

Give respect to each other

Show interest in each other's work

Have an indoor picnic on a rainy day

Put your partner first in your prayers.

(Taken from an article by Mark and Chrissy Donnelly in the book "Chicken soup for the couple's soul.")

Happiness a Female View

On the face of it, women want the same as men. Equal pay, equal rights, equal respect, equal shares of your income and all the house

The five most positive activities for women were found in a study in the West was (in descending order) sex, socializing, relaxing, praying or meditating, and eating.

Exercising and watching TV were not far behind. But way down the list was “taking care of my children,” which ranked below cooking and only slightly above housework. That may seem surprising, given that people frequently cite their children as their biggest source of delight. In India sex is not an openly desired positive activity, particularly by women. The socializing is more in the nature of gossiping. Praying in most cases is in the form of visiting temples and attending discourses of religious teachers.

It may surprise you but women want to be offered things that they don't really want. They don't want to tell jokes, as a rule – they don't particularly like jokes – but they do want you to make them laugh. It's not the laugh they care about, it's the fact that you're making exhaustive efforts to make them laugh. Women like to flirt, but don't much care for men who flirt. It seems to be a natural part of being a woman to need to feel secure in order to be happy. They want protection, but not paternalism. So don't run round and open the car door, but do open the door to the restaurant. Carry the bag if it is full of vegetables, but not if it's full of shoes.

When men argue, we keep things personal and singular. Women, on the other hand, escalate to third-party collective after the first shot. They become symbolic representatives for the whole gender. So a man will say, “You don't know what I want,” but a woman will say: “You don't know what women want.” There's a difference. That's all of them against just you. Don't think you can turn round and say, “Well, you don't know what men want,” because it's as plain as the lump in your Y-fronts what men want, and every woman knows it.

Taking care of the people they love makes them very, very happy. Ever since they are small they wanted babies, and having own gives them intense happiness. As someone said “It has taken me to the calm centre of myself, given me an understanding of the mysterious magic of life, and maybe death too. Loving my children makes everything else possible. Even now, from the sometimes dark depths of these years of coping with teenagers, I only have to glimpse those three cherished faces and my heart turns over and says, Yessss!”

And then there's the women's body – the sheer physical elasticity of being easy inside one's own skin. Here is how one model describes this feeling: “My relationship with my body is just as it always was. I like it. For its strength and its odd flashes of beauty. So I try to treat my body well. And last of all – but maybe more happiness-inducing than all of these put together – connection. Not just falling in love (though

certainly that as well) but discovering a perfect, breathless understanding with another human being. Looking straight into the eyes of someone who really gets me, who excites me, who makes me curious about them, and curious all over again about myself and this strange world and my place in it.”

The talkativeness of women has been the butt of jokes from time immemorial. Some of us are really chatterboxes who need to learn the value of silence. But this does not mean that the sharing of feelings and events is not a legitimate daily need for people, and women in particular. Some anthropologists derive the talkativeness of women from early tribal patterns. While the men were off hunting—an occupation which demands silence to avoid frightening the animals away—the women were suckling their babes around the fireside, preparing the food, and weaving. Naturally they would spend their time in conversation with other women.

Whatever the roots of the need for verbal sharing, we know that women seem to want to live empathetically in the world of the other to a degree not necessary to most males. Men are more inclined to get to the point, find out the gist, and then take action based on what they have learned. Having no one to talk to intimately is one of the most feared possibilities for most women.

“Men Are Happier Because—“

Your last name does not change after marriage.

Chocolate is just another snack without the worry about putting on weight

You can never be pregnant.

Car mechanics tell you the truth.

The world is your urinal.

You don't have to stop and think of which way to turn a nut on a bolt.

Same work, more pay.

Wrinkles add character.

People never stare at your chest when you're talking to them.

Your mood can be recognised.

Phone conversations are over in 30 seconds flat.

You know a bit about tanks and engines.

A five-day vacation requires only one suitcase.

You can open all your own jars.

Three pairs of shoes are more than enough.

You never have strap problems in public.

You are unable to see wrinkles in your clothes.

Everything on your face stays its original colour.

The same hairstyle lasts for years, maybe decades.

You only have to shave your face and neck.

You can play with toys all your life.

One wallet and one pair of shoes -- one colour for all seasons.

You can wear shorts no matter how your legs look.

You can 'do' your nails with a pocket knife.

You have freedom of choice concerning growing a moustache.

You can do Festival shopping for 25 relatives in 25 minutes.

INTERACTIVE HAPPINESS

Happiness cannot be seen isolated from those with whom we interact. Every interaction, direct or indirect, can result in different emotional feeling. For having a long lasting happy experience we have to ensure that not only we become happy but others also become happy. Another important aspect is to talk positively about others even when

they are not present during our interaction. (I am OK, You are OK and they are OK!). In other words

(I am Happy, You are Happy and they are happy)

Happiness through Benevolence

In our interaction with others some skills are more likely to make others and us happy. These include forbearance, kindness, love, compassion, generosity and friendliness. These can many times release tensions between the interacting persons and remove negative environment. These benevolence skills may result in some material loss or show you as weak amongst other observers but in the end it results in the concerned parties being happy and the impact is usually long term.

These skills also remove the well known and widely practiced negative aspects of interaction, namely anger, hatred, jealousy, suspiciousness, envy and many more. Of course anger and hatred are the two most damaging factors of interaction between people. People who apply a "tit-for-tat" attitude to life are more likely to be unemployed, have a smaller circle of friends and be less happy. Be patient with other people's mistakes, as tomorrow it will be your turn to mess up.

Once , a young orphan girl, despondent and lonely, walked through a meadow and saw a small butterfly caught in a thorn bush. the more the butterfly struggled to free itself, the deeper the thorns cut into it's fragile body.

Filled with compassion, the girl released the butterfly. But, instead of flying away, the butterfly transformed into an angel and said gently, "To reward you for your kindness, I will do whatever you like."

The girl thought for a moment, then replied, "I want to be happy!"

"Very well," the angel said. Then the heavenly creature leaned close to the girl and whispered something in her ear.

Many years later, as the orphan lay on her deathbed after a full and happy life, her friends gathered around her. "Won't you tell us your secret now," they pleaded. With a labored smile, the woman answered,"An angel told me that no matter where I went in life, I would find people who needed me-- people rich or poor, young or old, meek or self assured-- and meeting those needs would bring me happiness and satisfaction."-Tammie (happyhippy.vox.com)

We confuse happiness with winning an argument. Best of friends are lost simply because we fail to appreciate that letting a friend win an argument is more important than having the satisfaction of being proven right. Some people would rather be right than happy. You'll know when you find yourself defending a position or an opinion in an argument. You find it impossible to climb down, let go, withdraw and concede, because you believe that would be losing. And you cannot accept the thought of being seen as a loser. Winning equals happiness and losing equals sorrow, that's what you think. But hold on a minute! When you are doing that, how do you feel? You are certainly not at peace with your self, you are not content, there is no joy in your conversation and you are unhappy at the thought of losing this...battle! You've forgotten that it's only a conversation. It's only an exchange of views. Is it really worth losing a friend? Winning an argument isn't winning, it is simply the ego's way of trying to convince you that you are victorious because you avoided defeat.

Another important factor that surprisingly gives prolonged indirect happiness is BEING GRATEFUL. Starting from being grateful to God almighty, to parents, family members, teachers, friends, senior colleagues, servants, neighbours, suppliers of daily needs, one can benefit by being grateful even to strangers with whom you may interact every day. It gives a great feeling when you express a genuine appreciation to them, either spoken or felt. You soon find that after having this feeling you feel more optimistic, energetic and joyful in whatever you take up. There is a strange determination to succeed. The day you have been grateful to strangers, you feel extraordinarily happy and get better sleep. You are more inclined to help others (to earn their gratefulness?). Being grateful for good things in life enables you to face difficult times with greater strength.

The author of the famous book 'The Secret', Rhonda Byrne said in her newsletter the following.

"Begin your day by feeling grateful. Be grateful for the bed you just slept in, the roof over your head, the carpet or floor under your feet, the running water, the soap, your shower, your toothbrush, your clothes, your shoes, the refrigerator that keeps your food cold, the car that you drive, your job, your friends. Be grateful for the stores that make it so easy to buy the things you need, the restaurants, the utilities, services, and electrical appliances that make your life effortless. Be grateful for the magazines and the books that you read. Be grateful for the chair that you sit on, and the pavement that you walk on. Be

grateful for the weather, the sun, the sky, the birds, the trees, the grass, the rain, and the flowers.”

Those of us who have been salary earners in a transferable job, the first boss under whom you work tends to become either a role model or in the other extreme, some one whom you may hate all your service life. I, for one, had been lucky to have my first boss who taught me so many things that are important in life and I have been grateful for this good fortune all along. Even now many years after retirement whenever we talk of our service life I never fail to recognize this aspect.

Happiness and Friends

We cherish our friends not for their ability to amuse us, but for ours to amuse them.

In the alienated and fragmented world we live in today, the human heart cries out for friendship or affirmation from others. That is because we are meant to see in the human faces we encounter, the face of God.

Friendship calls for a removal of all masks. Explaining the need for sharing our personal stories, Carmen Caltagirone says: "All those persons who have impacted our lives, those who have loved us and those who have refused our love are within us. In each of us there lives a mother, a father, a betrayer, a childhood friend, and a teacher. The deepest realities of human life cannot be defined in intellectual terms. We can at best, touch on them through stories".

Human stories can only be shared through intimacy, which is a psychological necessity of life. Friends complete us; they define us and act as chisels that shape our lives. Friends build us up through affirmation and gentle confrontation, filling a space in our lives. This space is filled not only through intimacy but also by respecting an affective distance from those who are closest to us. There are times for talking and interaction and times for silence and reserve.

Closeness invites friends to act as personal prophets in our life. Friends are also like messengers from God of unending, timely and constant love. They come to us just in

time and when we need them most. Abraham Heschel, the great Jewish theologian, narrates how a child responded to the story in scripture about the sacrifice of Isaac. Upon hearing that the voice of the angel stopped Abraham from killing Isaac, the child began to cry. Puzzled by the tears, the rabbi said: "Why are we crying? Isaac was saved." The child replied: "But, rabbi, what if the angel had come a second too late?" The rabbi comforted the child by saying: "An angel can never come too late". God sends friends when it is never too late.

Sharing Positive Energy with Friends

It is a recognized fact that all of us feel happy in the company of some of our friends. It is independent of gender and age. The topics that we share with them may vary but every one prefers some friends with whom they can share their problems and experiences as compared to others. One major aspect is the fact that more people than others like some of these friends. This is primarily due to the impact they make on their friends. In other words some of them have positive impact while others have a negative impact. Some of the signs that one can look for to recognize the two types are as under.

SIGNS OF POSITIVE ENERGY IN PEOPLE

- + they exude an inviting sense of heart, compassion, and support.
- + We intuitively feel safe, relaxed, wanting to get closer.
- + They emanate a peaceful glow.
- + We feel better around them. Our energy and optimism increase.

SIGNS OF NEGATIVE ENERGY IN PEOPLE

- + we experience a sense of being demeaned, constricted, or attacked
- + we intuitively feel unsafe, tense, or on guard.
- + We sense prickly, off-putting vibes. We can't wait to get away from them.
- + Our energy starts to fizzle. We may feel beleaguered or ill.

To be happy not only we should be in the company of friends with positive energy, but also more than that, we should strive to give out such positive energy. For this we should do whatever makes our 'inner light' burn brighter. In other words, try to treat us and everyone else with love. It's a constant process of finding people who support our spirit, trusting our gut-centered decisions to guide us. Then we won't end up in choosing a friend who impresses us but in whose company we feel uncomfortable. Or miss the chance to meet a loving man or woman because he or she doesn't fit some preconceived and superficial image of a good friend. It is not a question of wealth or other material possession but of aiming for finding common ground, rather than inflame negativity. The care with which we approach life is intuitively evident in our energy field. We can feel each other's love: that's the great attraction. Spread openheartedness around.

How not to loose a friend

Don't be adamant for his accepting your wish all the time (We must loose the battle of being right to win the war of being happy – Auriela McCarthy)

Don't be proud in dealing with him

Don't be too sensitive or totally lack sensitiveness

Don't take advantage of the friendship for unjust action

Do not all the time try to find fault in yourself or in your friend

Show your gratefulness as well as feel free to complain whenever necessary.

Feeling grateful actually make us healthier. Practicing gratitude and acknowledging the blessings in our lives can change us positively.

Don't be selfish or impolite

Never abandon an old friend. We may never find one who can take his (or her) place. Friendship is like wine it gets better as it grows older.

Love and Friendship

Lover is first a friend and then a lover. He or she has to be the best friend if the love is to be long lasting. We cannot make someone love us; all we can do is being someone who can be loved the rest is up to the person to realize our worth. The measure of love is when it is without measure. In life there are very rare chances that we will meet the person we love and loves us in return. So once we have found such a person it is necessary that we make sincere effort to not loose the chance simply by not taking it seriously as the chance might never come our way again. It is better to lose our pride to the one we love than to lose the one we love because of pride.

We can never find an absolutely fault free person as we ourselves are not faultless. We spend too much time looking for the right person to love or finding fault with those we already love, when instead we should be perfecting the love we give. When we truly care for someone we do not look for faults, we do not look for answers to all our questions, we do not look for mistakes; instead we ignore the mistakes, we accept the faults, and we accept the excuses. And we do this without in anyway feeling unhappy.

Don't go for looks; they can deceive.
Don't go for wealth; even that fades away.
Go for someone who makes you smile,
Because it takes only a smile to
Make a dark day seem bright.
Find the one that makes your heart smile.

What does it mean to be a lover?

It is more than just married or being in love with some one. Millions do that but few are real lovers. For being that one has to be committed to each other with perpetual intimate relationship with your partner. Remember her or him as not your property but someone loaned to you by the universe. Nothing between you two can be insignificant. You have to get either joy or sorrow. You should thank almighty for this wonderful gift that makes your life complete, by banishing loneliness, by just her or his presence, the scent, the smile and the open arms to soothe your nerves and give you happiness.

“True Love”

This is a true story told to me by a doctor who was treating an elderly gentleman who had injured his thumb.

“It was a busy morning, about 8:30, when an elderly gentleman in his 80's arrived to have stitches removed from his thumb. He said he was in a hurry as he had an appointment at 9:00 am.

I took his vital signs and had him take a seat, knowing it would be over an hour before someone would be able to see him. I saw him looking at his watch and decided, since I was not busy with another patient, I would evaluate his wound. On exam, it was well healed, so I talked to one of the doctors, got the needed supplies to remove his sutures and redress his wound.

While taking care of his wound, I asked him if he had another doctor's appointment this morning, as he was in such a hurry.

The gentleman told me no, that he needed to go to the nursing home to eat breakfast with his wife. I inquired as to her health.

He told me that she had been there for a while and that she was a victim of Alzheimer's disease.

As we talked, I asked if she would be upset if he was a bit late.

He replied that she no longer knew who he was, that she had not recognized him in five years now.

I was surprised, and asked him, 'And you still go every morning, even though she doesn't know who you are?'

He smiled as he patted my hand and said,

'She doesn't know me, but I still know who she is.'

I had to hold back tears as he left, I had goose bumps on my arm, and thought,

'That is the kind of love I want in my life.'”

True love is neither physical, nor romantic. True love is an acceptance of all that is, has been, will be, and will not be. The happiest people don't necessarily have the best of everything; they just make the best of everything they have. There are moments in life

when you miss someone so much that you just want to pick them from your dreams and hug them for real!

Happiness and Society

Man must cease attributing his problems to his environment, and learn again to exercise his will - his personal responsibility - **Albert Einstein**

Our life belongs to the whole community and that as long as we live it is our privilege to do for it whatever we can. We should have the satisfaction of thoroughly utilizing our life for the good of self, family, society, nation and world when we die. For the harder we work, the more we live. Life is not a brief candle but is a sort of splendid torch which we get to hold up for the moment, and we should strive to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations. -**George Bernard Shaw**

Here's what **Richard Evans** has to say about happiness and society.

“There are some fine distinctions to be found in the now immortal phrase, “Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” Life is eternal; liberty, an inalienable right, but with happiness - we are offered only the right to pursue it! We can give a man his liberty but not so his happiness. We can help, but ultimately he has to help himself to happiness.”

As a member of the society we have to interact with other members of the society. Our happiness does depend on how we interact with ourselves, but it also depends on how we interact with others, and on how we perceive them. People are much happier if they feel they live in a friendly and harmonious world

Once you are miserable, knowingly or unknowingly, you only spread misery. Being happy or unhappy is actually your choice. People choose to be unhappy because they think that by being unhappy they will get something from the members of the society or government. If we are happy, if we don't get anything, what does it matter? After all everything that we are doing, every single act we are performing is in pursuit of happiness in some way.

We can never be totally happy with all aspects of our life. There are many times when we are not happy with what is going on in the world around us. Even if we do not follow the local news and world affairs, and even if we live in a cave in the Himalayas, we will not be happy about something or at least would like to improve it if we knew an effective way to bring about positive change around us. There are many positive things about our world, but we have to admit that some things could be much better. We should increase our self-awareness and take or assist in taking some positive steps to derive happiness in changing the world for the better. While religion is essentially an inward experience, outward engagement with society through volunteer work also contributes to happiness. In a paper titled *Conditions of Happiness*, psychologist Ruut Veenhoven of Erasmus University in Rotterdam, says that people involved in voluntary tasks in clubs, places of worship and political organisations profess to be happier than those who do not.

So if happiness is so important to us, and its what everyone seeks, then why aren't there any classes on how to be happy? No society, past or present, has put any emphasis on teaching people to experience what we all yearn for. You'd think with the magnitude of the role happiness plays in our lives, that there would be some type of education on the subject. Ever seen "A Study in Happiness" offered at school? No, of course not.

There is one possible reason to explain why there are no courses on happiness. It could be that the Society, as a whole, has some pretty big misconceptions about what it means to be happy. We have passed down from generation to generation the belief that happiness, or unhappiness, can be attributed to external causes. We've been told that other people and the circumstances make us happy or unhappy. Our happiness is outside us!

The first problem is that happiness is not a teachable subject. It is famously elusive and may be unattainable. Pursuing happiness, as an aim of life is also difficult since it is more readily gained as a side-product of some other achievement or condition.

Secondly happiness is also too varied to teach: a single set of tools will not work for everyone. One pupil may derive great pleasure from being kind to others - another from being the person on the receiving end of that kindness. Where one child may be happily fulfilled taking on a tough challenge, another may find more happiness with a less driven approach.

An analysis of the environment of countries that have a high happiness index identifies ten possible reasons for this as "indicators for a happy society".

- High degree of trust in fellow citizens
- Low amount of corruption
- Low unemployment
- High level of education
- High income
- High employment rate of older people
- Small shadow economy
- Extensive economic freedom
- Low employment protection
- Appropriate birth rate

The activities that make us happiest are those where we can identify with our task. This the self-employed can do better than alienated workers. He can get unambiguous and immediate feedback, and stop worrying about what others think. Similarly activities like playing sport or a musical instrument are great for happiness. Traditional craftwork has been another source to experience happiness. As against this a worker employed by another is more concerned with what he gets out of it for himself and the work itself does not give him that happiness.

But then it is clear that happiness is not everyone's ultimate value either. I know academicians who have sacrificed happiness for discovery. And I know bankers who

work very hard and earn a lot of money. They know that more wealth will not increase their happiness as much as more leisure would. Nevertheless, they keep working. For them making money for others and themselves provides them professional happiness.

Do not miss Opportunities

We all share a desire for self-improvement. Whether through education, work, parenthood or adhering to religious or ethical codes, each of us seeks to become a 'better human' in a variety of ways. And for some people, more consumerist pursuits like working out in the gym, wearing makeup, buying new clothes, or indulging in a spot of cosmetic surgery, hold the key to self-improvement and thus happiness. For many others it is just that they need **opportunity**.

“Inside every Singer is a song that has to be sung.

Inside every Poet is a poem that must be written.

Inside every Painter is a painting that must be painted.

Inside every Entrepreneur is an enterprise that must be started.

Inside every Social Campaigner is an ill that must be righted.

Inside every Administrator is an inefficiency that must be organized.

Inside every One is something that must be created, fixed or improved.”

Since society believes happiness comes from things and events, its focus is on assessing events and things and training classes deal with success at the workplace only. The really important lessons are however left up to individuals to sort out. Who am I? What do I believe? How can I be happy? You deal with people and situations effectively only when you are happy. If you are concerned about society and you want to deal with it intelligently and effectively, the fundamental need is for you to be happy, isn't it? Otherwise, in your unhappiness, it won't matter what good intentions you have, you will only spread misery in the world. Once you are miserable, knowingly or unknowingly, you only spread misery. You cannot help it. Being happy or unhappy is actually your choice. – New Economist

In the society some people choose to be unhappy because they think that by being unhappy they will get something. It is being taught that if you suffer, you will go to heaven. If you are a suffering human being, what will you do in heaven anyway? Hell will be more of a home for you. Once you are unhappy, whatever you get, what does it matter? If you are happy, if you don't get anything, what does it matter? This is not a philosophy; this is your true nature. By nature you want to be happy. Everything that you are doing, every single act you are performing is in pursuit of happiness in some way. So happiness is the fundamental goal of life. Why do you want to go to heaven? Only because somebody has told you that if you go to heaven, you will be happy and for achieving that goal you must suffer?

After doing all that you are doing, if happiness is not happening, somewhere you have missed the ABCs of life. Somewhere, the fundamentals of life have been missed. When you were a child, you were simply happy. Without doing anything, you were happy. Then somewhere along the way, you lost this. Why did you lose it? You got deeply identified with many things around you specially your body and your mind.

What you call your mind is actually just the stuff you have picked up from social situations around you. Depending upon what kind of society you have been exposed to, that is the kind of mind you have acquired. Everything in your mind right now, every decision you make, is based on something you picked up from outside.

The Modern Happiness Criteria

Today it seems like life flies by faster with every minute that passes. Everyday a new set of possibilities is opening up. As we sleep there are advances and developments that are going to affect the way we live our life. Advertisers are busy plotting how to get our precious attention – and money. And the people in our life are making changes in their lives that will impact on us. So when we wake tomorrow, we have to play catch up. And each day in our life becomes more and more complex.

The solution isn't working harder. Nor is it even working smarter. That just puts us in a more competitive race. As the quote says... 'Even if we win the rat race... we're still a rat'. The real problem is that the world-and most of the people in it - don't care about our dreams. They take no notice of our hopes and fears. They couldn't care less

about nurturing our potential. All they care about is what benefits them. (We can't blame them. Everyone and everything only look from their own perspective). And so they want us to do their bidding. They want to take all they can from us, for as long as they can, to make them stronger and more powerful. And then they will move on to some other poor sucker.

Making a reasonable progress for the realisation of a goal makes us feel happy. This goal need not be only ours. It can be of a family member, a friend or a section of society. What makes us happy in day-to-day interaction is a debatable point. While we allow others to set out the rules for our life, while we allow others to dictate what we do and don't do in our life, we will never get close to experiencing life the way that we really crave to feel it.

Today it is lot different today than it was 50 years ago. Materialism, consumerism, good looks, high position, multiple choices of things, outshining the neighbour and so on seem to be yardstick for happiness today. But if one thinks dispassionately long lasting happiness does not depend so much on these factors.

In a recent analysis the following emerged:

- a) Those who watch a lot of TV are less happy than those who don't
- b) Money does not guarantee happiness. Only very poor are 'less' happy
- c) Middle income people are just as happy as the very rich
- d) Possessions that bring happiness are usually not very costly
- e) Divorced or separated are less happier than those staying married

f) Marriage provides companionship and lot of emotional help. Men need it more than women for being happy although they always joke about wonderful life as a single man.

g) Extroverts are happiest. They have good social skills, are more assertive and cooperative and are better equipped to use leisure time.

h) Having a sport or challenging hobby keeps people absorbed and happy.

j) Company of calm and spiritual people, meditation and visit to place of worship makes many happy.

Developing a Pleasing Personality

Being happy in a company requires that not only you enjoy company of others but more importantly they enjoy your company. For this you have to develop a personality that is pleasing. Others should feel happy for your arrival and expect a good time with you. Given below are some guidelines for developing such a personality through serious effort.

Conversation Skill

The most important aspect for being a pleasant personality is to have good conversation skill. Only then the real 'you' can be judged. Don't try to say something just for the purpose of looking smart. Most people would rather be friends with someone who comes off as being sincere, not someone just trying to show off. Not everybody likes a bubbly, highly social and funny personality. A lot of people probably like you just as you are! Be yourself. Do not think about changing into someone else that you are not; you will not get respect that way. If you lie about something that you really don't do, they'll end up finding out and maybe everyone the next week. So the best thing to do is talk about your own interests & ask them about theirs or any others they may have.

The 'key thing' in a conversation is the word 'you'. Ask them about themselves. DON'T go on talking about yourself the whole time! If you notice you are saying "I" too much or are just talking about yourself, hurry up & finish that sentence & ask them about what they like.

Listen. Don't do all the talking when it comes to conversations. Good conversations are crucial when you want to be a likable person, and sometimes you just have to be quiet and listen. Realize too, that listening is a learnable skill that takes practice, and it's more difficult than many people believe. So talk about a topic/subject you want to, then listen to his/her opinion about it or let them start a topic for a conversation.

Smile and laugh. Laugh because people like people who laugh with them (not at them). This makes people happy and brightens the way they think of you. It makes you seem like you truly love life and you can deal with any problems that you have to face.

Be a happy person, not insensitive and uncaring, but optimistic. Think about the people you most enjoy being with, usually they are always on the up and up. There are times to be sad, but they should not take up a majority of your time.

Make eye contact. This is very important because it makes people feel like they have all of your attention, you are listening, interested in what they have to say and they are getting the attention that they deserve. It also makes you seem more trustworthy, honest, and open. If you are always shifting your eyes around and looking at everything but the person you're talking to, people will think that you don't care what they have to say or you have something to hide.

Be active. Are you having fun when you are sitting at a bench, looking down and not doing anything at all? In order to be fun to be with, you need to be active, to stand up, to be creative. Maybe shout or do a "happy dance" when something good happens, take up a sport, or twirl around to cheer someone up. It works!

Be curious. Know what you'll be doing later. If you get turned down or rejected, move on. You never know what's going to happen until you try. Always try to seek out more knowledge or skill in an area that interests you. It will really improve your character. Go ride a bike past the local park or walk to the nearest local hangout spot (In our young age it was the India Coffee House) because you never know who you'll meet.

In order to be a fun person, you must be confident. Also, physically take care of yourself--practice personal hygiene, eat healthy food and be fit.

Be sociable and friendly. In order to be fun to be with, you'll need to build some new relationships so people start noticing you. Be friendly to everyone--people who were mean to you, that guy that sits next to you in math class, your team captain--everyone. Treat your new friendships well. Praise them, cheer them up when they're down. Joke with them (not at them), help them, invite them to parties, etc. Just be yourself, and be a people person. Be friendly, kind, giving, caring, generous, learn about them, and make them want to know more about you. Be aware that the kind of fun you're having is healthy, legal, and doesn't cause anyone any harm, including yourself.

Take genuine interest in other people, and they will do the same for you. A great way to start a conversation with some one new is to ask advice. Everyone wants to show off a little and most likely they'll be happy to help.

Start out slowly with people. Begin conversations with open-ended questions like, "How's it going?" and let the other person run with the conversation. Calibrate their initial response, to gauge whether they are responsive to more conversation. Don't forget about your other friends! Introduce them to each other. That way, you'll have more to talk about and your friends can make more friends, too.

Sometimes people need a little coaxing. You might have to ask them "How are you?" and "What have you been up to?" in succession before you get a deep enough response to bring about further conversation.

People often underestimate how self-conscious other people are. When you interact with other people, remember that they can often make the conversation uncomfortable because of their own insecurities. The best thing to do is to be confident. Confidence gives you a greater vantage point in which to see the social inadequacies of other people.

Aim to get respect from other people instead of their approval. People are attracted to the people that value themselves. If you are looking for other people's approval then you are implicitly saying that "I value this person's opinion of me, and valuation of me as my indication of worth." You have to value yourself and not seek anyone else's value assessment of you.

Surround yourself with other people and you will attract more people. People take shortcuts, and in the absence of spending hours with you to find out who you really are, they look to see that you are liked by other people (it's called social proof). As a result, they come to the conclusion, "if other people like you, then I suspect I can like you as well."

One thing that people like to talk about is sports. A good way to start a conversation is "What is the latest score?" It's easier to talk to people if you have shared an experience with them. Clearly the friends you have at the moment predominantly talk about interesting things they did in the past.

Making Others Happy

You should empower yourself as how not to make others unhappy but also on how not to let others make you unhappy (Swami Sukhbodhananda). Are you feeling good and want to make someone else feel good too? Do you have a friend who is feeling out of sort? Here are a few ways to make someone happy!

Smile at them. Don't have a forced smile, but a soft caring smile. Tell them a funny joke. Inside jokes work really well, especially if it is something only between the two of you. Find something funny online and send it around in an email. Even a silly joke may change their mood.

Compliment them sincerely. Tell them how you love their shirt or how their hair looks. Invite them to do something that they enjoy with you. Go to a video parlour or a theatre, swimming, or something else fun and active.

Listen to them. Try to understand their thoughts and be in their shoes. This shows you care and love them, whether they may appreciate it or not. Be there. They will come to realize what a friend you've been. Be attentive to what they have to say and let them know that you are there to help if needed.

Be happy yourself. You're saying, I know how to be happy - follow me! It can fade their sadness, getting in touch with their desire to enjoy themselves instead of shedding tears.

Let them know that you're comfortable with them around. Say anything sweet you truly mean, but have always kept on the inside. It'll make them smile physically and mentally, knowing that it came from the bottom of your heart.

If your friend wants to be alone, leave him or her alone, but let them know that if they change their mind and want to talk, you're willing to hear whatever they have to say.

If your friend is upset about someone, don't say bad things about that person, to make things worse. It'd just encourage negative feelings towards that someone he/she is thinking of. Point out some good characteristics of the person who had upset him.

Try to avoid making comments about how you pity him/her. At the same time do not try too hard to cheer this other person up, meaning trying for a long period of time without any success. If you do, they can start thinking that you can't make them happy.

Making others Laugh

Think beyond jokes. Jokes can be funny, but being funny is about much more than being able to tell jokes. While jokes are a valuable addition to your funny repertoire, if you simply repeat jokes that you've heard, you're not so much being funny as repeating something that somebody funny thought of. Joke-telling is an art itself, and there are

good joke tellers and bad joke tellers. Following steps can be applied not only to becoming funnier overall, but also to becoming a good joke teller.

Broaden your base of material. In everyday conversation, being funny is mostly about having something funny to say about something that comes up in the course of the conversation. Sometimes this can be a prefabricated joke, but more often you're on your own, and if you're to have any hope of thinking up something funny, you've got to know something about the subject of the conversation; the more you know, the better. If you know a tremendous amount about 17th century poetry, you've probably got a good chance of saying something funny when that comes up in conversation. Unfortunately (or maybe fortunately) 17th century poetry doesn't come up much. As a general rule, people who are very focused on one hobby, occupation, or sitcom are often very funny to other people who are also wrapped up in that particular pursuit. When they try to be funny around people who are not "in the loop," however, their humor often falls flat. How do you avoid this? Broaden your horizons so that you are tuned-in regardless of who you're speaking to. If you can find the humor in physics and Mallika Sherawat, for example, you're well on your way. In a way, being funny is simply showing that you are intelligent enough and know enough about something (hopefully a great many things) to find the humorous nuances that others miss.

Learn from the best. In the same way that good writers are almost always prolific readers, really funny people usually are familiar with the techniques of other funny people. Watch funny movies and shows, read funny books, and go see some stand-up comedians. If you have very funny acquaintances, pay attention to what makes them funny. Immerse yourself in humor and you'll develop a toolbox of techniques you can use to be funny.

Be observant. While knowing a lot can increase your capacity for humor, there's no substitute for seeing a lot. In fact, many very knowledgeable people are rather unfunny, mainly because they fail to see the humor in things. Look for the humor in everyday situations, and see what others don't. This brings up the old question of what is funny. Unfortunately (or maybe fortunately) researchers have looked at this and haven't found any hard, fast rules. There is some consensus, however, that the humor response is similar to the fear response, and thus the unknown, the surprising, and the incongruous are often funny. You can find these by looking, for example, for connections between

dissimilar things or by looking for the unexpected in the familiar. On a more basic level, just pay attention to what people around you are saying and doing.

Different people find different things funny. You can, of course, be funny to yourself, but if you want to be funny to other people, you need to have at least some idea of what they find funny. When you're in a group of people you don't know, for example, just listen to what subjects they talk about and what makes them laugh. Generally the better you know someone the easier it will be to make them laugh.

Be quick. People can appreciate even a slightly funny comment if it's said at the right time (usually as soon as possible after the event that precipitated the comment). If you wait too long, however, even very funny comments will lose their impact. For example, if someone says something to you and you think of a witty comeback two hours later, you're probably better off just keeping it to yourself. It won't be funny anymore, and you'll look slow.

Develop your own style. You can't be all things to all people, so you should develop your own unique brand of humor. In other words, learn from comedians and friends, but don't try to duplicate them (unless you're doing impressions, which can be funny).

You can Fail sometimes. Sometimes a joke will fall flat, or an observation that cracks you up will just make others groan. Don't be discouraged. Learn from your comedic errors, and keep trying. Even the highest paid comedians don't always get a laugh, and no one expects anybody to be funny all the time. If you feel like you're temporarily off your game, though, don't try to force humor.

Don't tell 10 jokes over a 2 minute period. Be conservative and tell the jokes at the right time. Practice callbacks. You may have noticed that many comedians will tell a joke and then bring it back in one version or another, usually getting as big a laugh (or bigger) on the second time than on the first. This is called a callback, and you can use this technique, too. If you come up with a joke or observation that gets a big laugh, subtly bring it back a little later or another time for similar type of audience. As a general rule, though, don't try to call something back more than 3 times.

It's not all verbal -- sometimes doing a funny dance, or making a funny noise, can work in the right situation. Just make sure you're not making a complete fool of yourself. **You want people laughing with you, not at you.**

Don't try to think of jokes. Let them come naturally during conversation. The more you practice the above techniques, the more naturally funny observations will come to you. Do not try to be funny just to tell a joke. Similarly you should not try to tell a joke because you want people to think you're funny. You have to go at your own pace. You need to say something at the right time and the right instinct and it will be funny. At the same time there are occasions that are inappropriate for telling a joke.

Don't be afraid to make fun of yourself. Self-deprecating humor is a lot safer than making fun of others, and it can be really funny. Just be careful not to sound pathetic or whiny, especially if you're trying to impress a date. Try to make jokes about yourself as little as possible. This will display a healthy self-confidence. When you make jokes about others however, be sure to not insult them and if you are feeling angry: don't let it out through a demeaning joke.

You can't be funny to all people. Sometimes you'll run into people who just aren't amused by anything you say or do. They're probably either stick-in-the-muds or they just have a different sense of humor than you do. Don't let them get you down.

NEVER laugh at your own jokes before at least one other person laughs first (unless they're the type who will laugh at anything). Doing so can make you look like you're trying hard to be funny. Remember that being funny isn't about what cracks you up, it's about what cracks others up. Here we are not talking of comedians show but of normal conversations. People will tend to get annoyed if you're always trying to crack a joke or make a witty observation.

Don't make jokes or comments about people's race, religion, and so on. Don't do anything negative in a group that you wouldn't do by yourself. If something seems wrong, like picking on a guy or abusing an individual (even if the individual is a jerk), SPEAK UP, forget whatever others of the group might think. Who cares if they disagree or agree in general? When it comes down to it, do you really want to spend the rest of your life regretting not defending the man/woman that your friends humiliated? Is it worth it, the social acceptance vs. your morals and rights.

EXTERNAL STIMULUS

Role of Government

What makes people in some countries happier than others? One of the most consistent trends is that those with the highest levels of happiness also reported the highest levels of trust in their governments, the police and the justice system, as well as those around them. Happier people also tended to have plenty of friends and acquaintances, as well as at least one very close friend, or a partner.

It also appears to confirm the old adage that money can't buy us happiness. In countries where the population generally said that they trusted the government and other institutions, a high income made people happier still – but in those countries where such trust was lacking, even the richest tended to be less happy. The degree to which people had been educated had a similarly limited impact on their overall well being. But the degree to which peoples' jobs gave them a sense of self-respect did appear to influence their happiness levels.

A survey by Cambridge University, conducted in Europe, shows that trust in society is very important. The countries that scored highest for happiness also reported the highest levels of trust in their governments, laws and each other. The UK shows lower trust in government, the police and other institutions and higher social distrust, which might explain why the level of happiness among British people is also lower compared with other countries

The message to policy-makers is that Governments should therefore promote social inclusion, because that brings the psychological integration that is essential to happiness. “One thing that is clear from the report is that it is not enough for governments to focus on improving wealth. Our well-being would be more likely to flourish in a mutually supportive and trusting society.

Over the past 60 years after our independence, the three constitutional organs of state have fallen far short of our hopes and expectations. Legislatures have become battlefields, and no serious public policy is evolved, nor accountability of the executive enforced by our elected representatives. Most legislators are content to be disguised executive, seeking and obtaining state patronage, privilege and ‘red light’. A vicious cycle of unaccounted money power, illegitimate election expenditure, polling

irregularities, abuse of public office, corruption and nepotism is operating, making citizens somewhat helpless and unhappy. Even the citizens are self-centered and rarely follow those rules and law that makes their life even slightly inconvenient even though these are for their long-term happiness.

The question is: Are governments addressing these issues?" Governments have started waking up to the fact that economic achievement is no replacement for a happy nation but still they cling desperately to gross domestic product (GDP) as a measure of national prosperity. Already there is a growing interest in the genuine progress indicator, which, in stark contrast to GDP, considers both the quality and distribution of economic growth, and in gross national happiness (GNH), a project aimed at developing more appropriate and inclusive indicators that truly measure the quality of life in nations and organisations. It is pointed out that while wealth is a factor in happiness, it is subject to diminishing returns.

Happiness Quotients

Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

GDP is a broad quantitative measure of a nation's total economic activity. More specifically, GDP represents the monetary value of all goods and services produced within a nation's geographic borders over a specified period of time.

Gross National Happiness (GNH)

GNH is an attempt to define a standard of living in more holistic and psychological terms than gross national product or GDP. Bhutan's King Jigme Singye Wangchuck coined the term in 1972. It signaled his commitment to building an economy that would serve Bhutan's unique culture based on Buddhist spiritual values.

It can be used as a way of deriving and prioritising the economic and development plans of a country.

Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI)

GPI considers both the quality and distribution of economic growth, the value of the

nation's economic activity. It also considers the value of housework, caring for children and the elderly, volunteerism and the hours spent on free time or family and community activities - all of which can be viewed as "good for the economy", despite no money changing hands. The GPI attempts to show that the quality of economic development is at least as important as the quantity of economic activity measured by GDP.

Human Development Index (HDI)

The HDI is a measure of human development. It measures achievements based on life expectancy at birth, the adult literacy rate and the combined primary, secondary and tertiary enrolment ratio, as well as the standard of living as measured by per capita GDP.

There is a slump in public contentment that could be due to flagging trust in the Government and other institutions. Governments should carry out extensive survey, designed by a team of leading psychologists, which can ask questions ranging from "How religious are we?" to "How much do we personally trust the police?" The aim is to identify not just where people are happiest, but why, with a view to forming policy initiatives. Economics has focused too exclusively on wealth maximisation. Bhutan, with a population of about 2.2 million, has evolved its unique identity largely from a rich religious and cultural heritage. This magical kingdom has replaced Tibet as the country travelers know for its pure practice of Mahayana Buddhism in the Tantric form and its untouched culture. But the Bhutanese are determined to balance development and change, tradition and progress. And their policy of implementing GNH as a measure of prosperity has been working.

Government's major role comes in providing education to its people. The other major requirement is with regard to health services near their place of residence. Help in kind to the needy is preferred to monetary help that also invites corruption.

Social Psychologists use a term Subjective Well-being (SWB) when describing the satisfaction of general public. It has small positive relationship with wealth, particularly for elders. Social relationships like marriage, friendship are major source of SWB. In case of workers, job satisfaction is important and unemployment is the major distress factor. Satisfied and happy workers are absent less and have lower labour conflicts. Happiness can be enhanced by skill training, increasing pleasant activities and

showing concern for their problems. Satisfaction index depends upon Leisure, marriage, work, standard of living, friendships, sex life and health.

Database of Happiness

Happiness in this survey is defined as the degree to which an individual judges the overall quality of his life-as-a-whole favorably. Within this concept two 'components' of happiness are distinguished: hedonic level of affect (the degree to which pleasant affect dominates) and contentment (perceived realization of wants). These components represent respectively 'affective' and 'cognitive' appraisals of life and are seen to figure as subtotals in the overall evaluation of life, called overall happiness.

Happiness as defined here can be measured by means of questioning, and hedonic level also by observations of non-verbal behavior. Though happiness is measurable in principle, not all the questionnaires and observation schedules used for its measurement are deemed acceptable. Many measures tap in fact broader phenomena than defined here. These measures are left out in this review of survey research on happiness in nations. All the data reported here are based on indicators that successfully passed a test for face-validity.

"Taking all things together on a scale of one to 10, how happy would you say you are?" With that question and global surveys, the World Database of Happiness has ranked 95 nations on a happiness scale.

Switzerland's citizens closely trail the Danish, each reporting an average happiness level of 8.1 (out of 10), followed by Iceland (7.8), Finland (7.7), Australia (7.7) and Sweden (7.7), all the way down to grim Moldova (3.5). Denmark, Switzerland, Austria, Finland, Iceland, Australia, Sweden, Canada, Guatemala, Luxemburg, Ireland, Mexico, Norway are the happiest nations in that order. Research by socio-economist Weiner shows that Scandinavian nations come out on top, making up five of the 13 happiest nations. India is in the middle range with a level 6.2 and a rank of 45 in 95 nations covered in the survey.

The Swiss are efficient and punctual, comparatively wealthy and face hardly any unemployment. Their streets, air and tap water are squeaky clean and chocolate is a national obsession. But Weiner saw no joy in their faces, and reasoned that perhaps it's better to live in this middle range than to vacillate between moments of elation and long periods of despair. Mere contentment does not indicate full-on joy. In the case of Iceland that ranks as the fourth-happiest nation in the world, he learned the small nation is quite literally a family; geneticists have found that almost all Icelandic citizens are related. When people greet each other in Iceland, the phrase they use roughly translates to "come happy," and when people part, they utter the equivalent of "go happy." The country is a favorite stamping ground of artists and cultivates a creative spirit; the government supports writers with generous subsidies.

But it's not just about money. Nigeria and Bangladesh are poorer and happier, As against this Moldova compares itself to Italy and Germany. The country also lacks a distinct culture and any semblance of national pride. Government officials even speak Russian--the language of their oppressors for much of the last century.

In the United States of America "Happiness is there for the taking in America, you just need the willpower to find it, and enough cash." "Americans work longer hours and commute greater distances than virtually any other people in the world," Weiner writes, but "they remain profoundly optimistic." Two-thirds of Americans say they are hopeful about the future.

So far, the data reveal national happiness doesn't predictably track average income, type of government--democracy versus dictatorship--or even warm climate. Thus, while wealth doesn't seem to generate happiness, extreme poverty is more likely to produce the opposite. It's comforting, though, that most people in the world report being satisfied with their lives. "Virtually every country in the world scores somewhere between five and eight on a 10-point scale," Weiner writes. "There are a few exceptions." So while, admittedly, those Scandinavians have it pretty good, the rest of us aren't too far behind. And that's something to be happy about.

Role of NGOs

In a large country like India where what constitutes happiness differs from regions to regions and communities to communities the effort of governments alone to make people happy cannot succeed. The government can perform better as one providing the infrastructure for its people to lead a happy life. Further it can act as a regulator to ensure that the resources are justly divided amongst the needy. Unfortunately redtapism, inefficiency, non-accountability and above all corruption eat away almost 85% of the allotted amount and only 15% may reach the person it is meant for (remark made famous by late Prime Minister Rajeev Gandhi). And here also the rich and powerful corner most of the benefits or ensure that their supporters get a major share.

It is here that Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) can play an important role. Unfortunately, except for a few well-known organizations started by sincere philanthropists, others are created with a purpose other than what they profess. A number of them are there only to draw government grants. Others spend major portion on administration and media coverage. Another aspect is duplication of effort and unorganized functioning. All this results in less of happiness and more of heart burn to the needy.

A very important non-governmental effort, peculiar more to our country, that provides not material happiness but shows a path to salvation and emotional happiness, is through discourses by eminent religious leaders and the guidance given by cultural and spiritual organizations (not those with political ambitions or those who take upon themselves the duty of social or cultural policing).

Joy is greater when other people are also involved. Members of club are likely to be happier. Sporting, music, voluntary gatherings discourses and festivals provide opportunities for joint activities leading to greater happiness. TV programmes are other source of happiness in a group. Involvement of women is very important as they feel the need for doing some thing for the society and also have more compassion for the needy. They prefer part time involvement as they have home responsibilities. Social associations, forums, ward or colony association, citizen societies etc can play a major role in providing happiness not only to their members but also to general public through

rallies against habits causing distress, camps for health check ups, lectures on topics of general interest and public meetings on specific occasions.

Role of Media

Sixty years ago only newspapers were available, that too only in larger towns on the same day. In smaller towns it was delivered the next day or even later. Radio was available only in the houses of a few well to do persons. Visual media was restricted to the news magazine from the Information and Broadcasting Ministry that was shown at the start of a show in cinema halls. In such a scenario the impact of media on the life of people was limited. In most cases information to the common men was second or third hand from the better-informed people of the society. Cinema was the only major source of entertainment that could provide at least a short-term happiness to the common public.

Today media is able to impact the mood of the people almost instantaneously. Further its content directly causes happiness or anguish, as one is all the time being 'bombarded' with information through over hundred TV Channels, scores of newspapers and magazines, radio and now even SMS. Teenagers, by and large, do not mind this multiplicity of information and ease of entertainment. But for those busy at work some of these act as a distraction that may not be appreciated in most cases. For senior citizens the TV programmes of their choice do provide entertainment or at least a 'time-pass'. Many houses subscribe to more than one newspaper.

Unfortunately for major part the media in general and TV in particular tries to create tension and stress rather than provide an enjoying and informative environment. A perfect example of this is our news media. They've found that negative news gets better ratings than positive; the more dramatic and repugnant, the better. So that's what they focus on and look for. If you watch the news on a regular basis you might start to think that this world is filled with nothing but hostile, angry, hateful, dishonest and cruel people. It's a warped perspective. These are bound to drag us into utter despair every day, if we choose to let it. Where are the stories about all the loving, happy, gentle, honest and sweet people out there? Obviously they're out there, but where are the stories?

Senior citizens, even then, eagerly await the newspapers and go through them in greater detail, as this is their biggest time pass. Radio, particularly FM could be a great boredom reliever as they can enjoy music through out the day (and even night if they so like). In fact for many of them the aches and pains common at this age can be forgotten for some time while they enjoy a movie or direct telecast of their favourite sport. But all these can also be a source of annoyance particularly if they are loud or when some family member is not keeping well. Many of these media inputs are not totally in our control particularly in a free society where the consumption culture is prevalent and advertisements of the print and TV mediums are all the time impacting our daily life.

If there is a problem with the media, it is not due to the system or the policies that put the system in place but to “the people” who demand the content that the commercial media firms obediently provide. This may well be the most important myth of all, partly because it contains an element of truth. At a certain level it seems like it *must* be true; after all, why wouldn't profit- seeking firms try to satisfy the market? But upon close inspection, the argument has a number of flaws. Take the case of soaps that paint women as a family villain. Nobody wants it but once a serial is started viewers want to know what happens next or how the villain would act and how the good ‘bahu’ wins in the end and are thus attracted to the channel. The media thus not necessarily give us what we want, but also give us plenty of what we do *not* want.

However one cannot deny the usefulness of the media in directly or indirectly causing happiness to most of us based on specific favourable news in our areas of interest. You write a letter to the editor on some grievance or in support of some decision or suggesting some improvement in the dealings of the government and it gets published. Obviously you would be delighted. You are eager to know the result of some examination or a sporting event and you come out successful or your team wins then you would be happy and may even celebrate the success. You have taken part in some group discussion or were a speaker in some function and the media covered it (preferably with a photograph!), naturally you will be happy and would like your family members and friends to see it.

In the case of Newspaper most of us eagerly watch for Cartoons, detailed report of sporting events where our country or our chosen players have performed well, results of examination where some one near to us has appeared or the results of an election where we have voted or where the political party of our liking wins and so on. Some of us are eager for news about films, actors, their 'affairs' etc. While others are keen to read advertisement for a job of their liking in the 'Wanted' column, a good match for their children in classified advertisement and any other announcement that reduces a burden or increases the take home pay. These are 'happiness generators' for the day.

The programmes on Television that give happiness depend upon the family members. Many like to watch a good movie while the ladies eagerly wait for Soaps of their liking. Reality shows, live sports telecasts of sports, live telecast of chosen events, special programmes like cooking, dancing, religious discourses, yoga classes, comedy shows etc are some of the programmes that may cause many of us happiness or at least enable us to pass our time fruitfully. News telecast can be an overriding choice in case of some important event. But the most popular programmes are related to live overage of matches involving our country, especially if we are winning. A victory in some event of Olympics or a cricket or hockey match gives so much to cheer about to a large number of viewers.

Anything in excess is likely to cause harm. It is especially true for TV viewing. Others in the family may not like what causes happiness to some. There are many reports or shows that can make us unhappy. Hence we should be selective about them. Persons who are likely to get worked up by certain information/display and thus harm their health should be particularly careful.

Impact of Sports and Entertainment

Sports can be an important contributor for happiness. Although the purposes of sports are varied and mean different things to different people, many would agree that organized sport participation could bring authentic happiness to a wide range

of participants as well as spectators and viewers. While the real happiness is when the team or individual being supported by us is victorious, intelligent spectators/viewers enjoy high-class play irrespective of it. Sports when played in the right spirit can bring joy to the players and million others. The challenge of taking risks, proper appreciation of ups and downs in life, team spirit to work cooperatively toward a common goal are some of the obvious benefits of participating in sports. We can build our communication skills. We can develop or reinforce confidence, trust and humility. In an indirect way these benefits also impact on the spectators.

Establishing a sense of purpose and meaning in sports participation reinforces the pursuit of pleasure and engagement. Ed Diener, a pioneering researcher on well-being from the University of Illinois, claims that fun and enjoyment may predict daily satisfaction; however life satisfaction is predicted by the quality of one's purpose and meaning. When we demonstrate our "best effort" as a coach, player, administrator, official, parent or even spectator, we also become fully engaged in the game and have the greatest opportunity to enjoy the process. As human beings, we have many aspirations, motives and desires that drive our participation in sport, either from the field, sidelines or stands. Motivation and happiness can come from the rich stories of sport participation that have inspired belief and a sense of purpose in many of us.

Taking part in sports and games is a great source of enjoyment to the young people. Live coverage of many sports through TV is big business as it provides advertisement revenue to the channel owner. Children and elders alike in our country enjoy such telecasts, particularly when our team is doing well. For some, statistics of their favourite sport, particularly cricket, is a great source of happy conversation. Those not at home or not owning TV are also able to derive happiness from the live commentary of Radio.

In the schools the students, by and large, eagerly await the 'Games Period'. While many want to play, others are happy that the 'boring' class would be avoided. Unfortunately, the load of subjects and the need for doing extremely well in crucial examinations, forces senior children to concentrate only on coaching and studies. Those with well known sports persons as their parents are automatically attracted to sports and

some of them may not even bother about studies. Only a small percentage of such students become top class sports persons.

The entertainment industry provides the greatest happiness to the spectators in movie theatre, stage shows and reality shows both within the country and abroad. The TV medium over the years has become the number one source of happiness to viewers. Leaving aside the poorest families, almost everyone wants to buy a TV as soon as he has some spare cash. There are channels to help school children in their studies. General knowledge level of all above average students is primarily due to the inputs provided by News channels and special channels like Discovery, Animal Planet, Travel, History, National Geographic, Gyan and so on.

Happiness from Books

With the advent of first the radio then the music systems, cassette recorders for audio and video, CDs, TV and Computers, the importance of Books has definitely come down. We want to 'relive' the happy moments. The 1983 World Cup victory replays are watched with pleasure whenever they are telecast. But hardly any cricketer would give a second look to a detailed analysis in a book. However no one can deny that the spread of knowledge even today primarily depends on written or printed matter. Even after viewing an event or listening to a commentator on TV/Radio, many of us still would like to read the details in the proceedings in a newspaper, magazine or in some cases in books.

A book on jokes cannot be replaced by a 'Comedy show'. A poem or 'shero-shairy' collection that one likes, can give as much more personal happiness than a 'kavi sammelan'. The difference is only with regard to availability of spare time. With our fast life we do miss out some of these leisurely spent moments with a book in our hand. The same may not be true for magazines as most of the 'readers' just glance through them, halting to see some glamorous photographs or reading some spicy gossip.

For an elder person a novel or a book on topics of his or her interest, especially if written by his favourite author, is a great source of relaxation and happy time spent alone.

Religious books and magazines are for serious reading. However the happiness provided by spiritual thoughts to those who have deliberately chosen to read such books, cannot be easily described or explained. This is especially true for elderly ladies in India who spend many hours regularly to read mythological and spiritual books. For intellectually exposed men these may look waste of time but for them it is time well spent that gives them mental peace and happiness.

For youngsters a comic of Archie or Indrajal can provide fun time. The girls would spend hours reading a 'Mills and Boone' and then happily share the story with their teenage friends. Unfortunately in the progressive (!) society the dating, dancing and even affairs are now the 'in' things and books have taken a back seat. The more studious youngsters do read books concerning their chosen subjects as well books on science fiction, personality development and so on. While books about sex either bought or borrowed from friends are still the primary source of sexual knowledge in our country, the Internet has taken over this role in a rather damaging way in towns and cities. The choice of books decides whether it would give one correct knowledge and eventual happiness.

The bookstalls are full of hundreds of magazines on current affairs, political views, films, celebrity gossip, recipes, health and bodybuilding, glamour, fashion, sports and entertainment, astrology, religion and spirituality, finance and share market, management and trade and technical or other specialty. Each one of them can be a source of information as well as happiness. Of course some stories in news magazines do give us moments of sadness, shock and despair. One cannot deny that we all spend useful moments in the company of magazines and usually it gives us joy.

HOW TO BE HAPPY?

Shrikrishna tells Arjuna in Gita: Most of us have a notion that anything pleasant or pleasurable to the senses would lead to happiness. Hence our mind craves for such experiences. However, there are several shortcomings in seeking happiness this way. Firstly senses always require some external object for experience. Secondly, such a sense gratification is only a temporary experience while we are looking for a lasting state. Thirdly if the experience is pleasurable, the senses demand more of this experience. This results in our becoming an addict of this sense gratification. If we are unable to gratify our addiction, we become angry and an angry person temporarily loses control on himself and unpleasantness results. So the real happiness cannot be through sense gratification.

Notable features of an Unhappy person

Some people have lived unhappy lives for so long that they've forgotten what true happiness feels like. For some, it may take most of their adult lives to recognize their own unhappiness. Many do not realize their unhappiness until they are in their middle or later years of their lives; hence the "midlife crisis". An unhappy person usually exhibits one or more of the following symptoms:

- He/she is obsessed with life being unfair.
- They have a negative outlook on life and towards others. Their first reaction is to doubt the intentions of others and to assume the worst of them.
- Unhappy people are insecure, have low self-esteem or overly sensitive egos.
- They have unrealistically high standards that no one can measure up to. This includes them; whether it's looks, ethics, or achievements.
- They are easily offended and are too critical of themselves (secretly) and others (openly).
- They have a strong need to be right all the time, which makes her/him highly argumentative.
- Their happiness is attached to events, things or others. They view everything in terms of status or competition including their homes, cars, partners, job titles and bank accounts.

- While their cheeks may smile, their eyes don't. Their laughs might be loud, but they don't sound heartfelt.
- They tend to exaggerate negative events. They get depressed more often and for longer periods of time.
- Their language is mostly critical and negative.
- Because of their negative disposition, these individuals can't easily relate to other people (at a deeper level), and they feel lonely.
- They are "control freaks" and exhibit higher degrees of fear, worry, anxiety, stress or anger.
- Because we are all creatures of habit, unhappy people are more attracted to negative situations (watching tragedies, war, court and crime shows)
- Unhappy people go through life missing its simple pleasures.
- They have less sex, and when they do, it's usually less sensual, more of a conditioned routine or a performance act.
- Since they are not happy with themselves or their lives, they resort to escapism through workaholicism, alcoholism, drug abuse, food addiction or the adoption of a superstitious belief system.

Notable features of a Happy person

You can be happy while enjoying whatever role you are playing - flowing and growing while being whoever you are, however you are, and wherever you are. Just imagine - what would it feel like to simply accept and believe that you are already, always, automatically, deeply and profoundly happy, and to know that you will always inherently be happy, regardless of what does or doesn't happen in your life?

Those who think they're not feeling happy are often advised to focus their attention on observing someone who *is* happy, or on helping someone else to find greater happiness. While admiring or helping others, our focus is on appreciating and serving, instead of on monitoring our own personal, momentary experiences of happiness.

In order to learn how to be content with our own lives, we need to understand what makes some people generally happier than others. Researchers have found four inner traits that predispose people to have positive attitudes and to be content or happy more often than not. These traits are:

Self-esteem. Happy people respect their value as human beings and have confidence in themselves. When times get tough, people with a solid sense of self-worth and a firm belief in their own competence are the very people who persist until the tough times have passed.

Personal Control. Happy people believe that they have control over what happens to them. They tend to believe that they are actively in charge of their own destiny rather than being a passive victim of fate.

Optimism. Happy people are hopeful people. They expect they have a decent chance to succeed when they try something new. They see the proverbial glass of life as half full rather than half empty.

Extroversion. Happy people tend to be outgoing and sociable. They often derive pleasure being involved in functions, outdoor events, parties and so on rather than spending time all alone or in company of only the close relations.

Attract Happiness

Not everyone is born extrovert with high self-esteem and an optimistic outlook. Some people are more pessimistic by nature, prone to depression, to not think well of themselves and to find social activities to be more work than play. Even such pessimistic people can become happy despite their nature.

The way to cultivate greater happiness is deceptively simple. *Pretend* that we are self-confident and optimistic. We might think that pretending to be happier couldn't possibly work, but in fact, if we give it half a chance, it can indeed help us to become a happier person. There is a very real sense in which being happy is a habit. We can strengthen our own habit of being happy by practicing it again and again. As we become more and more comfortable acting happy, the phoniness will diminish and the happy behaviors and attitudes we have been practicing will begin to feel more natural. Happy and successful people tend to choose their happiness, and plan for it. Once you know what you want your life to be like, you can develop goals for yourself based on these desires. Train Your Mind - Choose the way you think about things. Sometimes things

happen in life that might seem like a disaster at first, but aren't necessarily in the end. Focusing on your strengths leads to higher levels of health, happiness, and success.

The Genie of Aladdin and his Lamp always says one thing: “Your wish is my command!” In our story of life the wishes are not limited to three. So let the world of yours know your wishes, have confidence in your effort and you will ‘attract the result’, as mentioned in the famous book “The Secret”.

The same goes for our interactions with other people. Pretend to be more outgoing than we are. Smile. Act like we like the people we meet, and we will likely find that we actually do like some of them! As a bonus, we may also find out that we are beginning to like ourselves better, that we feel more confident, and that we are becoming more comfortable with other people. These changes can help we feel greater happiness in our life and more optimism for the future. Build and maintain good quality relationships. To build a good quality and strong relationship it is important that you establish good open communication, that you think positively about the other person in the relationship, and that you respect and trust that other person.

Others would treat you the way you treat yourself. If you treat yourself with love and respect, you cannot expect others to give love and respect to you. Do not sacrifice yourself for others all the time. While occasional sacrifice to save a situation in the family or job is all right but if it becomes the rule than everyone will take advantage of you.

Believing that we have some measure of control over our life is important for wellness, as it motivates helpful coping that would not otherwise occur. People without control over their environment are vulnerable to feeling helpless and to lapsing into passivity and depression. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in nursing homes filled with formerly vital elderly patients. The research shows that real improvements in nursing home patients' physical and mental well-being occur when those patients are granted even small amounts of control over their lives, for instance, being able to choose some of their daily activities.

Although control is important for well-being, people never have perfect control over their situations. Birth and death (and some would add taxes) are just some of the many things in life that are not possible to avoid. Recognizing this truth, control is often described as having two critical components.

Happiness Test

The following questions should be truthfully answered choosing the appropriate response and the marks to be added to find out your score.

Authentic Happiness Test

Do you feel like a failure?

Yes most of the time:	0
Yes some of the time:	1
Only a few times:	2
Very rarely:	3
Almost never:	4

What mood you are in?

Very bad mood most of the time:	0
Bad mood quite a few times:	1
Bad mood sometimes:	2
Usually in good mood:	3
In good mood most of the time:	4

Are you clear about the purpose of your life?

You consider your life purposeless:	0
You have little understanding of it:	1
You have some idea:	2
You are clear to some extent	3
You are very clear	4

Do you strive to get what you want?

Never get what I want:	0
Seldom get what I want	1
Some times get what I want:	2
I get what I want many times:	3
I get what I want all the time:	4

Are you Joyful?

I lead a sorrowful life:	0
I am seldom happy:	1
I am joyful a few times:	2
I am joyful many times:	3
I am always full of joy:	4

Are you bored?

Yes I am bored of my life:	0
I am bored most of the time:	1
I am bored sometimes:	2
I am usually not bored:	3
I am never bored:	4

Are you a friendly person?
I have almost no friends: 0
I have a few friends: 1
I am reasonably friendly: 2
I have many friends: 3
I make friends easily: 4

Are you proud of yourself?
I am ashamed of myself: 0
I am usually ashamed of my actions: 1
I do not have to be ashamed of myself: 2
I am usually proud of my actions: 3
I am always proud of what I do: 4

Are you an efficient person?
No I never succeed in my tasks 0
I seldom succeed in my tasks: 1
I succeed in some of my tasks: 2
I am able to do a good job: 3
I am a very efficient person: 4

Do you like your work?
I do not like my work: 0
I seldom like what I do: 1
I like my work sometimes: 2
I usually like my work: 3
I always like what I do: 4

What future holds for you?
I am very pessimistic about the future: 0
I feel there is no future for me: 1
I am hopeful about the future: 2
I am quite optimistic about the future: 3
I am very optimistic about my future: 4

What tasks keep you involved?
I am usually doing useless tasks: 0
Quite a few of my tasks are useless: 1
Some of my tasks are unimportant: 2
I usually take up useful tasks: 3
I am always doing important tasks: 4

Do you enjoy daily routine?
I never enjoy what I have to do: 0
I rarely like what I do: 1
I sometimes like what I am doing: 2
I generally like my routine: 3
I have a very enjoyable routine: 4

A score of 10 or below indicates you are a very unhappy person. You must change your approach to life. Life is not that bad. A score of 40 and above indicates that you already have most of the attributes of a happy person. Keep it up and make others happy by encouraging them to change their approach to life. Those having up to 25 marks can improve their response to situations they usually face in life and those between 26 and 39 can review their response to make them more happy in life.

Control of Situation to bring Happiness

*There is no road to happiness. Happiness is the road.
Happiness is a voyage and not a destination.
Stop waiting for things to happen. Decide to be happy now.*

Primary control

This involves actually changing a difficult situation so as to make it less difficult. Taking the initiative to alter a troubling situation is an assertive act that frequently results in a self-esteem boost. Some situations are not possible to change, however, and instead must simply be accepted. When this is the case, secondary control, which involves finding the most positive way to think about a situation we cannot change, remains an option that provides similar positive benefits to primary control.

Recognizing when a situation can be changed and when it must be simply accepted is sometimes a difficult task. The difficulty involved in this recognition has been nicely captured in the Serenity Prayer from Alcoholics Anonymous:

"God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, Courage to change the things I can, and Wisdom to know the difference."

Though it can be difficult to know when to attempt primary control and when to fall back on secondary control, the "wisdom to know the difference" can be learned and improved upon so that the task becomes easier.

There are many situations that cannot be directly changed. In such situations we can take Secondary Control or indirect control. Serious illness, the death of a loved one, divorce, loss of employment, or natural disasters are examples. Our decision to look at

such situations in the most positive light makes the difference between whether we become helpless or take control of the situation with decisive steps.

Well-known Cyclist Lance Armstrong's experience with battling and surviving testicular cancer is an example of the power of maintaining a positive attitude in the face of serious situation. In October of 1996, Armstrong was diagnosed with cancer that had spread throughout his body. Two days after his diagnosis, Armstrong held a press conference in which he vowed to fight and win his battle against the disease. At the same time, Armstrong also vowed to become a spokesperson and fundraiser for cancer research. Several years later, Armstrong was cancer free and had managed to become a living legend in both the cycling world, where he became the first athlete to win six straight Tour de France races, and in the world of cancer research, where he became the inspiration for millions of people around the world.

Secondary control is the control that we have over our attitude, regardless of the situation. Lance Armstrong's battle against cancer and hopelessness is an example of how maintaining a positive attitude through a difficult situation can make the difference. Relations of such persons also exercise control for the future of the society at large. Imran Khan, Sunil Dutt and many others are example of such an effort.

Personal Response to Situation

It is important to keep in mind that how we respond to stressful events is at least in part under our control, and that we have the ability to choose to some extent how difficult and painful any given event will be. Our decision to work towards our greater personal sense of control will help us to become a happier and emotionally resilient person.

Developing a personal sense of control means working to become better at:

Knowing when to try to change a situation, and when to instead accept it,

Becoming courageous enough to make the changes we can make to improve our life, and

Learning how to manage our emotional reactions so that when we are faced with a difficult situation we cannot change, we are able to put the best possible face on that situation.

The key to the third, 'emotional management', is recognizing that we can have real control over our emotional reactions. Our emotional reactions may be provoked by external events and actions, but we ultimately determine them. We have the ability to decide how we will react. For example, if we have a boss who is given to insulting us in front of other employees that ultimately results in our anger over the situation. Our boss's behavior may trigger an emotional reaction in us, but it cannot sustain that reaction all by itself. Ultimately, we are the only person in control of how we react. Recognizing the power we have over our situation can greatly improve the way that we experience that situation.

Know yourself

Man spends the whole life to know himself. Lasting happiness is really possible when you are at peace with yourself. Spending time alone--walking in the woods, meditating, or journaling--can put you in touch with what's really going on inside you. When you acknowledge these feelings, you can make a conscious choice about what makes you happy, what to accept and what to change, rather than letting yourself be ruled by unconscious feelings.

Accepting yourself based on the contemplated recognition of self would make it easier to accept others as they are. Accepting others makes it more likely you will bring out the best in them, which in turn would make you and others happy. Accepting life's ups and downs seems to be easier for people who have accepted themselves. If you know who you are, what you are capable of, and what you are called to do, you are much less likely to waste your time and energy sweating the small stuff or even the big stuff you cannot change. You are less likely to project your uncomfortable feelings onto other people, instead of facing your feelings and learning what they have to teach you. You are less likely to waste time trying to change other people and more likely to influence them with a positive image.

Approach to happiness

Jug Suraiya in his column in Times of India says “No life could be considered either happy or sad while that life was still continuing because a sudden reversal of fortune could, overnight, transform happiness into sorrow or vice versa.” So one should not lose heart while facing a tough situation in life. But happiness cannot be achieved just by hope. We have to derive happiness by approaching everything with a positive view and simultaneously work towards achieving such a result.

Your happiness depends a lot upon how you approach your daily routine. How you try to take out the best in every task you have to do. How enjoyable you make it. How you handle failures and successes and so on.

Below are some **indicators** of the right approach for deriving maximum happiness.

- Regardless of what I am doing, time passes very quickly
- My life serves a higher purpose
- Life is too short to postpone the pleasures it can provide
- I seek out situations that challenge my skills and abilities
- In choosing what to do, I always take into account whether it will benefit other people.
- I am always very absorbed in what I do
- I am rarely distracted by what is going on around me.
- I have a responsibility to make the world a better place
- My life has a lasting meaning
- In choosing what to do, I always take into account whether it will be pleasurable.
- What I do matters to society.

- I love to do things that excite my senses
- I have spent a lot of time thinking about what life means and how I fit into its big picture

“Do Not Miss Out Anything”

The following is a story I received from a young friend in mail one day:

There was this 80-year-old lady. Once she asked me to accompany her to the Restaurant. As we were seated she ordered, what we call rich dishes and sweets. I asked “How come you order rich desserts at your age?”

She laughed and said, with wanton mirth,

“ I am tasting all that is Possible. I try to eat the food I need, and do the things I should. Life's so short, my friend, I hate missing out on something good.

This year I realized how old I was. (She grinned) I haven't been this old before.

So, before I die, I've got to try those things that for years I had ignored.

I haven't smelled all the flowers yet. There are too many books I haven't read. There are more sweets to be tasted and kites to be flown overhead.

There are many shopping malls I haven't seen. I've not laughed at all the jokes. I've missed a lot of Bollywood hits and potato chips and cokes in the cinema hall.

I want to wade again in water and feel ocean spray on my face.

I want to visit every temple of all faiths and thank God for His grace.

I want Amul butter every day spread on my morning toast.

I want to make un-timed long distance calls to the folks I love the most.

I haven't cried at all the movies yet, or walked in the morning rain.

I need to feel wind in my hair. I want to fall in love again.

So, if I choose to have only sweets, instead of having dinner,

then should I die before nightfall, I'd say I died a winner,

because I missed out on nothing. I filled my heart's desire.

I had that final chocolate ice cream before my life expired.”

Managing Problem Situations

We have to face problems in life. You cannot run away from them. But you can face them and manage them in a positive manner. Here are twelve rules for this.

- Do Not Under Estimate: Neither underestimates the problem nor your capability to solve it by being creative. If it is a problem it has to be important. Similarly you have untapped potential that can be put to effective use
- Do Not Exaggerate: It is necessary not to project a problem more seriously than it really is. Do not play a wolf, as you will not get the right attention when the problem is more serious and you really need help.
- Do Not Wait Indefinitely: Do not expect to find somebody else to solve your problems or hope that the problem would solve itself if ignored for some time.
- Do Not Aggravate: We can by our acts of omissions and commissions convert a simple problem to a more serious one. Do not make the situation worse by adding anger, jealousy, hatred and so on. Take prompt action without searching for a scapegoat.
- Analyse the problem to get at the root cause for it.
- Motivate yourself by knowing the benefits from the solved problem
- Create Positive Situation by removing unnecessary handicaps
- Get Assistance from friends and other knowledgeable persons
- Search for Opportunity to find a solution that will fit in this case
- Be dedicated to the effort and do not give up easily
- Communicate your experience to others
- Insulate yourself from wrong and disheartening inputs

Avoid Wasteful Activities

Most of us do not utilize our full potential in various spheres of our life. The main reason in most cases is impatience. Either we get easily satisfied or do not wait long for the situation to improve. Thus it is a constant story of missed chances. As soon as we become slightly happy, we become lazy and do not follow up our dreams and thus waste a large portion of our life. To live life to the fullest, we have to concentrate on our objectives and not waste our time in unproductive actions. The overload of information and its easy availability also contributes to the waste of time in selecting only that information which is of direct use for meeting our objectives.

We should take up only meaningful actions. Even a single negative action or even thought can lead us to a path that would make us and/or others unhappy. Instead of being consistently feeling miserable after the valuable time is lost in useless activities it is much better to be involved through personal control, as far as possible, in those activities that may make us happy in the long run and be habitually optimistic about their outcome. Stop and consider whether all the activities that fill your days are truly necessary, beneficial, or even enjoyable. If you spend all your days doing unnecessary things that waste your precious time and energy, then you won't have enough time and energy to devote to what would make you more satisfied and happy.

‘One thing we should remember is that there is nothing wrong with doing nothing! In fact one should set aside time each day to do just that. Do nothing, sit, relax or take a stroll. This removes the clutter from our mind. Do not think this is wasting time, it recharges you, clarifies doubts, shows a path out of difficult situation and you get back control of yourself.’ (Taken from ‘100 ways to a stress free life’)

It is our questing nature that has driven us to achieve some of the most marvelous feats of civilization. The dark side of our quests emerges when they become our fixations or our obsessions, when we spend so much time in pursuit of one of them (or several of them) that the most important ones are left starving for our attention. Even noble quests—religion, gold medals, careers, love—can become dangerous if they become a fanatic focus that leads us away from what really matters—God, self-respect, productive work, family, friends and compassion. - Dr Shawn Christopher Shea

“Filling up the Jar of Life”

A professor stood before his Philosophy class and had some items in front of him. When the class began, wordlessly, he picked up a very large and empty jar and proceeded to fill it with golf balls.

He then asked the students if the jar was full.

They agreed that it was.

The professor then picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar. He shook the jar lightly. The pebbles rolled into the open areas between the golf balls.

He then asked the students again if the jar was full.

They agreed it was.

The professor next picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up everything else.

He asked once more if the jar was full.

The students responded with a unanimous "yes."

The professor then produced two cups of coffee from under the table and poured the entire contents into the jar, effectively filling the empty space between the sand.

The students laughed.

"Now," said the professor, as the laughter subsided, "I want you to recognize that this jar represents your life.

"The golf balls are the important things - your God, family, your children, your health, your friends, and your favorite passions - things that if everything else was lost and only they remained, your life would still be full. The pebbles are the other things that matter like your job, your house, and your car. The sand is everything else--the small stuff."

"If you put the sand into the jar first," he continued, "there is no room for the pebbles or the golf balls. The same goes for life. If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff, you will never have room for the things that are important to you."

"Pay attention to the things that are critical to your happiness."

"Play with your children. Take time to get medical checkups. Take your partner out to dinner. There will always be time to clean the house and fix small pending repairs. Take care of the golf balls first, the things that really matter. Set your priorities. The rest is just sand."

One of the students raised her hand and inquired what the coffee represented. The professor smiled. "I'm glad you asked."
"It just goes to show you that no matter how full your life may seem, there's always room for a cup of coffee with a friend."

Be Confident

Hesitant to take an action in self interest due to the fear of the unknown or being unsure of success and being more concerned about what 'others' would say is a major reason for missing out opportunities for being happy. As against this not being concerned with the impact of our actions on others results in losing the support of friends and colleagues and again indirectly results in unhappiness. Below are given a set of questions that would help you to judge the level of correct self-confidence. Any negative answer should be further analysed to remove the constraint that is making you lose confidence. Being self-confident is essential for personal control and happiness.

Confidence Test:

Have you been able to concentrate on whatever you are doing? (Yes: 2, No: 0)

Do you lose much sleep worrying about the past? (Yes: 0, No: 1)

Are you convinced that you are playing useful part in things? (Yes: 2, No: 1)

Do you feel capable of making decisions about things that are of direct concern to you? (Yes:2, No:-1)

Do you feel constantly under financial or other strains? (Yes: -1, No:1)

Do you feel most of the time that you could not overcome your difficulties? (Yes: 0, No: 1)

Are you been able to enjoy your daily activities? (Yes: 1, No: 0)

Have you been feeling happy or depressed most of the time? (Happy: 1, Depressed: 0)

Have you been thinking yourself as worthless? (Yes: -2, No: 1)

Have you been feeling reasonably happy all things concerned? ((Yes: 2, No: 0)

(Desirable score: above 10)

As our elders used to say there is a time and place for everything. Doing something at the wrong time and at a wrong place can only result in failure. This is true for happiness as well. The following joke illustrates this aspect.

The Key

A neighbor found "Joha" on hands and knees. "What are you searching for Joha?" he asked.

"My keys," replied Joha.

So his neighbor got on his knees to search. After a while the neighbor said, "Are you sure you lost it here?"

"No," replied Joha. "I lost it at home."

"Good Lord! Then why are you searching here?" asked the neighbor.

"Because there is more light here!" replied Joha.

Lesson: Search for happiness where you lost it.

Be in the Present

Don't get distracted by the past or the future - What this means is to enjoy what is happening in your life now, and concentrating on being as happy as possible now rather than dwelling on bad things that may have happened in the past, or worrying about what

may or may not happen in the future. **Thich Nhat Hanh**, the noted Zen teacher says and I quote “We can be happy right here and right now. The weakness of the present civilization is that we are not able to live in the present moment. We have to learn this and not worry too much about the future.”

This doesn't mean to forget the past or not think about the future, but there are definitely more helpful ways of thinking about these times too, which may influence how happy or unhappy you are.

Take Notice of the little things in life and in the world, and enjoy Them - It may sound strange, but by paying attention to the things around you such as the natural environment, someone's smile, or how good your hot chocolate or coffee tastes in the morning, it may actually increase your overall happiness - it can be the little things that make all the difference.

Dream what you want to dream;
Go where you want to go;
Be what you want to be,
Because you have only one life
And one chance to do all the things
You want to do.

Forgiveness

If you want to experience true happiness in your life, look no further on the outside. Happiness is achieved internally, not externally. You can achieve true happiness by eliminating any stories you keep alive from the past that may haunt you. You should be more fully present in the now.

If you're holding on to resentment and bitterness, it will certainly colour your interactions with that person, causing disharmony. When you have forgiven him in your heart, whether you announce so to him or not, it will be clearly visible in your relationship and will lead to decreased tension and increased happiness for you both.

By virtue of being human, you carry within you the potential to do self-destructive and foolish things. You can hurt your loved ones and

yourself. You may be hurting right now because of something that you did in the past. Forgiving yourself is in many ways more difficult than forgiving others. Because you know your heart, you cannot get away with partial or false forgiveness. Being bitter against yourself for the mistakes of the past leads to self-loathing.

Self-forgiveness brings about a corrected self-image. Free from blame, we can see our true potential and feel good about ourselves again. When you stop flagellating yourself for the sins of your past, your future looks much brighter. Forgiving yourself requires a conscious effort to let go the past and take a step forward toward a happier and healthier life.

Let the mistakes of your past stay in the past. Push them away as if they never happened. When you can honestly do that, only then can you earnestly forgive others, only then can you begin to move away from bitterness and toward your true goal that is happiness.

(From a book by **Thomas Herold**)

Become more Optimistic

Optimism is the name given to the personality trait exhibited by people who tend to expect that good things will happen in the future. The opposite of optimism is pessimism, which is the belief that bad things will happen.

A fair amount of scientific evidence now suggests that being optimistic contributes to good health, both mental and physical. Optimism helps to improve health in several ways.

Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success- Herman Cain

By reducing the sense of helplessness that tends to set in when people feel out of control, optimism helps to motivate people to take constructive action (primary control)

they otherwise would not bother with. Joy and Happiness should remain with us even through the worst of times.

By making it possible to believe that bad situations can improve, optimism motivates people to change those bad situations (e.g., to stick to health regimens and to seek health advice, and also to address life problems early on before they spiral out of control). By nipping problems in the bud before they become entrenched, optimists end up (on average) having to solve fewer difficult life problems than do pessimists.

Optimism also improves a person's ability to develop friendships and supportive relationships because it motivates people to think that other people will like them. Having friends and social supports helps reduce people's risk for disease, particularly the recurrence of chronic disorders.

Finally, optimism affects the body at a physical level by influencing the immune system; Optimists catch fewer contagious diseases than pessimists. People who are habitually pessimistic tend to have lower immune activity than people who are optimistic. This is true regardless of physical health or temporary emotional states. Learning to be habitually optimistic may very well increase our chances of living a healthier life.

Learn to ignore worthless comments are opinions that are just meant to hurt your feelings and are not at all truthful. Try to remember that people often insult out of anger or jealousy. Some people take joy out of hurting others, and should be put in the back of your mind.

Even in the most terrible times, do not turn to alcohol, drugs, or anything else that is addictive, abusive to the health of you or others. Bad habits grow like weeds - they are easy to get, but hard to get rid of. Many addictive 'solutions' can make your problems much worse.

Pessimism is a habit as much as it is anything else. Like any habit, it can be changed if one is willing to put in the effort. The best method for dealing with habitual pessimism is to learn how to dispute (argue against) pessimistic thoughts as they arise. The disputing process has several steps:

First, we must learn to identify which thoughts are pessimistic thoughts; a process requiring some self-awareness.

Once we have identified a pessimistic thought, we must examine it to see how reasonable that thought is. Ask ourselves, "Is there really any good reason why this thought is pessimistic?". If not, we'll know how to dispute the thought.

Biased or exaggerated thoughts (thoughts that are pessimistic for no good reason) must then be corrected with more realistic ones.

To illustrate this process, imagine that we have to give a speech for work or school. Despite preparing for the speech, we find ourselves nervous at the prospect of speaking in front of people. If we are pessimistic, we'll likely believe that something negative will occur when we speak; people will hate what we have to say, will laugh at our poor delivery and our life will be ruined. The first step in disputing is to recognize that such a thought is pessimistic. We can tell this thought is pessimistic because of its overly negative tone and the absence of evidence that the feared outcomes would actually happen. We can dispute this thought by thinking more realistically about what the worst case scenario might be if our speech isn't well received. Chances are, the speech will go fine. Even if a few people don't like what we say, it is unlikely that our life will actually be ruined. Who knows? Maybe people will even like our speech. Choose to focus on the positive possibilities, and counter our negative fears with realistic judgments and possibilities.

Though the optimistic tendency to look on the bright side of things and to expect good things to happen is a good overall personality trait to have, it is not appropriate to be blindly optimistic in all circumstances. For example, it's not a good idea to be optimistic about the weather when planning for an outdoor event because despite our best wishes for sunshine and blue sky, it might rain and storm instead. In such circumstances, cautious optimism is the way to go. Plan for our event, but also have a "Plan B" ready in the event of rain. Consider the cost of failure when deciding how optimistic to be about a given situation. If the cost of failure is high, we should be cautious about being blindly optimistic that our optimistic plan will work out. On the other hand, if the cost of failure is low, it is healthier to adopt an optimistic attitude than a pessimistic one.

When we look at the people around us, we most likely find that most people's favorite pastime is to complain. And just why do we complain anyway? Is it because we need something? Is it that we lack something? Is it that we need or want sympathy? Is it because we need attention? Is it just that we just like to complain; or is it that we just like to hear ourselves talk? Is it becoming a pattern with you? These are some of the most

common elements that describe our problem. It is within our control to avoid being miserable. We tend to become miserable if

- We live most of the time for others
- We seek support most of the time and become dependent on others
- If we have to maintain a fake image
- If we take care of everyone else before ourselves
- If we are always ready to sacrifice without being asked
- If we follow traditions just to please others
- If we suppress our opinion so that nobody complains
- If we take criticism seriously all the time
- If we allow ego to take control of our life
- If we are greedy, jealous, stubborn or too sensitive

Laughter

We recognize that positive thinking is an essential ingredient in the path to happiness. Laughter is one element that is either triggered by or triggers positive thinking. Laughter can be heard and understood by all independent of the person's race or language. It is surprising but true that that one laughs mostly at incidents that have nothing to laugh about. While good news and jokes invariably makes one laugh but some of the incidents that make us laugh are something like sudden tearing of pant seam, person slipping on a banana peel, bird shit falling on body or clothes, sad but laughable actions of a circus joker, silly mistakes and so on.

Natural laughing has become scarce due to increasing tensions of life and lack of free time in the company of friends. Earlier life moved at a slow pace. People had enough time to have daily evening gossip, attending programmes like dramas and Kavi Sammelans and family get together lasting days. They provided enough opportunities for laughing. So now we need Laughter shows, comedy film, cartoons and the daily dose of jokes in the media to make us laugh. Of course for this also one has to have leisure time but one can do this while at home.

Laughter is the best medicine for illnesses of modern times like Hypertension, heart ailments, anxiety etc. It is considered to be part of any Yoga programme.

To succeed in life not only you should have occasions for laughter but also you should make others laugh. Laughing on self is the most valuable quality in any person. Laughter is not only good for physical well being but also for making us emotionally happy. **Osho** even said that laughter and smile takes one forward on the path of spirituality.

- Life is simple so let's stop complicating it. Just try to be happy in your own way.
- Just simply be happy and content with yourself, and who you are.
- Love yourself.
- Accept yourself for who you are, and as you are.
- Life is about understanding. The lessons and experiences you have are only for your own growth and for better soul awareness.
- Discover who you are, and your soul, and get acquainted with that.
- Make some time for yourself every day.
- Learn to listen.
- Pay attention to your child (children), help your elders, and you will feel fulfilled.
- Accept humiliation as part of your growth.
- Always have peace of mind. It's not easy, but try to create it.

In the end, you can live happily or you can live miserably. Take your life in your own hands and make your own choices! Simplify instead of complicating life.

SPIRITUAL APPROACH

“To begin with, your life has nothing to do with ‘You’. It has nothing to do with your body as well. Your life has to do with the ‘agenda’ that has been set for you. Set by whom? Obviously by yourself, by that part of you we’ve come to call ‘ATMA’ or soul. Satisfactory completion of the agenda would give you supreme happiness.”

-J Krishnamurty

After doing all that we are doing, if happiness is not happening, somewhere we have missed the ABCs of life; somewhere the fundamentals of life have been missed. When we were child, we were simply happy. Without doing anything, we were happy. Then somewhere along the way, we lost this. Why did we lose it? We got deeply identified with many things around our body, our mind, and us.

What we call our mind is actually just the stuff we have picked up from social situations around us. Depending upon what kind of society we have been exposed to, that is the kind of mind we have acquired. Everything in our mind right now is something we picked up from outside. This nonsense did not come with us; we picked it up and got identified with it. We got so identified with it, now it is causing us misery. We can collect any kind of garbage we want. It is okay. As long as we are not identified with it, there is no problem.

You are not same as your Body: This body is not yours; you have picked it up from the earth. You were born with a tiny body, which your parents gave you. After that, you ate plants and animals and grew. You borrowed it from the earth; it is not yours. For a while you have to use it, so enjoy it and go. But you have become so deeply identified with it you think this is you. No wonder you suffer. The basis of all this misery is, you have established yourself in untruth. You are deeply identified with that which you are not. That is why the suffering.

The whole process of spirituality is only to de-identify with that which you are not. Though we all want to be happy, after every desire gets fulfilled we are soon dissatisfied. The reason is that we are not clear about the mystery of our existence. When you don’t know what you really are, can you search for it? If you search, only your imagination will run wild. Your inner voice repeatedly asks you to find out “Who am I?” Nobody can tell you the answer. They can only show you the path to try and find the answers yourself. That path is the spiritual path. It can lead you to find out not only who

you are but also where did you come from, what is the purpose of your life, what happens when you die, will you come back, how to avoid the suffering of birth and death and so on.

Once we are miserable, knowingly or unknowingly, we only spread misery. Being happy or unhappy is actually our choice. Some people choose to be unhappy because they think that by being unhappy they will get something. Unfortunately even some of our religious teachings want us to suffer so that we can go to heaven. If we are suffering human beings, what will we do in heaven anyway? Hell will be more appropriate! Once we are unhappy, whatever we get, how does it matter? If we are happy, if we don't get anything, it does not matter. This is not a philosophy; this is our true nature. For example, why would we want to serve people? Serving people gives us happiness; that is why. So happiness is the fundamental goal of life. Why do we want to go to heaven? Only because somebody has told us that if we go to heaven, we will be happy.

Why Spiritual Happiness?

“Once we have started to realise that our worth or value does not lie in our accessories — our body, our talents, or status, or brain — we can start to become much more honest and open about ourselves. By detaching from our self-image, we can see that we are not defined by whatever we, or others, have always thought about us. We can also start to look at our shortcomings in a different light, for the way we view and handle our shortcomings is another important factor in how we can come to terms with ourselves and find true happiness and peace. If we remember that we alone are responsible for our happiness, we can take charge of the circumstances in our life. By remembering that real happiness is only possible if we are at peace with ourselves, we can start to change the way we relate to ourselves, to others, and we can finally experience true, enduring happiness throughout our life”- **Theun Mares**

The words happiness and enlightenment are perhaps among the least understood in spiritual vocabulary.

Quite often, happiness is mistaken for pleasure that is transitory. Enlightenment is sought as a state of perpetual bliss, which, when not attained, leads to frustration. Ramesh Balsekar, teacher of Advaitic truth, clarifies that what one wittingly or otherwise seeks is happiness and peace. Happiness is derived from peace of mind. Peace of mind is what enlightenment gives. We, therefore, need answers to only two questions. One, what is enlightenment and two, what will enlightenment give us for the rest of our lives that we did not have till now?

In fact, most of the seekers begin their spiritual search because they have experienced some dissatisfaction with their lives, and want to feel more satisfied, complete, positive, whole, and happy. Therefore, rather than interpreting a sense of dissatisfaction as a sign of unavoidable unhappiness, we can choose to view it in a positive light - perhaps as a sign that we are growing and being prodded to create an outer world that better reflects and nourishes our evolving soul.

With spiritual happiness, we are not waiting to be rich before we can be happy, or to find the right person to be happy with, or to have more friends to be happy. We don't need to look differently to be spiritually happy; nor do we have to heal all our flaws to be spiritually happy.

With spiritual happiness, we can look at the world with realistic eyes -- seeing, experiencing, and responding to all the muddled mess that life can sometimes seem to be. Yet, in the depths of our being, we'll know a peacefulness and contentment that never fades, even while the world may be crashing down around us.

With spiritual happiness, we try to work in harmony with the universe and our own highest good. We can surf the ups and downs of life with the blessing of knowing that we're growing. We enjoy a good sense of humour that makes even bitter medicines go down more easily.

What is Spiritual Happiness?

Happiness can be perceived at different levels, each higher than others.

Body-based: This lowest level of relative happiness relates to the more animalistic nature of human beings, such as experiences of happiness that come from the satisfaction of raw desires. People who are stuck in this level of happiness tend to be ravenous and are always looking for immediate pleasures, without much regard for troubling consequences.

Mind-based: The second level of relative happiness involves intelligence. We look to create a good life, and are willing to forgo some of the more animalistic, instinctual, and self-indulgent pleasures in order to achieve greater long-term happiness. For example, we're willing to go to work every day so we can have a home and enjoy the good things in life. Our desires have also a purpose. Desires are necessary for progress. Achievements make us happy. Unfortunately we become too involved and if there are failures, which are quite possible, we become sad.

Heart-based: The third level of happiness has more of a spiritual element. We've purified our understanding, awareness, and motives enough that our happiness comes from greater things, such as love, devotion, and service to humanity and to those we love. In this level, we do not stop taking part in the worldly affairs. In fact we strive harder as we consider them as our duty. The only care we have to take is that we do not get upset by failures or get too excited by successes.

Beyond these three levels of relative happiness, exists the realm of spiritual happiness. Spiritual happiness is a deep contentment and joy that exists peacefully beneath all the superficial waves of ephemeral life. Spiritual happiness comes from having a greater vision of how we fit into the bigger universal picture. Spiritual happiness brings a sense of gratitude and faith that allows us to be unaffected by the ups and downs of life. You can't reach this state unless you have satisfied essential body based happiness, mind based successes and heart based detachment.

**Happiness, pleasure, joy, bliss -- all these are our natural characteristics.
Sorrow is not our natural state.**

One way to describe spiritual happiness would be to say that ordinary happiness comes from getting what we want, while spiritual happiness comes from wanting what we have or get. Ordinary happiness depends mostly on what happens in arenas that may

be beyond our control, while spiritual happiness is potentially in our court. Spiritual happiness shines most brightly when we are in harmony with God and the universal flow. Instead of waiting for God and the universal flow to get in harmony with us, we can take a more proactive stance and create the ground to be in greater harmony with God's will and the nature.

We can use whatever religious or non-religious image or term we choose for envisioning this unknowable perfect flow of God's will. What is most important for supporting and nurturing our experience of spiritual happiness is the state of mind that results from seeking to be in harmony with the universe. It is independent of the religious belief, gender, material possessions and any other differentiating identity or path.

Spiritual happiness involves entering a bigger picture view, in which we can see the ups and downs of life as paint strokes on this magnificent canvas that is our own individual and unique story. We often question as to who we are and why we are here? We (our 'atma') are a tiny spec of the God ('param-atma'). It may be difficult or unconvincing to find out why we are here let us identify what we are not here for?

We are NOT here:

- To blame others
- To cry for what we do not have
- For wasting our time in useless efforts
- For artificial living to impress others
- For fighting with others
- For being sad and unhappy all the time
- For getting angry on small things
- For worrying

And so on.

With spiritual happiness, we trust in universal goodness, while resting in the humility of knowing that we see only tiny slivers of a grand and infinite reality. With humility and trust, we can stop living life as a tug of war with Universal Reality. While striving to flow in harmony with the unknowable essence of life, we walk lightly, yet

powerfully upon this earth. We can more easily let go of whatever falls away, and embrace whatever comes with a happy heart.

Having spiritual happiness doesn't necessarily mean that we walk around letting anything fall upon us without making any efforts to also create what we want. It's a balance. We put forth sincere efforts, and if some of our efforts don't bear fruit, we nevertheless have faith that all is well, that everything ultimately happens for the best, and that God will provide whatever we need at the right time, and in the right way.

Spiritual happiness will also offer great peace when it is time to leave this world. In fact, one of the most precious qualities of spiritual happiness is that it will stay with us at the moment of our death (but don't wait until then to look for it!) With spiritual happiness, we'll be able to depart from this life journey with a deep sense of gratitude and satisfaction, rather than weeping and lamenting with guilt and disappointment over the past, or with fear of the unknown abyss ahead. We'll be waving farewell, while moving forward courageously and happily into the great light of our Beloved, of Heaven, and of our own sublime soul.

Enlightenment will not result in reducing the amount of pain or increase the quantum of pleasure that each one of us has to experience. We will be able to realise that while we do have total and full freedom to do whatever we want in any given situation, the outcome of action has never been in our control. We will gradually acknowledge the wisdom of living life moment by moment, doing the best we can in any given situation; free of undue expectations and involvement.

It is Eternal and Based on Faith

Spiritual happiness is unconditional happiness. Spiritual happiness comes with a sense of eternal hope, and a trust in universal perfection. With spiritual happiness, we can be ecstatic even when we're miserable, because we know that whatever troubles have come our way are meant to uplift our soul in the long run. With spiritual happiness, we can feel complete even when we lose something valuable; we can be fearless even while shaking in our boots.

If I were to boil the whole idea of spiritual happiness down to one word, I would have to say that the essence of spiritual happiness is 'FAITH'. Not blind faith, or ignorant faith, or a one-time declaration of some faithful-sounding phrase, but true faith -

a powerful yet tender trust that is drenched in qualities such as wisdom, humility, love, courage and service. This faith comes with a greater awareness of spiritual principles, and seeks to be in harmony with the Tao, the flow, the Shakti, the perfect divine pattern, and the Will of God - all words used to describe the supreme energy and consciousness that is beyond word and thought.

From a stance of faith and surrender, we are able to act with confidence, patience, and a positive attitude. Because positive interpretations of the events we experience can actually help to create positive outcomes, finding our natural state of spiritual happiness and optimism is bound to bring unexpected blessings into many areas of our lives.

Faith is not only a refuge during troubling times, but can also help empower us to create an outer life that is in greater harmony with our nature. This faith can come with vast knowledge or with simple wisdom - or perhaps with both together. Everything is fine when it feels fine, and everything is also fine when it doesn't feel so fine. Faith knows that life is a gift, always. Faith is a combination of: "May the force be with us," and "May we be with the force!" Faith keeps away self-sabotage, fear, anger, and depression. Faith is the grand elixir of spiritual happiness.

The two most powerful emotional forces of human beings are Faith and Fear. But faith is much stronger than fear.

As Gandhiji said "Happiness is when what we think, what we say, and what we do are in harmony." Disharmony between thought, word and deed results in unhappiness. Having a spiritually orientation in life enables us to coordinate the three factors and maintain balance of mind. Pure devotion to God apart from faith and good conduct gives us the spiritual strength to experience spiritual happiness.

Godliness is happiness

DOG is considered to be men's best 'FRIEND'. There can be no greater friend than GOD who has the well being of us human nearest to his heart. (Could it be the reason for naming Dog?) Many have in the past experienced this friendship and love of

God, directly or indirectly. Experience of the supreme happiness occurs in this state of godliness when some are able to identify themselves with God. If you believe God is helping you, then everything else isn't as important and you can trust that there's somebody there for you no matter what.

Happiness and Religion

Religion supplies direction and value to our lives, particularly the inner life. It provides meaning, purpose and consolation, not to mention some hope of evading death. Does this mean it provides happiness? Are the meaning, purpose, consolation and promise of an afterlife sufficiently clear and convincing? Are religious people happier than nonreligious people? And if so, why might this be? These are the type of questions that one faces when we think of the impact of religion in being happy.

A deep analysis of the nature of self is important to help us to understand the origin of our problems, worries and miseries and how to overcome them. Here, religious advice is important for maintaining a tranquil life. However, a man should not become a slave to any religion. Man is not for religion--religion is for man. That means man must know how to make use of religion for his betterment and for his happiness in a respectable way. Simply by following certain religious vows, precepts or commandments with blind faith or by force, thinking that we are duty-bound to observe them will not develop proper understanding. In fact the process of building inner strength to remove the obstacles that we ourselves have placed on the road to happiness is more a type of spirituality rather than religion.

The important point here is that our ability to be happy is in direct proportion to our acceptance of the One Truth, which is highlighted by all religions. 'Thy Will be Done' in Christianity; 'Inshah Allah' in Islam and 'Thou art the Doer; Thou art the experiencer; Thou art the speaker and Thou art the listener', in Hinduism. Total acceptance of this helps us to surrender our ego. The majority is not able to accept this in daily life and give up their sense of being the doer.

An example of our good judgment is in knowing that materialistic comforts by themselves do not lead to lasting happiness. Having reached that conclusion by our good judgment, we do not retreat into our comforts. We continue to crave a happiness that seems out of reach. We make more money thinking that is the way to become happy, and in the process neglect our family. Most big events we dream of yield less sustained happiness than we hoped for. In addition to getting less happiness than we expected or hoped for, we frequently do not know exactly what we want, what will make us happy or how to get it. We misjudge.

Enduring happiness does not come from 'making it.' Imagine someone could snap their fingers and give you fame, fortune, and leisure. Would you be happy? You would be euphoric, but in the short run. Gradually you would adapt to your new circumstance and life would return to its normal mix of emotions. Studies show that big lottery winners after a few months are no happier than the average person! To recover the joy, you would now need an even higher high.

In 1957 per-person income in USA, expressed in today's dollars, was less than \$8,000. Today it is \$16,000. With doubled incomes, people now have double the material goods that money can buy - including twice as many cars per person. They also have microwave ovens, color TVs, VCRs, answering machines, and \$12 billion a year worth of brand-name athletic shoes. So are the Americans happier? No. In 1957, 35 percent of Americans told the National Opinion Research Center they were "very happy." In 1991, only 31 percent said the same. The story in our country would be same.

It is a common experience that 'belief' clearly affects people's state of mind. Three common ways of accounting for the link between religion and human expectations and his desire to be happy are:

1. **Social Support.** Religious involvement is a way of gaining social support. People in general are happier when they are around others who are supportive. Religious groups tend to offer this. Overall pattern of religious people being happier is more pronounced among people who are single, elderly, or in poor health. Related to this is the idea that religion helps people feel closer to God, who might also be viewed as personally supportive.

2. **Firm Beliefs.** Happiness and life satisfaction increase when we have a sense of where we are going and what is important in life. Of course, many people find this in religion.

3. **Religion Itself.** Religious experiences can be very positive. They offer a person a feeling of being in contact with God (also known as "transcendence") and contact with others having similar views.

4. **Religious Love**

While we follow many rituals 'to be in contact with God' we forget that each one of us has God inside. An alien came to earth and saw so many ashrams, churches, mosques, and temples, so he said to his human friend, "You must be proud of your earth, I was especially impressed by the number of worship places in it. Surely the people here must love God", "Well", the man replied, "they may love God, but they sure as hell hate each other."

Whatever else they profess, most world religions say happiness is not as simple as it seems; earthly pleasures can easily prove to be a mirage. Where religions often disagree is on the result of the spiritual effort. Some speak of self-annihilation, others of union with God, others of a very personal sort of reward. In a recent article covered in BBC News (18 March 2008) the author finds 'A belief in God' could lead to a more contented life. Religious people are better able to cope with shocks such as losing a job or divorce, claims the study presented to a Royal Economic Society conference. Data from thousands of Europeans revealed higher levels of "life satisfaction" in believers.

Religion could offer a "buffer" which protected men from life's disappointments. But it is not an essential element for achieving happiness. Even the Dalai Lama has said that in order to be a good person and a happy person, it's not necessary to practice Buddhism, or for that matter any religion. After all, neither is needed for virtuous states of mind such as kindness, love, respect for others and a desire to help them to arise. "It is these positive states of mind themselves that bring happiness to the individual and the people he or she engages with," says Lungtok. Therefore as we're all seeking happiness, it makes sense to try to be as good as possible.

"We're not saying that all religious people are happier than non-religious people. It's just that, on average, religious people tend to be happier because they have a greater sense of purpose in life."-Joseph in 'WebMD'

Actually, a spiritual path outside of organized religion works in the pursuit of happiness, too. "Religion is only one path to sense of purpose," he says.

Pursuit of happiness should shorten our "give me" list, he says. "Material success, wealth, possessions -- those are detrimental to happiness. More important is valuing our relationships, fostering a sense of community. Religion serves as a vehicle in pointing people in that direction."

The Koran puts it simply. "Happiness in this life, and in the hereafter" is promised to "those who believe and lead a righteous life"—there is no other way. In the Christian tradition, there is much talk of joy and sorrow being intertwined: we can't have one without the other. Christian monastics cultivate a state known as *charmolypi*, joy-sorrow: tears for the woes of the world, and gratitude for God's mercy.

But on a more earthly level, sociologists agree that the practice of a faith and broad happiness with life do seem to be related, though nobody has much idea why. "We don't know whether people go to church because they are happy, or whether they are happy because they go to church," says Andrew Clark, an economist who helped conduct a survey of 30,000 Europeans in 21 countries.

Hinduism's View of Happiness

Happiness, pleasure, joy, bliss -- all these are our natural characteristics. Sorrow is not our natural state. 'sat-chitt-anand' - Existence-Knowledge-Bliss

The Vedas define our culture through astrology (Jyotish), Yoga, Ayurveda and Vastu. All these science are inter-related and inter-dependent. Each sector of a quadrangle (Mandala) is identified with the primary elements of Nature. When these identifications are studied carefully, those can be applied to bring in happiness into the family and surroundings.

Types and Levels of Happiness

Hindu scriptures give greater importance to only that happiness that is of a more permanent nature without hurting anybody else. It defines happiness to be primarily of three types somewhat similar to the three modes of behaviours (GUNA) as defined in GITA. The 'Satvik' form of happiness is one that results from leading a meaningful life.

The 'Rajsik' approach considers good life as the ultimate happy experience while the 'Tamsik' approach considers anything that is pleasant to the person's experience, even if it means hurting ourselves or others in the long run in the process, as the real happiness.

Defined slightly differently, happiness can be linked to how we spend our life. Pleasant Life involves enjoying the pleasures of life, even if they cause harm to us as well others. Good Life means experiencing high standard of living even if is achieved by dishonest or unjust means. On the other hand meaningful life concentrates on service to others and virtuous living creatures to realize the ultimate happiness of becoming one with the almighty. In Gita, Lord Krishna tells Arjun that a person achieves real happiness once he has completed the mission for which he took birth, after leading a pious life. There are short cuts to the leading the first type of life. These are drugs, sex, TV, shopping etc. The second type of life is led by following 'accepted' rules as long as it benefits us. This person may not do wrong to others but occasionally feels guilty and uses confession or prayer or donations to 'wash the sins' and thus feel happy. There are no shortcuts to the last one that is achieved through concentrated effort and is the most authentic and long lasting happiness.

Nothing in life is achieved just by luck and that is true for happiness as well. We tend to commit many mistakes and fall and arise before we reach our goal. We can experience various levels of happiness before we realize that something better is possible and try for it. In simple terms we can characterise four levels of increasing happiness leading to a meaningful life. The first level of happiness is rooted in the satisfaction of bodily appetites, but we soon realize that happiness is more than the gratification of desires. This leads us to the second level where we use our mind and will to achieve success in whatever we choose. Unfortunately, this second level also crumbles if we make our happiness dependent upon the approval of others. At the third level of happiness we experience the pleasure in loving and serving others; even here, however, happiness is vulnerable to the pain of the separation of loved ones. It is only at the final level of happiness that we have the opportunity to experience lasting joy through friendship with God.

Happiness is a pleasant feeling in the mind. I eat a sweet. It brings a pleasant sensation to my mind. I hear good music that I like. This brings a pleasant sensation in mind. I call all this happiness. When, again, I eat the same sweet, and hear the same music when a tragedy has occurred in my life, I don't enjoy it. Happiness is subjective and not objective. The same person, place or thing that brought happiness at one time, may bring misery at another

This happens because we only are responsible for our happiness or sorrow, and not the external objects of the world. We think that somebody brings joy; this person brings misery, etc. All this is not true. The external persons, places, and things are only stimuli. These stimuli affect the brain and bring joy or sorrow in us, depending upon our state of mind. Thus, all our so-called love, hates, ambitions, dislikes, successes, failures, and so on are for our own sake, created by us. These words of wisdom from Swami Sunirmalananda of Ramkrishna order are similar to the comments of many in the famous and popular book "The Secret".

Additional Characteristics

Hinduism has these things to say about happiness:

Ordinarily what we call happiness 'sukha' and misery 'dukha' are relative experiences. They are termed 'dvandvas'—dualities. We must rise above these dualities in order to discover and experience real happiness.

Where do we find this real happiness? It is inherent within each one of us. Where is it located? It is not located as such: it is we ourselves. Ourselves? Oh, yes, we are of the nature of bliss. What does this mean? We are bliss. Our nature is one of immortal bliss. We have forgotten this simple truth. According to Hinduism, everything is bliss, and not sorrow.

Then, what is this experience that we are calling happiness? This so-called happiness is only a faint reflection, a little spark of the brilliant sun of bliss that is hidden within. This is only a shadow of that eternal bliss that is waiting to be exposed. Our so-called happiness and misery now, are nothing but different states of mind. In the Bhagavad Gita (5.21), it is said: 'He who is unattached to the external world and its objects, and is attached to the inner Self, will attain supreme happiness, which is everlasting.' Real happiness, called ānanda in Sanskrit, is the goal of all beings. All are seeking that goal only—some ignorantly, some with knowledge.

Therefore, according to all the different philosophies of Hinduism—Yoga, Vedanta, Samkhya, dualists, non-dualists—our goal is to transcend dualities like happiness and misery and reach the state of supreme Bliss. It is in that state that we get real bliss. Until then, we are only passing through different states of mind.

We may restate the ideas in the form two or three simple laws. Firstly we are in this physical form only to play our part as an actor under the direction of the Supreme Director, Secondly seek only what is true and lasting within the constraints of this life. And thirdly the more we seek what is true and lasting, the more we go nearer to the source of supreme, everlasting Bliss, which is within us

Hinduism is positive in approach to life and its various aspects. It does not say this world is miserable, etc. It says that what we are enjoying is happiness, all right, but there are higher and higher forms of happiness. Go for them. Don't stop where we are. Go forward. Go forward. There are higher and higher aspects of happiness. Get them.

According to the Vedas, there is a gradual increase in happiness as we evolve in life: worldly happiness, mental happiness and spiritual happiness. In this world, we sing, dance, drink, enjoy, eat, and do everything we can. All these joys put together can be called worldly happiness.

Stage one: In this world, however much we may try however much wealth we may have, however much enjoyments we may have—all our enjoyments will be only to some extent. Not much.

Stage two: We all believe in heaven. What is the type of heavenly pleasure? In the higher worlds, the happiness will be equal to 100 times more than in this world.

Stage three: Spiritual happiness is when we want to know God, or when we want to know who we are, or when we want to know the Self. When we are striving for knowing it, our happiness increases proportionately, but when we attain God, or the Atman, our happiness can be measured in physical terms.

According to Hinduism, no one is condemned. No one is bad. No one is a sinner. All sins are mistakes. Don't seek anything. If you seek anything, you will be in misery.

What we deserve, we get, always. What we don't deserve, we don't. So there is no point in worrying unnecessarily, because it will bring misery and not joy. Let us leave everything to God. That is the best way to achieve happiness.

Hinduism says that we are not here in this world to enjoy it and suffer. We are here to know God. Why should we know God? We should know God for the simple reason that we are God. We are Divine. To know God, we must practice self-control, and perform spiritual practices.

When we are in the world, seeking worldly joys, we get very limited bliss, but extreme pain. When we seek God, we get immense peace and bliss, which is our true nature. We need not beg or borrow it. It is our real nature. Since we think we are limited, we are suffering. When we give up limitations, we know the Bliss.

Let us love God. This is most important. We have loved this world too much. We have seen how Tsunamis affect the world. In one moment, everything is gone. So let us love God. Then we shall begin to know what true bliss is.

In Shrimadbhagvat Gita, Arjun asks Lord Krishna (Ch2, verse 54). What is the definition of a God-realised soul? Shri Krishna replies as follows. God-realised person has a stable mind. He is satisfied in self. His thrust for pleasure has disappeared. He is free from passion, fear and anger. He is unattached to everything. He withdraws all his senses from sense-objects. He meditates and devotes himself heart and soul to ME. All his sorrows come to an end. One, who has not controlled his mind, can have no determinate intellect or contemplation. Such a person has no peace of mind. How can he be happy? Only god-realised person without attachment, egoism and thirst for enjoyment can obtain supreme happiness.

Let us serve others as if they are gods. In our free time, let us mix with some good organization, and try to serve others. Let us meditate. Meditation means trying to concentrate the mind. Our minds are naturally restless. By meditating every day for some time, we can exercise the mind, bring it under control, and tap immense energy. .

At the beginning of every work, let us pray to God and begin the work. At the end of the work, let us offer everything to God.

Christian idea of Happiness

The idea of Happiness in christianity was first reported in a saying of Jesus,

“...now is your time of grief, I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy” (John 16:22)

This idea of happiness was further developed over the centuries and, in turn, rested on a theology of sin, which, as St. Augustine explained in *The City of God*, taught that because of Adam and Eve’s original transgression in the Garden of Eden, true happiness was “unattainable in our present life.”^[1]

In 1776, Thomas Jefferson, summarizing a good century of reflection on the subject in Europe and America, deemed the “pursuit of happiness” a “self-evident” truth. By this time, the truth of happiness had been declared so often and so confidently that, for many, it scarcely needed evidence. It was, as Jefferson said, self-evident. To secure the “greatest happiness for the greatest number” had become the moral imperative of the century. But just how “self-evident” was the pursuit of happiness? Was it, in fact, so obvious that happiness was our naturally intended end? Christians confessed that human beings pursued happiness during their earthly pilgrimage, but remained skeptical about its attainment. Elsewhere, Jefferson himself was pessimistic whether the chase would ever be brought to a satisfying conclusion. “Perfect happiness...was never intended by the Deity to be the lot of one of his creatures,” he specified in a letter of 1763, adding soberly that even “the most fortunate of us, in our journey through life, frequently meet with calamities and misfortunes which may greatly afflict us.”^[2] To “fortify our minds” against these attacks, he concluded, “should be one of the principal studies and endeavors of our lives.”

Whereas in the fifth century, Boethius could claim that “God is happiness itself,”^[3] by the middle of the 19th century, the formula was reversed to read, “Happiness is God.” Earthly happiness emerged as the idol of idols, the locus of meaning in modern life, the source of human aspiration, the purpose of existence, the why and the wherefore. If happiness was not, as Freud said, ‘in the plan of Creation,’^[4] there were those ready to alter the handiwork of the Maker to put it there by

manufacturing, consuming, and exporting it as democracy and free-market economy (materialism). As the philosopher Pascal Bruckner observed, "Happiness is the sole horizon of our contemporary democracies." As a surrogate religion, materialism relocated God to the shopping mall.

Reasonable beings, while they act as such, naturally choose those things which they are convinced are best for them, and will certainly do those things which they know they had better do than leave undone. A good man is a happy man whatever his outward circumstances are.

By "happy" in the Doctrine is not real in the strict sense, the actual enjoyment of the highest pleasure and perfection without the least mixture of the contrary, is reserved for every godly [person] to be enjoyed only after this life;

The good man is happy in whatsoever condition he is in; and that, first, because no worldly evils can do him any real hurt; secondly, because of those advantages spiritual joys and satisfactions, he enjoys while here; and thirdly, more especially from the joyful hope and certain expectation, of the enjoyment of the perfection of happiness, eternally, hereafter.

Islam and Happiness

"The word Muslim means one who submits to the will of Allah"

Absolutely, God's allies will have nothing to fear, nor will they grieve. They are those who believe and lead a righteous life. For them happiness is in this life, and in the Hereafter. Such is God's inviolable law. This is the true triumph [10:62-64]

One of the most elusive objectives of every human being is "Happiness." The Quran reveals the secret of attaining perfect happiness in this life and forever. We learn from the Quran that happiness is an exclusive quality of the soul. Thus, a body that attains all the material successes it longs for - money, power, fame, etc. - often belongs to an unhappy person. Happiness depends totally on the degree of growth and development attained by the soul, the real person. The Quran provides a detailed map towards perfect happiness for both body and soul, both in this world and in the eternal Hereafter

When pleasing God becomes the most important aspect of one's life, God will make every thing wonderful for him or her. Once we make pleasing God the most important thing in our life, we will possess the most valuable thing one can ask for - God's support. But, if we make anything more important than pleasing God, we will be tested over and over. If we do not realize that fact after all the tests, we will lose both in this world and in the Hereafter. By Abdurrahman Demashqeyyah

It is the nature of every person to seek happiness. Some people strive to seek material happiness in this world away from religion, thinking that this is the true happiness. But this kind of happiness will be succeeded by pain and sorrow at the Day of Judgment, and its people will know that their striving led them only to misery and not happiness.

While others know that the true way to happiness is to obey God and follow His religion. For them the pleasures and riches of the world are of little consequence. When this happiness penetrates and fills the heart of the believer he does in fact live in this world as if he were in Paradise. Those are the people who find true happiness in this world.

What kind of happiness could be greater than that of someone who humbles himself to God, worships Him, strives for His pleasure, and strives to enter Paradise and have salvation from Hellfire? The believer lives with such sweetness in his heart that if the masters of the earth knew of it, they would fight him to death to take it from him.

God has said:

Whoever does right, whether male or female, and is a believer, We will make him live a good life, and We will award them their reward for the best of what they used to do. (Quran, 16:97)

Happiness is in the good life mentioned in this verse, that even the rich disbelievers cannot find, despite the money they have. That is why we are not surprise when we know that many among them committed suicide.

To reach true happiness, we need to know what is the purpose of our life, how to reach success in the hereafter, and to fulfill the requirements of reaching this success by following the commands of God and His true religion.

One reason we have so much trouble attaining happiness is that we have no idea about what it is. Consequently, we make poor judgments in life. An **Islamic tale** illustrates the relationship of judgment with happiness.

“Oh, great sage, Nasrudin,” said the eager student, “I must ask you a very important question, the answer to which we all seek: What is the secret to attaining happiness?”

Nasrudin thought for a time, then responded. “The secret of happiness is good judgment.”

“Ah,” said the student. “But how do we attain good judgment?”

“From experience,” answered Nasrudin.

“Yes,” said the student. “But how do we attain experience?”

“Through bad judgment.” answered Nasrudin.

Religion is a significant factor in making people satisfied. This is shown in a gallop poll conducted specifically in Islamic countries. Dalia Mogahed, who oversees Gallup's research on Muslim opinion, has made some stark observations about that poll. There are, she notes, many Muslim countries where men and women alike are fed up with life. But of the ten places with the highest correlation between being female and being relatively satisfied, nine are mainly Muslim: Afghanistan, Iran, Egypt, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Bangladesh, Palestine, Jordan and Morocco. Ms Mogahed says this reflects the travails of being a Muslim man as much as any blessings of being female. In traditional lands, where men expect to be breadwinners, many suffer the trauma of being jobless or doing hard, ill-paid work. Another factor, she thinks, is that one big source of female and child poverty in the West—single motherhood—hardly exists in Muslim societies.

Some may find such conclusions too complacent about the fate of Muslim women. Margot Badran, an American scholar of feminism in Islamic countries, says that in most of them there is a palpable sense of grievance among women. “But that doesn't imply that they are miserable, or consumed by victimhood—it just tells us we need a more nuanced picture of life than any simple spectrum of happiness can capture.”

Buddhism and Happiness

We know, however, there is no happiness in the material world. Happiness is experienced in our relationship with Krishna, and our relationship with the other devotees who are also serving Krishna. When we can please Krishna that is real happiness. And that happiness is unending and unlimited. That is real happiness. Madhudvisa dasa (11-05-02)

When science and religion meet, there's often a fascinating consequence. Scientific research has found that Buddhists who practice meditation on a regular basis are happier than others! This seems beautifully ironic - a religion that seems to suggest that the fundamental truth of life is that suffering is endemic turns out the happiest people.

The following **five precepts** of Buddhism lead to happy states. These are not killing or harming living beings, not lying, not stealing, not indulging in inappropriate sexual activity, and not drinking or taking drugs. To harm a living being, for example, has bad karmic consequences. It can lead to feelings of remorse and regret for what one has done. It will lead to suffering according to the Buddhist doctrine of kamma.

So, how do we find happiness in this world? One message from Buddhism is the deep truth that one finds happiness by seeking the happiness of others. There is no other way. This isn't a soft option. To love is to give endlessly, to fail repeatedly, to see the weaknesses in oneself on a daily basis, to fail and to fail again... but then to get up and try again.

A central tenet of Buddhism is that we are not helpless victims of unchangeable emotions. In the words of Buddha himself, "We are what we think. All that we are arises with our thoughts. With our thoughts we make the world." It's an idea that's in line with

current thinking in psychology ('The Secret' by Rhonda Byrne). In fact, this simple philosophy – that changing the way we think can change the way we feel.

Research has shown that practicing meditation regularly – and being more 'mindful', that is, focused on the present moment – has beneficial effects for a range of conditions. These include stress, anxiety, depression, poor sleep and coping with chronic pain. It also has other health benefits like reduced inflammation, improved immunity and lower blood pressure. Most methods suggest meditating for about 20 minutes twice a day, although many people will find it useful to start with five to 10 minutes twice a day and to build from there.

Lungtok describes meditation as "a method to make the mind relaxed and peaceful. Tranquility gives rise to clarity from which understanding and wisdom grow." This wisdom, explains Lungtok, allows us to observe that negative emotions such as anger and desire cause all of our problems. However by applying antidotes, it's possible to free us from their harmful influence.

So for instance, to overcome anger, Buddhists cultivate the practice of patience. To counteract desire – say for wealth, status or a lover – one reflects upon the impermanent and transitory nature of life and everything in it. Similarly, positive behaviour such as acting in a kind and loving way, or as Buddhists say, practicing 'loving-kindness', give rise to joyful experiences and we should therefore try to cultivate them, says Hasted, a Senior Lecturer in Monash's Department of General Practice.

As we analyze our mental experiences, we recognize that the powerful emotions we possess (such as desire, hatred, and anger) tend not to bring us very profound or long-lasting happiness. Fulfilled desire may provide a sense of temporary satisfaction; however, the pleasure we experience upon acquiring a new car or home, for example, is usually short-lived. When we indulge our desires, they tend to increase in intensity and multiply in number. We become more demanding and less content, finding it more difficult to satisfy our needs. In the Buddhist view, hatred, anger, and desire are afflictive emotions, which simply means they tend to cause us discomfort. The discomfort arises from the mental unease that follows the expression of these emotions. A constant state of mental unsettledness can even cause us physical harm. –Dalai Lama

"That can be very positive -- you can take time to do nice things for other people, enjoy their company and the support that you give each other," he tells WebMD.

"Also, volunteer work can be a good way to get beyond yourself," Bray says. "Ring the bell for the Salvation Army. I have friends who buy 10 or 20 frozen turkeys, then spend an afternoon driving around in poor neighborhoods and giving them out. Also, I've noticed that a lot of holiday parties encourage bringing toys [to give to charity]. That's a great way to be part of the celebration."

According to Buddhism, life is a consistent misery: birth is misery, old age is a misery, separation from a loved one is a misery, inability to achieve a desired goal is a misery. The cause of this suffering is attachment to life, the craving for existence. To end this misery it is necessary to get rid of this craving by stifling all desire. A person must suppress in himself any aspiration for existence, any desire, passion, and attachment to anything. A person would ultimately reach perfection by following the Noble Eightfold Path to become an arhat (a perfect person, saint) and attain Nirvana. Nirvana is the final, ideal state towards which a sage strived. Nirvana signifies the end of the eternal cycle of reincarnation, which leads any living creature from one transmigration to another through constant suffering.

The Four Noble Truths – the teaching about misery, the cause of misery, that this cause can be eliminated, and that misery can be ended by following the correct path:

Everything that exists is filled with suffering

Suffering is caused by desires

You can get rid of suffering by stifling all desire

The Noble Eightfold Path leads to the end of suffering:

- Right mode of seeing things
- Right thinking
- Right speech
- Right action
- Right mode of living
- Right effort in every mode of being
- Right mindfulness
- Right meditation

The secret of health for both the mind and body is not to mourn for the past, not to worry about the future, not to anticipate troubles, but to live the present moment wisely and earnestly. – **Buddha**

I believe that the very purpose of life is to be happy. From the very core of our being, we desire contentment. The more we care for the happiness of others, the greater is our own sense of well-being. Cultivating a close, warmhearted feeling for others automatically puts the mind at ease. It helps remove whatever fear or insecurities we may have and gives us strength to cope with any obstacles we encounter. –**Dalai Lama**

Sikhism and Happiness

Sikh Dharma is a very rare religion. It gives us the life. It tells us to go out, it tells us to prosper, it tells us to take care of others. It tells us everything that a saint and a soldier can do together. It's a religion of a saint and a soldier. It's a religion of mree and pree. It's a religion of shaastra and shastar. "Shaastra" means all knowledge and "shastar" means arms. So Sikhism is a combination of arms or strength and knowledge, if we put it literally. But in other words, what it means practically speaking, it tells us to be creative but be above the fruits of that creativeness. It means we fight for 'rightness' as defined in our Grantha that is the source of knowledge to us. Only then we would be really happy.

Ethics, knowledge, beauty, love, health, productivity, peace, justice and prosperity are simply and ultimately means of facilitating happiness. There is no need for a religious 'tag' to practice these.

Jainism and Happiness

Spiritual Rules of Happy Living

Don't seek anything. If we seek anything, we will be in misery.

What we deserve, we get, always. What we don't deserve, we don't. So there is no point in worrying unnecessarily, because it will bring misery and not joy.

Let us leave everything to God. That is the best way to achieve happiness

Don't worry that we are a sinner. This is one of the worst obstacles to joy. Give up worry. What is past is past. God is not a historian and a petty judge to judge us for what we did. Sins are mistakes done. Will the dancer go on weeping because she fell ten times when she was practising dancing? She will go on dancing. And will succeed. So in life, we fall a hundred times. Let us not worry about it.

Don't worry if someone hates or someone dislikes us. Let them hate us. Let them not like us. The world is broad. There are millions of people here. Let everyone go his own way. Be free. Shake off everything, and we will be free and happy. Whenever anyone deserts us, or begins to dislike us, just say to our mind: 'O my mind! This world is impermanent. Let us seek something permanent: God.'

Pray. Never imagine we are a big person. We are all little creatures. We don't know what is in store the next moment. So hold on to God. This will bring peace.

Control ourselves. This itself is a big peace-giving method.

If some problem comes in our life, don't start worrying. Worry will make things worse. Imagine that we are taking that problem in our hand like a fruit, and offer it to God. And pray. When worry comes, brush it aside and pray. This will help us immensely in every way.

Why we are here?

We are here to know God.

Why should we know God?

We should know God for the simple reason that we are God.

We are Divine.

Confucianism

Founder: Confucius, Chinese philosopher and reformer (B.C. 551 - 479)

Core value - balance between individual variety and social harmony.

The main theme – wisdom inside and kindness outside: "The wise man admires water, the kind man admires mountains. The wise man moves, the kind man rests. The wise man is happy, the kind man is firm."

Keys to success: Virtuous life and adherence to performing your duties

Three main principles:

- Jen – humaneness, love of fellow men; the central virtue of Confucianism and the most important characteristic of the ideal man (chün-tzu)
- Li – morality, uprightness, custom, observing rules
- Chi – virtuous life

The practice of jen is governed by li: "To conquer oneself and turn to li; that is humaneness."

To achieve Jen, you must maintain decent relationships (wu-lun) with people, especially in the five pairs of social roles:

- Between father and son
- Between the ruler and the subject
- Between the older and the younger
- Between husband and wife
- Between friends

Practicing Jen – "doing without a purpose" because you must, not because you want

- Shu: Do unto others as you would have others do unto you (mutuality)
- Chung: Don't do unto others as you wouldn't have others do unto you (loyalty)... More about Confucianism

Sufism

Sufism is a mystical branch of Islam. It is practiced mainly in South Asia.

Islam adopted the mystical and semi-monastic trend of Sufism (sufi is a coarse wool fabric) between the eighth and tenth centuries. Sufism grew within Shiism, but was also taken up among the Sunnites. Sufism was influenced by the ideas of Mazdaism, perhaps Buddhism and even Neoplatonism. The adherents of Sufism did not pay much

attention to superficial ritual; they sought true understanding of God, a mystical merging with the divine.

- Sufism emphasizes the direct knowledge of the divine within each person.
- Its followers see music, dance meditation as a means to spiritual quest.
- The ecstatic dancing ritual of dervishes is the most recognizable aspect.
- Sufism is based on the principles of self-esteem and love.
- Sufism opposes orthodoxy, caste/creed division.
- Sufism "affords freedom within a structure"

Taoism

Taoism in general received a great jolt from Lao Tzu's powerful teaching. Taoism points our attention towards our natural capacity for transcendence. "A unique gift of the Taoist tradition is that it does not see transcendent experience as separate and "other" but fully integrates inner and outer, everyday and mystic, pragmatic and transcendent. The Tao is a path we can all readily follow without fears of falling over some esoteric edge, because the Tao points directly to everyday reality and says, right here before you, in your everyday routine, you will find transcendence – you will encounter the Tao."8... More about Taoism

Zen

Zen way of thinking about the world is based first of all on clarity and preciseness of images, as opposed to the Western approach based on formal logics. The secret of Zen philosophy is that it can be expressed not only through words and writings, but also through arts, paintings, calligraphy, customs, and ceremonies (e.g. tea ceremony is also some kind of philosophy).

Living by Zen

Key ideas of Zen:

- True enlightenment comes suddenly. Special preparations may be necessary, but it' actually comes through experience.
- Action can be achieved by inaction, where the result is achieved by "Not-Me"

- Enlightenment and experience are closely connected, while books, texts and theory don't open the way to nirvana.
- True wizard lives in every person and every thing. The man does not need to seek recluse or to be an ascetic to achieve enlightenment...More about Zen

Lasting Happiness

Everywhere in this universe, in one respect man's condition is the same. No matter how vastly different he may be in the outer appearance of his life, different countries, different races, different cultures, different languages, different ways of living, eating, dressing, etc., he may be completely different in all of these aspects, but there is one thing that is the same to all human individuals. And it is this factor that binds them into a global unity. If analyzed, it will be discovered that all humanity is engaged ceaselessly, day after day, from the cradle to the grave, only in trying to avoid painful experiences and in trying to attain that which gives them happiness. Yet, there is not even one single individual on earth who has not had at some time or another some type of pain or suffering or grief or sorrow. Natural forces beyond our control—floods, earthquakes, tidal waves, cyclones, fires, and famines, bring about many painful experiences. Then there is suffering brought about by other forms of life—germs, microbes, bacteria, viruses, insects, reptiles, and animals. But man himself causes by far the greatest source of suffering. It is suffering that is self-created, that arises within our own psychological self due to desire and attachment for worldly objects—love and hate, anger and passion, fear, worry, tension, anxiety, jealousy, envy, greed, frustration, disappointment, disillusionment, the sorrow of separation, bereavement, and all other varieties of restlessness of mind due to our multitude of desires. To be happy most of the time, turn your gaze within. Dive within. Happiness is within. God is within you. Meditate upon the Reality within. –Swami Sadananda

Have a small corner in our room where we can place the picture of the form of God we like. Let us offer flowers, incense etc every day. Let us sit before this small altar every day. Let us love God. This is most important. We have loved this world too much. We have seen how Tsunamis affect the world. In one moment, everything is gone. So let us love God. Then we shall begin to know what true bliss is.

Let us serve others as if they are gods. In our free time, let us mix with some good organization, and try to serve others. This is the eternal truth of Vedanta that every living being is God. We cannot help anyone as only God can help others; we can only serve. Service to others will bring immense peace and bliss to us. And this is one of the ways to knowing God.

Let us meditate. Meditation means trying to concentrate the mind. Our minds are naturally restless. By meditating every day for some time, we can exercise the mind, bring it under control, and tap immense energy.

At the beginning of every work, let us pray to God and begin the work. At the end of the work, let us offer everything to God.

Meditation a Way to Happiness

Research shows that people who meditate have a somewhat detached approach to the problems of this life, and are calmer, happier and more contented than usual. Turning to a higher power, closing your eyes and thinking of artistic images, doing deep breathing, etc. can give you a sense of peace. Meditation can help you to believe in Yourself. Know who you are. Strive to love yourself for all of your unique, exceptional and distinctive qualities. Embrace your right to be happy. Get in touch with all the small, silly and substantial things that make you smile. They are uniquely yours. You have your own blissful happiness support system deep inside of you.

There are many different meditation methods, but at the core of each is the goal to focus and eventually quieten your mind. Meditation is a simple method that, if practiced regularly, can provide the base for being in a relaxed and happy mood for the rest of the day. Remember, meditating isn't about sitting in awkward positions. As you progress, you will find that you can meditate anywhere and at any time, accessing an inner calm no matter what's going on around you. But first, you have to learn to tame your mind. At the core of this is concentration. And the most important concentration object of our life is Breathing.

Begin by thanking the divine for all the gifts in your life right now. Every situation and relationship from your past has taught you something useful, and has made you who you are today. Now notice those things that have outlived their usefulness.

Recognize the obstacles to achieving the changes that you choose for your life. Begin to make mental notes of all of those things that you are ready to release.

Are you still holding resentment towards a person (including you)? Let all your fears, worries, doubts, disappointments, and anger surface in your mind. See yourself releasing old hurts, sadness, imbalance, and injustice in your life from the past and present with every breath. Feel them dissolving, pouring out of your body.

Now see what items, relationships or situations you have outgrown or that need to shift in some way. Take the time to express gratitude for the lessons learned, and then visualize them gently leaving or changing to promote your new reality.

As you free yourself from the past you open up space for fresh, honest relationships and exciting new opportunities to come into your life that can provide you happiness. Feel a new power and vitality entering into your mind and body opening up space for compassion, for forgiveness, for health, for prosperity and success. 'Invite in' those people who are able to respect and honor your growth and change.

Now imagine that you can breathe in the qualities that you need for this new part of your life. Breathe in courage to be true to yourself. Breathe in patience, discipline, spontaneity; anything that you feel would assist you in this new beginning. See yourself as strong and positive. Feel yourself radiating with positive energy as you attract new people, ideas and situations.

Slowly begin to deepen your breaths. Gently move your fingers and toes. Gently begin to turn your head from side to side. Keeping your eyes closed, take three final deep breaths. When you are ready, you may open your eyes. Many blessings for a "Happy New You!"

Guidelines

Place and Time

- Try to do it every day, preferably at the same time (morning is best).
- It is best to do it before eating, when the stomach is empty.
- Find a quiet and semi-dark place to use only for meditation.
- Set aside at least 20 minutes (you may have to work up to this).

Basic technique

There are many different types of meditation and no “right” technique for everybody. You need to find out what works best for you. Most types of meditation include the following basic elements:

Position

Before engaging your mind, follow these guidelines to make your body comfortable.

- Sit in a comfortable position on the floor or in a chair.
- If you choose a chair, keep your knees comfortably apart and rest your hands in your lap.
- If you sit on the floor, choose one of these poses:
 - Tailor fashion (cross-legged) with a cushion under your buttocks
 - Japanese fashion (on your knees, with your big toes touching and your buttocks resting on the soles of your feet) with a cushion between your feet and buttocks
 - The yoga full lotus position (not recommended for beginners)
- Keep your spine straight and vertical, but not rigid.
- Briefly rock from side to side and from front to back until you feel comfortable and balanced on your hips.

Focus

In order to direct your thoughts, do the following:

- Close your eyes (unless the focus of your attention is an object).
- Focus your attention on one of the following:
 - A silent thought, word, or prayer
 - A mental image
 - The sensation of each breath as you inhale and exhale
 - An object such as a candle flame, flower, painting, or bare wall

Attitude

It is important to maintain a gentle and nonjudgmental attitude while you meditate. This will help you to relax. Do not be concerned about your goals, or whether or not you are meditating “correctly.” Keep the following points in mind:

- As a beginner, it is natural for your attention to wander frequently.
- When your attention wanders, gently redirect it back. Do not try to force your attention. Meditation should not be stressful!

Breathing

Proper breathing can enhance your experience.

- Breathe through your nose.
- Place your tongue on the roof of your mouth.
- Focus your attention on your tummy and diaphragm rather than your nostrils and chest.
- Place your hand on your tummy and feel the sensations as you inhale and exhale.
- Your tummy should rise when you inhale and fall when you exhale.
- Be attentive to your breathing, but stay relaxed and breathe naturally.

(Amy Sholten from beliefnet.com)

Transcendental Meditation

(As explained by Late Mahesh Yogi)

Step 1. Chose or get a mantra from Guru

Step 2. No need to concentrate on the meaning of the mantra or its association with something

Step3. Start ‘thinking’ the mantra innocently while sitting in a comfortable position with eyes closed

Step 4. Do not struggle with thoughts or try to forcibly remove them

Step 5. Let calmness or thought coexist but continue to think the mantra

Step 6. Thus a cycle of thoughts, calmness and mantra should continue moving towards lesser thoughts and mantra and finally to NO thoughts and only mantra.

Step 7. Next move to a stage of NO thoughts and NO mantra.

Step 8. There could be in between periods of only thoughts and NO mantra. One becomes aware that one is in meditation and again innocently starts thinking mantra.

Step 9. Slowly after many attempts one feels greater clarity and reach a state of joyful calm with no thoughts and no mantra. This may be for very short period to start with.

The various cycles, time periods would vary from person to person depending upon his psychosomatic and spiritual state.

Role of Prayer

Krishna says:

If I answer your prayer at once, it is because I am testing your faith.

If I did not answer your prayer at once, it is because I am testing your patience.

If I did not answer your prayer at all, it is because I have a better plan for you.

We all go through ups and downs in life. We fall sick, lose our dear and near ones, lose money either due to our own folly or being cheated by others, fail in examinations or in performing tasks allotted or planned and so on. While success by itself makes us happy, problems and failures like above make us unhappy. When the problems are serious and not within our hands, the only source is to pray to God by whatever name we call him. Leaving aside the unhappiness due to loss of material possessions or gains not materialising, the other forms of suffering automatically makes us seek the help of God. In case of sudden loss we usually dwell over the happenings but in case of health

problems, particularly while suffering from PAIN, when all treatments fail we usually immediately turn to God.

Prayer is the contact of the soul with God. True prayer requires discipline, it requires pain, it requires the agony to think. You accept God as the sole guide to you and wait for him to communicate with you or any other person involved so that your problem is solved.

It isn't God's function to answer or to not answer prayers; it is God's function to empower us to create what it is we choose to experience in our lives. Or, if we choose to place blockages in our own way, to stop ourselves from experiencing what we say we want to experience- Neale Donald Walsch, the writer of Conversations with God

Prayers have many shades. Religion does make the form prayer takes different. For the enlightened even playful anger for God is a sort of prayer! More commonly we rush to the 'Puja Griha', if we have one, or stand in front of his photograph and silently or loudly pray to him to make us happy by removing the cause of our pain. Others, who do not believe in idol worship, a spoken or silent call to the almighty to help us is the usual method of prayer. As and when we get over the problem we thank HIM for the help. The happiness, that one gets after a physical pain reduces or vanishes, is probably the highest form of happiness.

Sarve bhavantu sukhinah

Sarve santu niramayaah

Sarve bhadrani pashyantu

Maa kashtdukhabhaag bhavet

(May everybody be happy, may everybody be free from disease ;
may everybody come by happy events, may nobody have any misery)

SUSTAINED HAPPINESS

Most of us lose everyday a number of occasions that could have made us feel happy even if it is for a short period. Thus we spend our lives searching for happiness and find it so elusive while we can do so simple things and enjoy happiness and feel contented. Here are a few 'TIPS', some given by eminent writers, some collected from various articles on the subject of happiness and the rest through experience and self realization. They may sound simple and repetitive but we can train ourselves to recognize the opportunities to be happy and spare some time to enjoy them whenever we can.

Simple Rules of the game of Happiness

Life is not a rehearsal; it is the real thing. There will be good days and bad days. There will be many failures but you can always try to rise after each fall. To be happy you have to make life worth living. Each and every day is important as each day counts. One has to learn and correct ourselves based on the past experiences, live the present and dream about the future. Success in life is assessed based on the number and quality of dreams that have come true in your life.

Happy Five

Remember these five simple rules to be happy

1-Free our heart from hatred.

2-Free our mind from worries.

3-Live simply.

4-Give more.

5. Expect Less

How to lead a Peaceful, stress-free and Happy Life

(Collected from many sources and modified)

Connect with nature.

Slow down with Age

Choose the company of persons with whom you feel more alive, happy, and optimistic.

Enjoy the Beauty and Smell of Flowers

Listen to music that you find inspirational and uplifting.

Admire a work of art that raises your spirits: a painting, sculpture, or work of architecture.

Practice forgiveness, do not be angry and be Kind

Give some of your time and energy to help others expecting nothing but happy satisfaction in return.

Watch Butterflies or Birds. Enjoy Sunrise or Sunset.

Be grateful for good health. Take care of your body.

In any conversation don't interrupt, listen fully and then offer views if asked for

Get the correct amount of sleep every night. Take a nap in the afternoon.

Never be afraid to say, "I'm Sorry" and "Thank You."

Wave at children on the school bus or walking past your house

Play with your children.

Make others laugh and laugh with them.

Be a good loser and a better winner.

Be romantic just to trigger Smiles and spread Happiness

Live such that our children/grandchildren give our example for fairness, caring and integrity when talking to their friends.

Sing in the shower or while strolling or doing small routine tasks.

Resist gossip, political criticisms and personal blame games.

Don't nag.

Don't expect that only money will bring us happiness.

Take care of your reputation; it is your most valuable asset.

Learn how to feel and experience all your different senses, sight, sound, taste, touch and smell, in the best possible way.

Keep your mind as active as possible. It will help you cope with the ups and downs of life and will also help you improve yourself.

Call relatives and friends when they least expect.

Thank your Parents, Guru, and Friend and Mentor for all your good fortune

Avoid tension, if necessary by withdrawing from the scene.

Put Humour in your life.

Get some exercise on Daily basis.

Eat healthier food and do not fall for tasty but oily foods and sweets

Set Realistic goals on day-to-day basis.

Tips by well known Authors for Being Happy

SET A

Sharon Janis has suggested the following to have lasting Happiness

- Relax,
- Inspire your atmosphere,
- Know thyself,
- Enjoy being you,
- Remember who you really are, Know your weakest and strongest links,
- Happiness is a state of mind, learning to smile,

- Play the game of life with empowerment,
- Great faith brings great freedom,
- Count your blessings,
- There's always good news,
- If you are going to do something, do it cheerfully,
- Be aware of the words you use,
- Positive communications bring greater happiness,
- There's always a way to create happiness,
- Be careful about the company you keep,
- Don't Let Others Bring you down. Don't bring others down.
- Too many expectations lead to disappointment,
- Be a joyful giver.
- Find grace in challenges and blessings from tragedy.
- Let go of 'Punishment mentality', Things don't have to be so hard,
- Open yourselves to inner guidance, Do what your heart knows is right,
- Uplift your motives, Trust the perfection in imperfection,
- See the bigger picture of your soul's journey. Be optimistic.

SET B

The following practical suggestions are given by **Shobha De** to be happy

- Be Selfish
- Learn to let go what is causing you to be miserable
- Learn to trust
- Express Gratitude
- Slow down (particularly with age)

- Make it a point to touch or hug
- Listen with your heart
- Share and confide
- Learn to keep quiet
- Follow your heart sometimes
- Don't be obsessed with perfection and control
- Count before you make important decisions (including being angry)
- Compliment the achievers and those making sincere efforts
- Music acts like balm
- Cry at times to de-stress yourself
- Be helpful to the needy
- Grow a garden, how so ever small
- Do not chase money at the cost of your health, family and relaxation
- Enjoy good food, moderate wine and good company
- Learn to loose
- Sleep well
- Occasionally dance with joy
- Life is God so cherish it to eventually find God
- Give away what ever you can afford for good cause and to the needy
- Just Do It

SET C

Prescription for Happiness Attributed to **Robert Louis Stevenson**

- Make up your mind to be happy.
- Learn to find pleasure in simple things.

- Make the best of your circumstances.
- No one has everything and everyone has something of sorrow intermingled with the gladness of life.
- The trick is to make the laughter outweigh the tears.
- Don't take yourself too seriously.
- You can't please everybody; don't let criticism worry you.
- Don't let your neighbor set your standards.
- Do the things you enjoy doing, but stay out of debt.
- Don't borrow trouble.
- Imaginary things are harder to bear than the actual ones.
- Since hate poisons the soul, do not cherish enmities and grudges.
- Don't hold post-mortems.
- Don't spend your life brooding over sorrows and mistakes.
- Don't be one who never gets over things.
- Do what you can for those less fortunate than yourself.
- Keep busy at something.
- A very busy person never has time to be unhappy.

SET D

Make it a Daily Habit: Defined by **Deepak Chopra**

Sunday : Being available for all

Monday : Thinking about how to make ourselves as well as others, with whom we deal, happy

Tuesday : Feeling for those who are unhappy

Wednesday : Speaking to others about how they can get and give happiness

Thursday : Making an effort to bring happiness to the needy, sick and poor

Friday : Creating an environment for everyone to be happy in our company

Saturday : Sharing our happiness with others to make them happy and increase our own happiness

Little things that we can appreciate and enjoy

A hug from a loved one

The smell of clean sheets

A warm smile from a stranger

The sound of a child's laughter

The dew on the fields in early morning

Being able to be there for a friend or stranger in their time of need....

Waves lapping on the shore

A puppy wagging its tail

A card from an old friend who we haven't had contact with for years

Listening to grandchildren singing and laughing

The cuddle and giggle of a child

The warmth we feel when we have been able to help someone with a problem

Becoming healthy after an illness

A happy story in the newspaper amidst all the bad ones

A poetry that touches our heart

A good book

The smell of spring

The first bud of our favourite flower in our garden

Smell of good food from kitchen

When things work out RIGHT for a change.

A random act of kindness

Getting flowers unexpectedly from that special someone

Having an attached garage or porch in the house . . . and it's raining.

Knowing our friends really care about us

Having your first child

The soft breathing of your wife while asleep in your arms

A warm towel out of a shower

Playing in a summer shower

Seeing a bird drink at your birdbath on a hot summer day

Husband giving the wife the TV remote

Seeing a repeat of the favourite program on TV that you missed

A quilt, a cup of hot cup of tea in bed on a winter evening

An unexpected visit from your sons/daughters

Discovering having enough petrol to make it to the petrol pump

Watching babies sleep

Walking in your garden in early morning

Son graduating (specially if you could not)

Being a senior citizen and finally finding peace with your life

Memories of the smell of your mother's cooking

Being blessed with good friends

Fireworks

Flowers blooming in your garden that you planted.

Hearing your father or Boss say, "I'm proud of you" and knowing that he means it

Having a partner that trusts you.

A flock of birds in perfect formation

Twinkling stars

Bonfires

Knowing that all bills are paid for the month.

Waking up in the morning, and hurry out of bed only to realize it's second Saturday and you don't have to be at work.

Nursing a sick animal back to health.

Swinging on swings.

Wearing new clothes that fit perfectly.

Occasionally eating dinner in bed when just feeling lazy.

Seeing your children get a better job than you

Giving blood to someone who needs it.

Passing in driving test in the first try itself.

Starting own business.

Hosting a dinner party.

Buying a house

Taking a trip around the world.

Winning a lottery.

When military people get to come home safely to their family.

A foot-rub or body massage

Blue skies

Eating your favourite chocolate

When we open our eyes after a bad dream and know everything is okay

Being offered a cool drink, 'matha' or 'aam pana' as you return from outside on a summer day.

Getting that first smile from our new baby grandchild

Planting a kiss on the warm cheeks of your children, as they drift off to sleep

Having long talks with mother or daughter, during the wee hours of the morning.

(Man cannot understand this!)

Having sight to read this list!

Alphabet of Happiness

(From <http://alphabetofhappiness.com>)

A – Accept others for who they are and for the choices they've made even if we have difficulty in understanding their beliefs, motives, or actions.

B - Break Away from everything that stands in the way of what we hope to accomplish with our life.

C – Create a family of friends with whom we can share our hopes, dreams, sorrows, and happiness.

D – Decide that we'll be successful and happy come-what-may, and good things will find us. The roadblocks are only minor obstacles along the way.

E – Explore and experiment. The world has much to offer, and we have much to give. And every time we try something new, we'll learn more about ourselves.

F – Forgive and forget. Grudges only weigh we down and inspire unhappiness and grief. Soar above it, and remember that everyone makes mistakes.

G – Grow up. Leave the childhood monsters behind. They can no longer hurt us or stand in our way.

H – Hope for the best and never forget that anything is possible as long as we remain dedicated to the task.

I – Ignore the negative voices inside our head. Focus instead on our goals and remember our accomplishments. Our past success is only a small linking of what the future holds.

J – Journey mentally to new worlds, new possibilities, by remaining open-minded. Try to learn something new every day, and we'll grow.

K – Know that no matter how bad things seem, they'll always get better. The warmth of spring always follows the harshest winter.

L – Love: Let love fill our heart instead of hate. When hate is in our heart, there's room for nothing else, but when love is in our heart, there's room for endless happiness.

M – Manage our time and our expenses wisely, and we'll suffer less stress and worry. Then we'll be able to focus on the important things in life.

N – Notice: Never ignore the poor, infirm, helpless, weak, or suffering. Offer our assistance when possible, and always our kindness and understanding.

O – Open our eyes and take in all the beauty around us. Even during the worst of times, there's still much to be thankful for.

P – Play: Life is a playground. Never forget to have fun along the way. Success means nothing without happiness.

Q – Question: Ask many questions, because we're here to learn.

R – Relax: Refuse to let worry and stress rule our life, and remember that things always have a way of working out in the end.

S – Share our talent, skills, knowledge, and time with others. Everything that we invest in others will return to us many times over.

T – Try: Even when our dreams seem impossible to reach, try anyway. We'll be amazed by what we can accomplish.

U – Use our gifts to our best ability. Talent that's wasted has no value. Talent that's used will bring unexpected rewards.

V – Value the friends and family members who've supported and encouraged us, and be there for them as well.

W – Work hard every day to be the best person we can be, but never feel guilty if we fall short of our goals. Every sunrise offers a second chance.

X - X-Ray: Look deep inside the hearts of those around us and we'll see the goodness and beauty within.

Y – Yield to commitment. If we stay on track and remain dedicated, we'll find success at the end of the road.

Z – Zoom to a happy place when bad memories or sorrow rears its ugly head. Let nothing interfere with our goals. Instead, focus on our abilities, our dreams, and a brighter tomorrow.

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BIO-DATA

A B Mehta born at Damoh(MP) on 10 September 1935 had his school education in various places of old M P state and obtained B E (Hons) degree in Telecommunication Engineering from Government Engineering College, Jabalpur in 1956. Soon after he joined Indian Air Force as a Technical Officer. He was deputed from IAF to IIT Delhi in 1969 for post-graduate study and obtained the degree of M Tech with specialisation in Radar Engineering in 1971. He was then attached to the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai as a member of Project team for the development of a computer based System for IAF. On completion of the development phase he was deputed in 1979 to Electronic Corporation of India, Hyderabad to set up a Military Systems Group and initiate the production phase of the system.

He shared with other members of the development team the **VASVIK** Industrial Research Award in Electrical and Electronics Sciences & Technology (Combined) for the year 1985. In 1982 he took voluntary retirement in the rank of Group Captain from IAF to permanently join ECIL. He became General Manager in 1987 and Head of the Computer Group in 1989 and retired from ECIL on completion of 58 years of age in September 1993.

Settled at Bhopal, Gp Capt Mehta is an active participant in activities related to Senior Citizen's welfare. He is the Vice President of Senior Citizens Forum, Bhopal and a member of the MP State Federation of Senior Citizens. He is the Publisher of the Forum journal 'GREY HAIR' and maintains its website www.bhopalseniors.org. He is a Fellow of the Institution of Electronic and Telecommunication Engineers that he joined in 1957 and a Member of the Institution of Engineers since 1963. He is a member of the Air Force Association since 1982.

He is a regular contributor to Internet sites, newspapers and magazines on topics of current interests as well as on subjects related to Air Force, Senior Citizens Welfare, Society problems and Religion. His first book was a short booklet 'Dialogue with God' that was based on the famous set of books "Conversation with God" keeping Indian cultural background in view. He next wrote '**SIXTY PLUS**', a book providing detailed guidelines covering the various topics that are important in the day to day life of senior citizens.



DISCOVERY OF HAPPINESS

The aim of every living being is to be happy. No one is happy all the time. What is happiness for one may not be so for others. Most of us are confused about what is happiness and spend all our life trying to find happiness that we are unable to define. The irony is that we allow chances of feeling happy to be lost simply because we are too busy doing non-essential things. Looking at it from a different angle, we do not make enough effort to avoid situations that are likely to result in suffering to us in time to come or cause hurt to others thus making them unhappy

Unfortunately during the struggle for survival we miss out simple situations and incidents that could provide us happiness. Family, society, associations and the government can improve the general environment for the people so that situations causing unhappiness are reduced. While sustained happiness may not be so much in our hands, no one can deny us moments of pleasure in solitude, in the company of children, while listening to music and so on. The book tries to encourage you to discover such moments yourself.

As someone said a person needs just three things to be happy in this world i.e. someone to love, something to do, and something to hope for.

The Author's earlier book “ **60+** “ was released in 2006 during the Sixth National Convention of Senior Citizens held in Bhopal. The book explains the concept of aging and provides detailed guidance to face the health related, emotional, financial and spiritual impacts of entering the beyond sixty life. It also covered the responsibilities of the society, NGOs and the government towards facilitating the growing number of citizens to lead a comfortable life as well as utilizing this vast resource.

He also maintains the website of Senior Citizens Forum, Bhopal (www.bhopalseniors.org) and writes in <http://abmehta.blogspot.com>. He would welcome any suggestion both on the life of senior citizens and capturing moments of happiness in one's life.

DISCOVERY OF HAPPINESS

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DISCOVERY OF HAPPINESS

AN EXHORTATION

FOR

CAPTURING AND ENHANCING

MOMENTS OF HAPPINESS

IN OUR LIFE