

Chapter 4

Understanding Happiness and Prosperity

– Their Continuity and Programme for Fulfilment

Recap

In the previous chapters, we saw that the basic aspiration of a human being is continuity of happiness and prosperity. We also saw that there are three basic requirements to fulfil this aspiration are: right understanding, relationship and physical facility, and that too in the correct order of priority.

In this chapter, we will learn in more detail about happiness and prosperity. We will investigate the common perspectives on these basic aspirations, evaluate them and try to acquire right understanding about these, through self-exploration. We will also investigate in more detail about how the basic human aspiration can be fulfilled. What is going to be the method, what is going to be the process?

Exploring the Meaning of Happiness

Happiness is something we are all interested in. All our efforts are for being in a state of happiness. However, there is generally no single notion for it! Is it something subjective which can't be defined or is it something real which can be objectively defined? This is what we have been trying to explore.

In chapter 2, we had proposed that when we are in harmony within (between 'what I am' and 'what is naturally acceptable to me'), we are in a state of happiness (refer to fig. 4-1). We had asked you to explore whether this holds good for you or not. Could you recollect the times when you felt happy and verify this proposal?

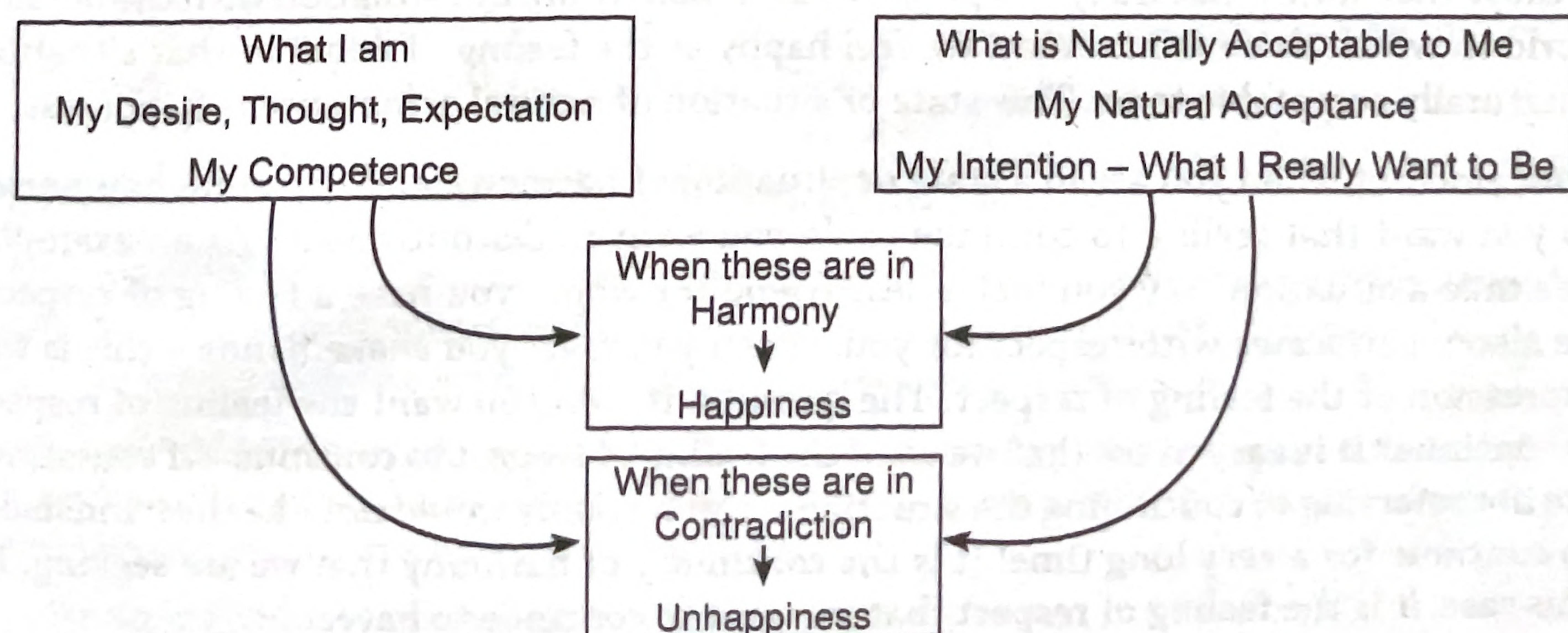


Fig. 4-1. Happiness and Unhappiness is Within

We had also indicated that if these two are not in harmony, we are in a state of contradiction. We want to get out of that contradiction and if we are forced to continue, we feel unhappy. Could you explore into this by recollecting the times when you felt unhappy?

Let us now delve deeper into the meaning of happiness. What is being said here is that happiness is something real, something definite. Therefore, it can be defined, it can be understood and we can make effort to achieve it. The detailed proposal for happiness is:

"The state or situation, in which I live, if there is harmony / synergy in it, it is Naturally Acceptable to me to be in that state / situation".

"To be in a state / situation which is Naturally Acceptable is Happiness".

i.e. "To be in a state of Harmony / Synergy is Happiness".

i.e. Happiness = Harmony.

To explore this proposal, let us take some specific examples.

Try to remember the time when you found the solution to a problem that you had been struggling with for a long time. Did you feel happy the moment you found a solution? Even now, when you recollect that moment, you might feel happy! Whenever there is harmony in our thoughts, we feel happy. If this harmony is discontinued, we feel uncomfortable. Whenever there is a contradiction in thought, we feel unhappy. This way, you can explore into the state of your being and try to verify that when you are in harmony within, you are happy and vice versa.

Now, let us explore some situations in which you are interacting with the outside world. In addition to you, there is another person. There is a feeling of affection in you for your family members. They also have a feeling of affection for you. There is harmony in the family. In such a situation, you will feel happy being in family, isn't it? Similarly, if someone is dominating, there is a disharmony in the family and you feel uncomfortable about it. You want to get away from the domination, but you don't know what you can do about it. In this type of situation, you feel unhappy. Find it out for yourself.

Some exploration will show that when we are in a state of harmony within, we feel happy because that state is naturally acceptable to us. When we are in a situation with the outside world in which there is harmony, we feel happy as the feeling of being in that situation is naturally acceptable to us. This state or situation of natural acceptance is happiness.

Now, find out when you are in a state or situation of harmony, and therefore happiness, do you want that feeling to continue or do you want to discontinue it? As an example, let's take a situation. Say you met a dear friend for whom you have a feeling of respect. He also reciprocates with respect for you. When you meet you shake hands – this is the expression of the feeling of respect. The question is – do you want the feeling of respect to continue? It is easy to see that we want the feeling of respect to continue. Of course, we are not referring to continuing the situation – you certainly would not like the handshake to continue for a very long time! It is the continuity of harmony that we are seeking. In this case, it is the feeling of respect that we want to continue to have.

Further, we can see that not only do we want to continue to be in a state of harmony, we would like to share it with others, and to extend it as far as possible. For example, when we have a feeling of affection for someone in the family, it leads to a state of harmony within and we want to continue with it. We also want to extend it to the others in the family. Ultimately, we want to ensure this feeling of harmony with everyone.

It may be easier to see that you do not want to continue in states or situations in which there is contradiction or disharmony. For example, if you are thinking about someone that you had an argument with, you feel opposed to that other person. Then, for the time duration you are thinking about this person, you are uncomfortable, isn't it? Similarly, if there is a conflict in your family on some issue and you don't know how to resolve it, you are uncomfortable and you want to come out of it.

These are the states where there is lack of harmony within or there is lack of harmony between us and the outside world. We do not want to continue in such states or situations and we want to come out of them as soon as possible. In case we are unable to come out of them, we are in a state of unhappiness. We can thus infer about unhappiness as:

"The state or situation, in which I live, if there is disharmony / contradiction in it, it is not Naturally Acceptable to me to be in that state / situation".

"To be forced to be in a state / situation which is not Naturally Acceptable is Unhappiness".

i.e. **"To be forced to be in a state of Disharmony / Contradiction is Unhappiness".**

i.e. Unhappiness = Disharmony.

Let us take an example to illustrate these definitions of happiness and unhappiness. You are sitting in the lawn with a close friend, a friend with whom you have feeling of affection, unconditional affection. You are sitting together for hours without much exchange of words. Will you be in a state of happiness within or unhappiness within? Similarly, when you are sitting in the office of your boss with whom you have feeling of opposition, waiting for taking instructions from him. He is looking into something and you are waiting, sitting together for even a few minutes without any transaction of words. Will you be in a state of happiness within or unhappiness within? Obviously, in case one, you are in a state of happiness, as you are having a feeling of affection, which is naturally acceptable to you; whereas, in case two, you are in a state of unhappiness as you are having a feeling of opposition which is not naturally acceptable to you.

Programme for Continuity of Happiness

Now, for the continuity of happiness, we have to look into the total possibility of our being. Ensuring harmony in every aspect of living would lead to continuity of happiness. Let us find out – as a human being what is the total expanse of our living?

We live at several levels, starting with ourselves. Then, we live with other people in our family, in the larger society and we are embedded in the nature. Whether we are aware of it or not, the expanse of our living is at four levels:

1. As an individual human being
2. As a member of a family

3. As a member of society
4. As a unit in nature/existence

Let us take a look at these different levels of our being.

As an individual human being: Each one of us is engaged in ourselves much of the time – in our desires, thoughts, beliefs, imaginations, memories, future plans, etc. No one else is involved.

As a member of a family: We are born in a family, we are nurtured and educated in the family. We live with our brothers and sisters, parents and grandparents, uncles and aunts, cousins and so many people. The family tries to ensure mutual happiness among the members, it takes care of their physical needs, it takes care of the young children, the old and all members in between.

As a member of the Society: Our family, together with other families is part of a larger group of people. We interact with many people outside of our family. In the society, we produce, use and exchange things like food, clothing, housing, etc. There are systems for education, health, justice, production and order in society. Our village, town or city is a part of a larger society.

As a unit in Nature/Existence: We are a part and parcel of a large interconnected, interdependent eco-system along with the air, water, soil, plants, trees, birds and animals which we call nature. We are inhaling the oxygen rich air and exhaling carbon dioxide laden air, which the trees consume. Our Earth is one of the many planets in our solar system. Our galaxy is one of the many galaxies. Then there is the all-pervading space. All that exists, units of nature in space, is called existence. We, human beings, are also units embedded in nature/existence.

We are living with all this expanse of our being, at these four levels; of course, we may or may not be aware of it. Find out if you are living at all these four levels.

We have explored that happiness is to be in harmony. We have also seen that the expanse of our being is these four levels. We can now see that for continuity of happiness, it is essential to ensure harmony at all these levels. To ensure harmony, it is essential to understand harmony.

The programme for ensuring the continuity of happiness is:

To understand the harmony
and
To live in harmony

at all levels of being:

1. At the level of the individual human being
2. At the level of family
3. At the level of society and
4. At the level of nature/existence

The scope of understanding extends from understanding the harmony in the human being, to understanding the harmony in the family, understanding the harmony in the society and finally, understanding the harmony in the nature and existence. The scope of

living also encompasses these four levels – living in harmony as an individual, living in harmony in the family, living in harmony in the society and living in harmony in nature/existence. Can you see that?

Is it necessary to ensure harmony within, at the level of the individual? Is it essential to ensure living in harmony in family? Is it essential to ensure living in harmony in society? Is it essential to ensure living in harmony in nature, in existence?

If there is disharmony in our living anywhere anytime, it will lead to unhappiness, it will disturb the continuity of our happiness. Prima facie, all four are necessary, but you may keep on exploring.

Now, our effort, through this book, is to facilitate your self-exploration about the harmony at all these levels. We will place the proposals about each of these levels of harmony. Chapters 5-7 have the proposals about harmony in the human being, chapter 8 has the proposals about harmony in the family. In chapter 9, proposals about harmony in the society have been discussed and finally chapters 10-11 contain the proposals about harmony in nature/existence.

We trust that you will do your part, i.e. to explore each proposal on the basis of your natural acceptance and validate it experientially. If that happens in you, it will start or augment your self-evolution.

Exploring the Meaning of Prosperity

Prosperity is related to material things or what we have been referring to as physical facility. If you list out all the things that you use, it will probably be a long list. It will include food to eat, clothes to wear, shelter for protection, a mobile phone, a two-wheeler and so many other things. These things are required. When we are able to see that we have more than adequate physical facility, we feel prosperous.

Over and above physical facility, prosperity has to do with our feeling. The proposal is:

Prosperity is the feeling of having more than required physical facility.

There are two basic requirements:

1. Right assessment of the need for physical facility, along with its required quantity.
2. Ensuring the availability/production of more than required physical facility.

Do you think it is possible to quantify the need for physical facility? Can you quantify how much food is required? How many clothes are required? Like that how much physical facility is required? Explore into it. At this point, what we can clearly see is that we can have a feeling of prosperity only if we are able to do the right assessment of our physical needs. The right assessment of physical needs, along with their required quantity, will come through right understanding. Without that right assessment, the feeling of prosperity cannot be assured, regardless of the availability or accumulation of physical facility that we may have been able to do.

Just assessing the need is not enough. We need to ensure the availability or production of more than the required quantity. This requires skills, technology and production. With both of these, right assessment and availability, we have more than required physical facility. Over and above that, it is a matter of feeling that we have more than enough.

Let us take an example. When we look into our need of food for nurturing our body, we find that it is required in a limited quantity. No one can eat in unlimited quantity; can you see that? Once we are able to identify the need for food along with the required quantity, we can check whether we already have more than what is required. If we have more than required food or if we can ensure more than required food by way of production, we will have the feeling of prosperity as far as food is concerned. If we neither have the availability nor the ability to produce more than required quantity of food, we will feel deprived (as far as food is concerned). Find out if you are feeling prosperous or deprived (as far as food is concerned). Similarly, you can find out for clothes, mobile phones, etc.

When you have a feeling of prosperity, you will naturally think of nurturing and enriching others, isn't it? On the other hand, if we feel deprived then we think of exploiting and depriving others.

By and large, there is a confusion between accumulation of physical facility and the feeling of prosperity. It is generally assumed that the richer you are, the more prosperous you are; the more you have accumulated, the more prosperous you are. With this sort of assumption, we pursue prosperity with an obsession for profit, for accumulation. That is happening all around. The major focus in the society today is on accumulation of physical facility. In particular, there is a major focus on accumulating money.

Today, most of the wealth (money) in the world is owned by a very tiny percentage of people. Many such people are seen exploiting others, and exploiting the Earth, in an effort to accumulate even more. Without clarity about how much is required, the effort is for an unlimited quantity of physical facility, and by almost any means. First the efforts may be by legal means, and then slip to even illegal means. This is all because the quantity required is undefined and there is a feeling of deprivation!

Try to find out, if you are feeling prosperous or you are feeling deprived.

We will revisit prosperity in chapter 7, after the discussion about harmony in the human being.

A Look at the Prevailing Notions of Happiness

In the light of the preceding discussion on happiness, let us take a critical look at the prevailing notions of happiness. One of them is that the continuity of happiness is possible through consumption of physical facility and enjoyment of favourable sensations. People may go to almost any extent to get the taste of their favourite sensation! It could be some particular type of touch, sound, sight, taste or smell.

Continuity of Happiness from Physical Facility?

Is it possible to ensure continuity of happiness by the consumption of physical facility, and the enjoyment of favourable sensation? Let us study this phenomenon and see what is taking place.

Physical thing → Contact with Body → Sensation (from Body) → Tasted by Self

- If taste is favourable → Happiness (Temporary)
- If taste is unfavourable → Unhappiness (Temporary)

We get happiness, or what appears to be happiness, when we eat our favourite sweet. What is happening is that a physical thing, this sweet, is coming in contact with our tongue. At that point, we can taste the sweet. Taste is a sensation. In case we find the sensation to be favourable, we feel happy. If we find the sensation to be unfavourable, we feel unhappy. You can observe this for any sensation – sound, touch, sight, taste or smell. But can it ensure happiness in continuity?

To take the sweet example further, let us say a particular chocolate is your favourite sweet – you like its taste. You get a lot, say 100 of them. Now you start eating these sweet savouries. You put the first chocolate in your mouth. If you like the taste, you feel happy about it but if you don't like the taste, you feel unhappy about it. Let us say you like the taste and continue to eat. So now you have eaten 10 of them and your stomach is full. Do they still remain tasty? Go for another one, and another one... If you observe carefully, it can be seen that:

- When you start eating the sweet, it seems tasty (for you) and necessary (for the Body). You are eating for happiness (for you) as well as for nurturing your body.
- Once your stomach is full, it still seems tasty (to you), but it is now unnecessary (for your Body). Now you are still eating for happiness from the taste of it (for you), but you know it is no longer necessary for nurturing your Body.
- If you continue to eat some more and you are full up to the neck, what is your state? The sweet is no more a source of happiness for you. At the same time, it remains unnecessary for nurturing the Body. It is still your same favourite sweet, but now it is neither tasty to you nor necessary for your Body. Now you want to stop eating it.
- But if someone forces you to eat further; eating the same sweets becomes intolerable. Now, it turns into a source of unhappiness for you; and you have to deal with the stomach ache on top of it!

The conclusion is that you do get some sort of happiness from the sensation. However, this happiness is momentary, very short lived and it seems to pass through the following stages:

Tasty-Necessary → Tasty-Unnecessary → Tasteless-Unnecessary → Intolerable

Firstly, continuity of happiness is not possible from eating chocolates, nor from any other food or any other sensation for that matter; be it sound, touch, sight, taste or smell.

Secondly, you become bored of the taste after indulging into it for some time. Even if one wants to get happiness out of taste, one has to keep changing from one sensation to another. Thirdly, the little temporary happiness you got from the taste is dependent on something outside, i.e. the chocolate in this example. There is no guarantee that you will get chocolate as and when you want to derive happiness out of its taste. This applies to any sensation from which one is trying to derive happiness.

[A point of caution: We are not saying that physical facility is not required. It is required for the Body. However, it cannot ensure continuity of happiness. Similarly, sensation has its definite role for the Body, but it cannot ensure continuous happiness.]

Continuity of Happiness from Favourable Feeling from Others?

The second prevailing notion is that we can be happy by getting favourable feelings from others. We tend to feel happy when others pay attention to us, when others praise us, when others respect us, care for us or express any favourable feeling to us.

For that, we keep doing all kinds of things. Wearing clothes of the latest fashion, going to college on that borrowed motorcycle and so many other things like that. Similarly, we may be pretending to be more than what we really are or agreeing with people just to be in their good books and to get their attention. All these are examples of our effort for getting feeling from others. We have a deeply held belief that we will get happiness like this.

Is it possible to ensure continuity of happiness by receiving favourable feeling from others? Let us study this phenomenon.

Other Human Being → Expression of Feeling → Feeling Received and Evaluated by Self

- If feeling is favourable → Happiness (Temporary)
- If feeling is unfavourable → Unhappiness (Temporary)

When someone is expressing a right feeling, like respect, that is naturally acceptable for you, you like to receive that feeling – you feel happy. Of course, if the other is expressing emotions that are not naturally acceptable for you, e.g. disrespect, you feel unhappy.

To take an example, you wear an exclusive dress while going for a party. Your expectation is that you will be noticed in the party, people will complement you and this will make you happy. You enter the door and the host appreciates your dress – you feel happy. Next minute another person points out that this dress is now out of fashion; he saw it in the neighbourhood goodwill store – your happiness is replaced by unhappiness.

The conclusion is that you do get some sort of happiness from the attention and feeling you get from others. However, this happiness is momentary, very short lived. So firstly, continuity of happiness is not possible through getting feeling from the other. Secondly, the little temporary happiness you got from the compliments is not your own property. You are not deciding the feeling – it is being decided by the other person. There is no certainty that they will notice you again or if they will even be around next time!

Happiness is not the same as Excitement

The question is whether the feeling that we got is happiness or something else.

- Was what we got from the favourable sensation = happiness?
- Was the favourable feeling we got from the other = happiness?

What we got in both cases is a sort of momentary happiness. We are calling it excitement. There is a confusion between excitement and happiness (a harmonious state within). Excitement is short lived, not sustainable, while a harmonious state within is something which can be continuous and sustainable. You have an expectation, say for a particular sweet, and if that expectation is fulfilled, you feel happy. However, since you are looking for continuity of happiness, you try to continue, in this case eating the sweet. But sooner or later you see that it cannot be continued indefinitely, so that happiness from eating the sweet dies out. In fact, there is no possibility to continue this happiness from eating the sweet. Somewhere you are able to see this. You are able to see that you have a deeper desire for continuity of happiness which this sweet is not able to fulfil.

This temporary happiness we are getting out of favourable sensation or out of the feeling we receive from the other is not really happiness (harmony). It is just a temporary state of excitement. If you look at it in a deeper sense, you would realize that this excitement is actually creating a disharmonious state within. That is why you feel uncomfortable within when you are in a state of excitement, so much so that it starts reflecting on your body in terms of disturbed pace of breathing, high blood pressure, etc.

Other Prevailing Notions about Happiness

There are many other assumptions, questions and confusions about happiness. Let us see a few of them here. Try to explore if they are valid:

"I will be bored of happiness if I am always happy".

Of course, one will be bored of the excitement arising out of favourable sensation. If happiness is assumed to be excitement, we do get bored of it (excitement). Now, if we understand that happiness is to be in harmony, we can evaluate this assumption to be false.

"Happiness and unhappiness are two sides of the same coin" or "Happiness and unhappiness go together, they cannot be separated" or "Happiness and unhappiness are the two banks of a river and one is doomed to travel back and forth between the two".

It is simpler to refer to our natural acceptance. "Do I want to be happy or unhappy"? And to further ask "do I want continuity of happiness"? The answers you get from within are authentic for you.

"Don't bother me with vague things like happiness. I have to live and deal with other more important things in my life".

Again, it is simpler to ask yourself what you are expecting to achieve out of the effort you are making – is it happiness or something else. Of course, the clarity of happiness is essential.

"If we become happy, progress will stop".

Ask yourself what is the purpose of all this progress - is it for sustained human happiness or something else?

"I need to be unhappy to recognize that I am happy".

The recognition of happiness is there in human beings innately, so comparing is not necessary. Like there is no need to be sick to appreciate health. However, if this assumption is very strong, keep exploring.

"We think of others only when we are unhappy. Thus, it is important / useful to be unhappy so that one can help others".

When you are unhappy, find out whom you remember and for what reason – to help you to get out of unhappiness or for something else? Similarly, when you are happy, do you want to share it with other people? Whom do you remember then? When we are in harmony within, we can relate to other people in a more meaningful manner.

"Yes, I want happiness. But my desiring does not guarantee it. Why talk of that desire"?

Just desiring happiness is certainly not enough, one has to make the effort also. Ask yourself, in what direction would you like to make effort in – for happiness or for unhappiness?

"My happiness depends on the others. What can I do about it"?

If we can see that happiness is harmony, it is our property, and does not depend on the other. If we are expecting feeling from the other for our happiness, it certainly can't be guaranteed, nor can it be continuous.

"We do not want happiness for ourselves, but we want to make others happy (while we may stay unhappy)".

Find out if you can give what you don't have. If you don't have harmony (happiness) within, can you give it to the other?

"Happiness is a small thing. We have higher aspirations, such as contentment, peace, bliss, etc.".

True, we do have higher aspirations. However, ask yourself if you can get to contentment without harmony within?

Observations on Various Efforts for Happiness

Since methods of getting happiness from outside do not necessarily ensure harmony within, the underlying disharmony continues, the frustration keeps building up. When the unhappiness continues, we try to escape from it. People try all sorts of ways, some of which are mentioned in fig. 4-2.

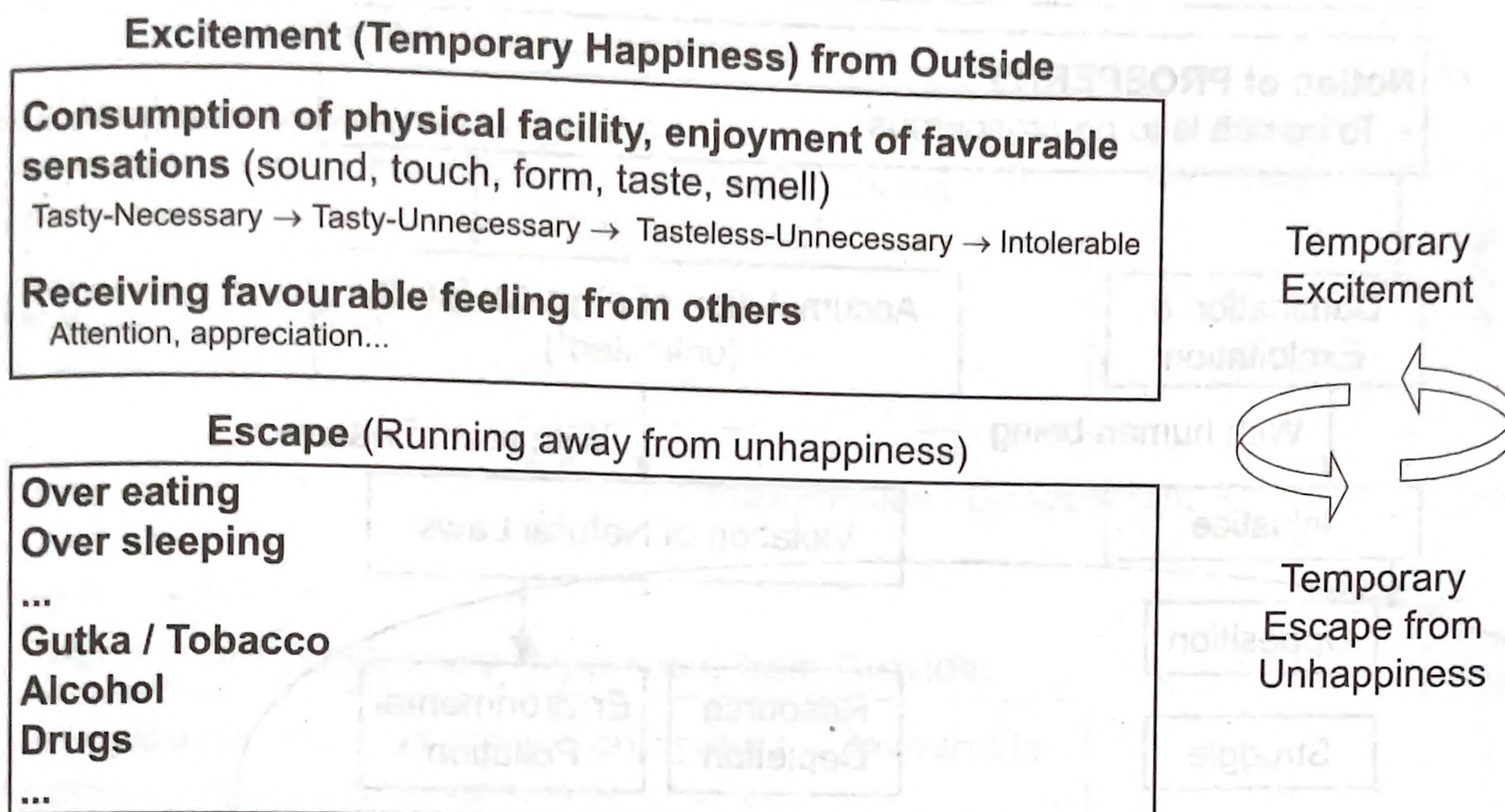


Fig. 4-2. Excitement and Escape

You can find out if these ways of escaping from unhappiness work or not. Take for example, people who smoke. Does their intake of cigarettes go up or does it go down when they are in more tension? Generally, the more the tension, the more is the intake of cigarettes. Needless to say, there are adverse side effects on the health of the Body. Is it a permanent solution to the unhappiness? We can easily see that cigarettes or any of the other means used for escape (such as alcohol, drugs, over eating, etc. as listed above) is not a permanent solution.

Another observation is that people with such assumptions about happiness tend to keep moving between excitement and escape. If we observe people working under unfavourable conditions they are under a lot of pressure. Such people tend to take to one escape route or the other, in the name of relaxing, chilling out, etc., so much so that it may even become an addiction. We can observe many well-meaning people caught up in this cycle.

Of course, such methods of trying to get happiness from outside, or the efforts for escaping from unhappiness in this manner are futile. Not only do these methods not work, but they also have many undesirable side effects. For example, rates of obesity, depression and suicide are increasing globally, particularly in high income societies, due to this confusion. Like that the side effects can be observed at every level – exploitation of human being as well as exploitation of nature, as indicated in fig. 4-3.

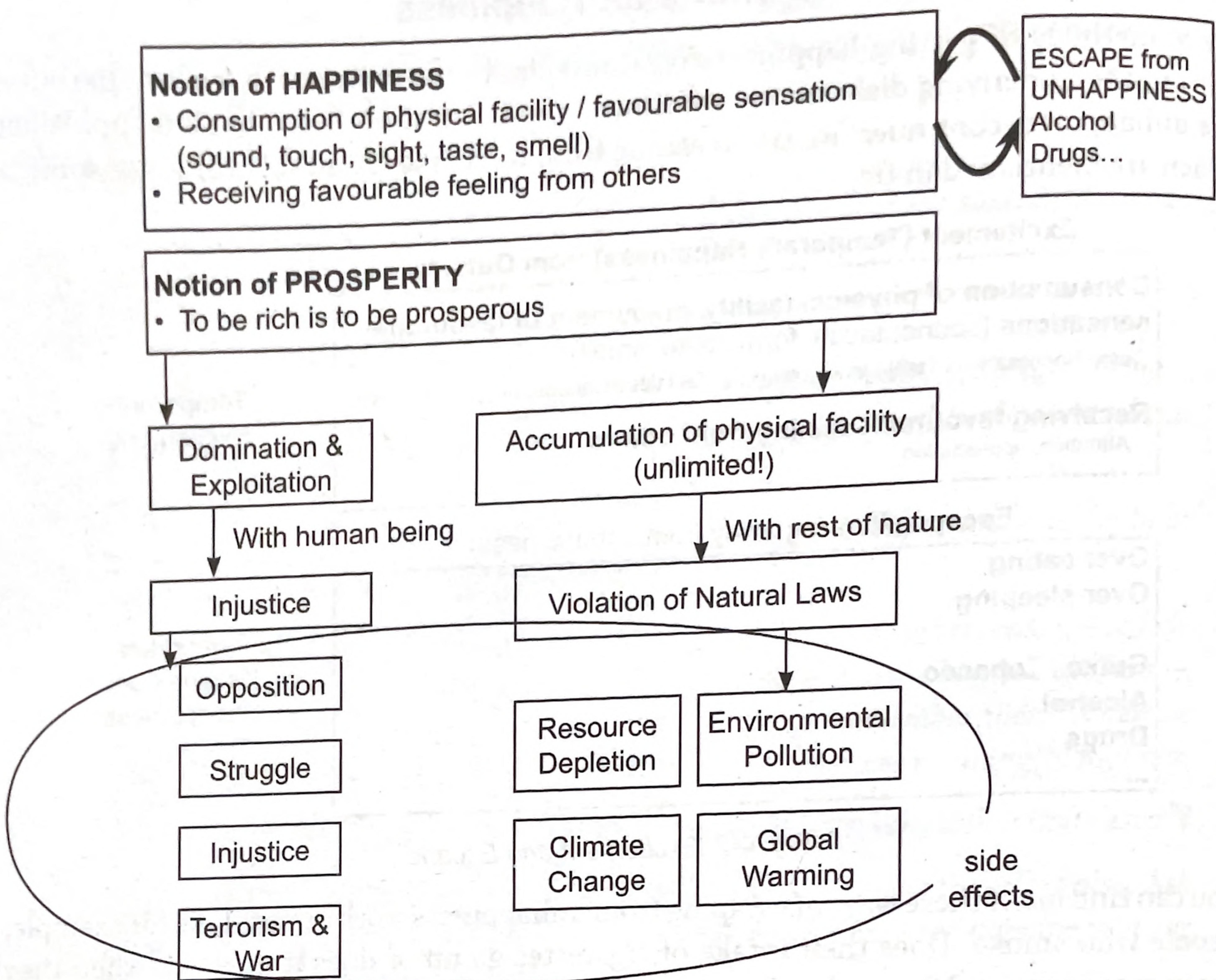


Fig. 4-3. A Critical Appraisal of the Current Scenario

The problems mentioned above have to do with one's notion of happiness and the programme for its fulfilment.



By now, you would have appreciated that in order to move towards a fulfilling life, it is of utmost importance to have clarity about happiness and prosperity. After going through the above discussion on these, it will be fruitful for you to pause and explore what has been discussed as well as your own present beliefs and experiences in this regard.

The Programme for Happiness

We have seen that happiness is to be in a state of harmony. The expanse of our living encompasses four levels – individual, family, society and nature/existence. The programme for harmony is to make the necessary effort to understand harmony and to live in harmony at all levels of our being. This is articulated in figs. 4-4 and 4-5.

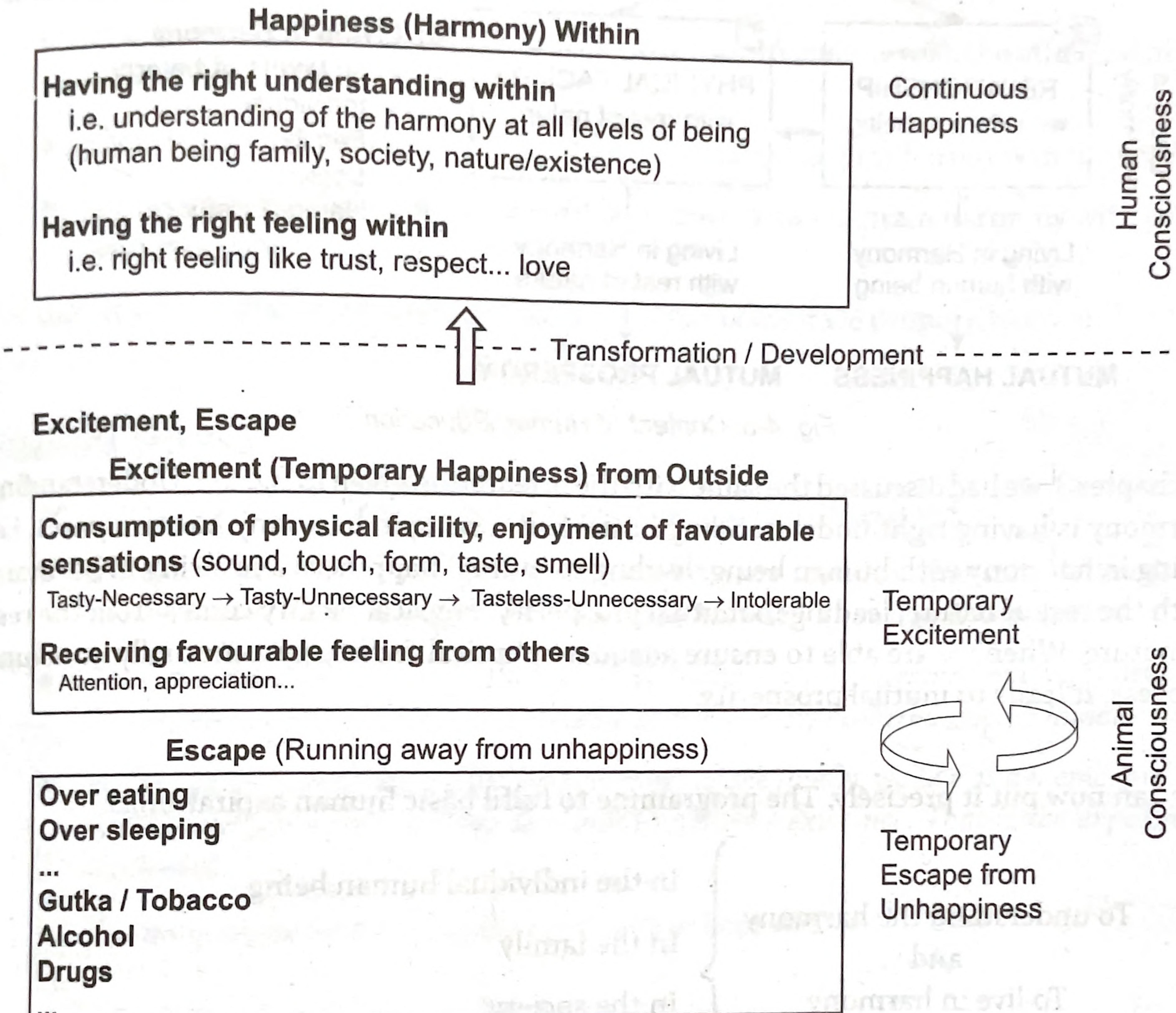
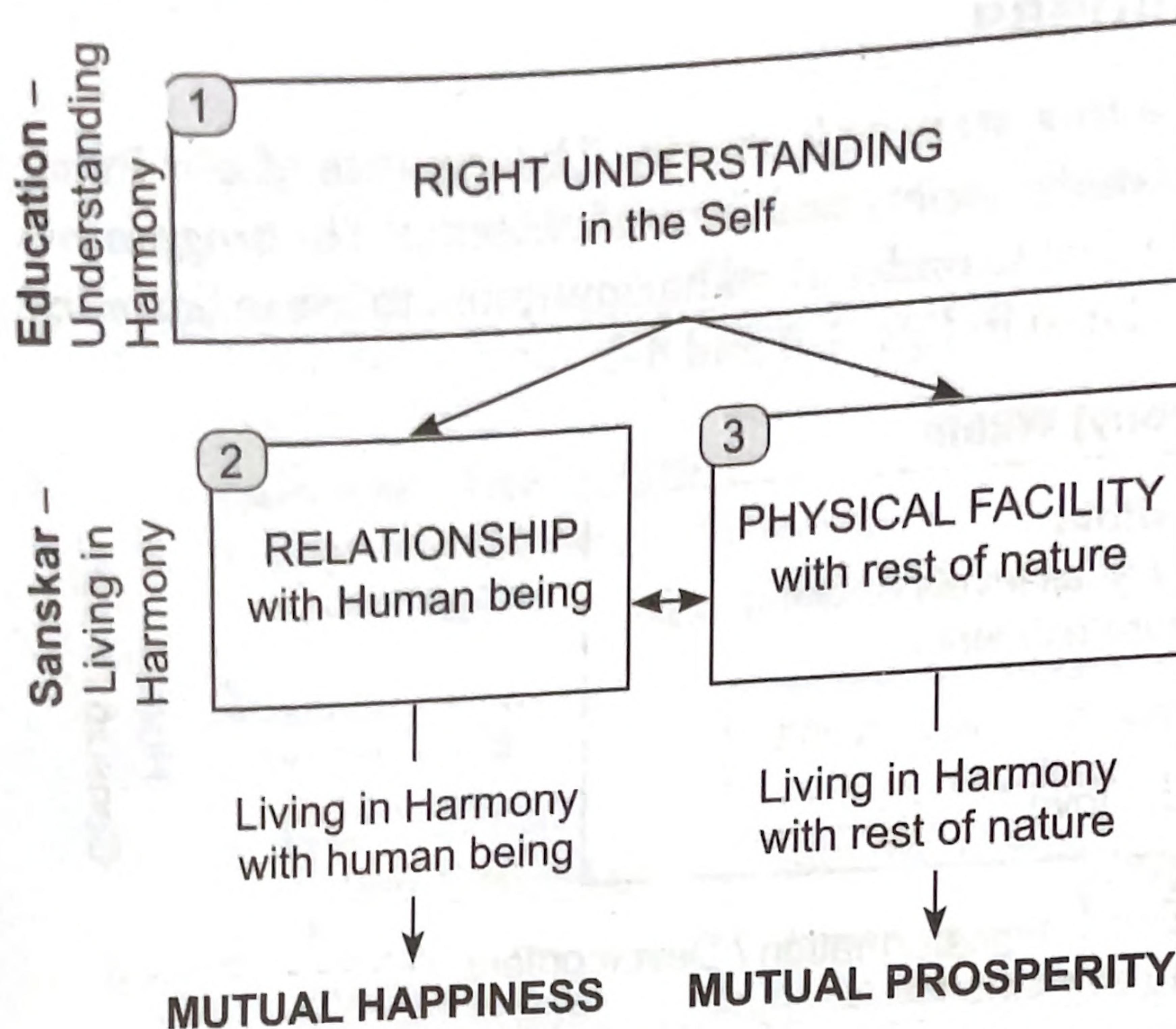


Fig. 4-4. Happiness, Excitement and Escape from Unhappiness

We have earlier proposed that the basic human aspiration for continuity of happiness and prosperity is fulfilled by right understanding in the Self, fulfilment in relationship and physical facility.

Right understanding is essentially the understanding of harmony in the entire expanse of our being, i.e. harmony in the human being, in the family, in the society and in nature/existence. If we are able to see the harmony at all these levels, there is a possibility of living in harmony at all these levels.



Content of Human Education

(A) Understanding Harmony:

- Harmony in Human Being
- Harmony in Family
- Harmony in Society
- Harmony in Nature/Existence

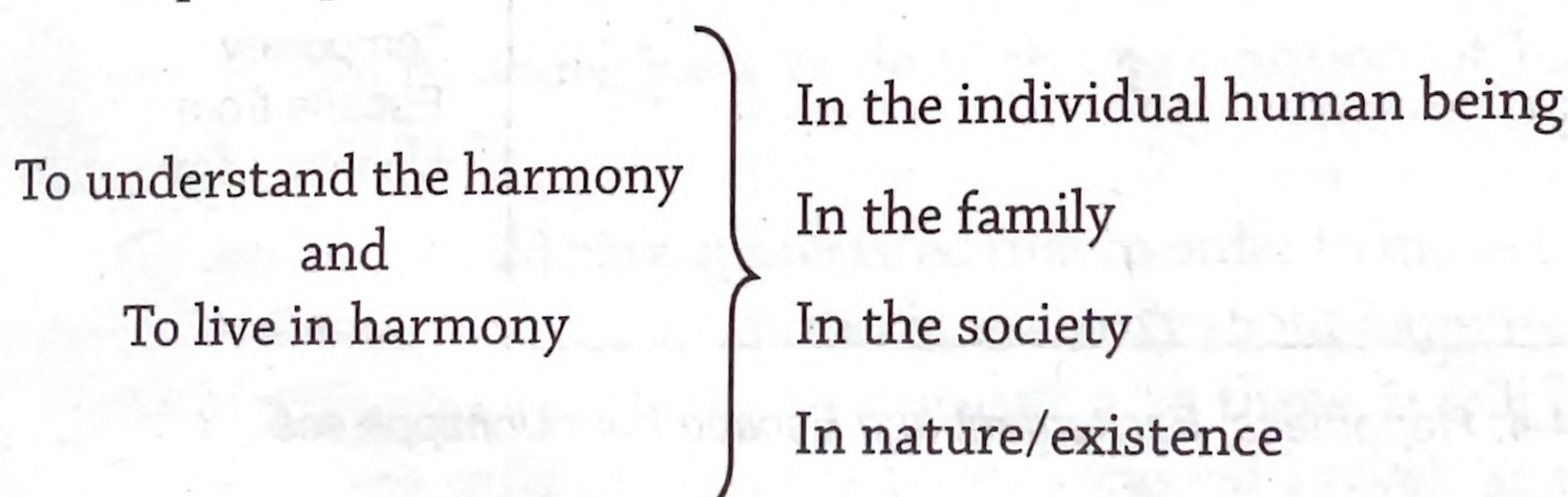
(B) Living in Harmony at all levels of being:

- Individual
- Family
- Society
- Nature/Existence

Fig. 4-5. Content of Human Education

In chapter 3, we had discussed the same with the orientation given in fig. 4-5. Understanding harmony is having right understanding in the Self. Living in harmony has two parts, i.e. living in harmony with human being, leading to mutual happiness and living in harmony with the rest of nature, leading to mutual prosperity. Physical facility comes from the rest of nature. When we are able to ensure adequate physical facility by a mutually enriching process, it leads to mutual prosperity.

We can now put it precisely. The programme to fulfil basic human aspiration is:



Natural Outcome of the Programme

As we understand happiness and prosperity as our basic aspirations, we would naturally put in our efforts to:

1. Understand the harmony
2. Live in harmony

The natural outcome of understanding harmony will be to first be in harmony within, i.e. to be in a state of happiness within. When we are in harmony within, we will naturally make effort to share and extend that harmony in every action – from the smallest thing to the biggest thing that we do. Recall from chapter 1, we had discussed that the value of

a human being is its participation in this nature/existence and fulfilling our participation leads to our happiness. This participation is something natural, rather than something forced upon us. Now if we can see that happiness is to be in harmony:

- Our participation with ourselves will be – to be in harmony as an individual human being.
- Our participation in the family will be – to ensure harmony with the other members of the family.
- Our participation in the society will be – to make effort for harmony in the society.
- Our participation in the nature will be – to work to maintain harmony with every unit in nature.

For this, it is essential to understand harmony. That is what we propose to do in chapters 5-11.

Salient Points

- *Happiness is something definite; it can be defined and understood.*
- *To be in a state / situation in which there is harmony / synergy, that state / situation is naturally acceptable to me. To be in a state of harmony / synergy is happiness.*
- *To be in a state / situation in which there is disharmony / contradiction is not naturally acceptable to me. To be forced to in a state of disharmony / contradiction is unhappiness.*
- *We live as an individual, we live as a member of the family, we live as a member of the society and ultimately, we live as a unit in nature / existence. That is the expanse of our being.*
- *The programme for ensuring the continuity of happiness is*

*To understand the harmony
and
To live in harmony*

at all levels

1. *At the level of human being*
2. *At the level of family*
3. *At the level of society*
4. *At the level of nature/existence*

- *Prosperity is the feeling of having or producing more than required physical facility.*
 - *To have a feeling of prosperity, two things are required:*
 - ❖ *Right assessment of physical needs, along with their required quantity*
 - ❖ *Ensuring the availability / production of more than required physical facility*
- A prosperous person thinks of right utilisation and nurturing the other, while a deprived person thinks of accumulation and exploiting the other.*

- The prevailing notions of happiness and prosperity can be summarised as follows:
 - ❖ Happiness is assumed to be excitement arising out of favourable sensation through the Body and favourable feeling from the other.
 - ❖ Prosperity is assumed to be accumulation of physical facility.
 - ❖ When these do not fulfil, and the unhappiness is still there, people try to escape from unhappiness by way of taking to alcohol, drugs, etc.

These notions have led to exploitation of human being as well as the rest of nature. There are visible impacts in the form of struggle and war with human being and resource depletion and environmental pollution with rest of nature.

Test Your Understanding

Part 1: Questions for Self-evaluation

(Have we grasped the basic proposals made in this chapter?)

1. Define happiness as proposed in the chapter. Explain with two examples from your day-to-day life to support your answer.
2. Four levels of living have been proposed in this chapter. What are these levels? Can you see that you are living at all these levels? Explain with examples from your life.
3. Discuss the programme for continuity of happiness.
4. Define prosperity as proposed in the chapter. Explain with two examples from your day-to-day life to support your answer.
5. Is there any difference between prosperity and accumulation of wealth? Explain with few examples of both, preferably from your own experience.
6. Is excitement and happiness the same thing or different? Explain with few examples of both, preferably from your own experience.
7. Critically examine the prevailing notions of happiness and prosperity in the society. What are the consequences of these notions?

Part 2: Practice Exercises for Self-exploration

(To help connect the content to one's life, at least at the level of thought, these exercises may be done individually or in a group, particularly with friends and family members)

1. It was mentioned that for any physical facility, the following sequence applies:
Tasty-Necessary → Tasty-Unnecessary → Tasteless-Unnecessary → Intolerable

Observe this sequence for at least five types of physical facility, say a tasty food, TV programs, your favourite music, etc. and note your conclusions. What are the other options for continuity of happiness?

- Take your list of desires. Revise it if you need to. Now, if a desire is fulfilled, find out what it will result into – harmony (happiness), prosperity or something else (see table, below). If it is something else, try to identify exactly what it will result into. It may be excitement; it may be a temporary relief from unhappiness.

Desire	When this desire is fulfilled, I expect that it will result in		
	Harmony	Prosperity	Other
Good health			I will look good
Lots of friends			I like to be with friends
Tasty food			I like the taste of it
Lots of money		This should lead to prosperity	But I don't know how much money
Understanding my natural acceptance	This may lead to harmony		
This is just a sample list. Please make your own list			

Articulate the key conclusions that you draw from this exercise.

- Observe yourself for a day.

a. Find two examples when you can notice that you are living as an individual, as a member of the family, as a member of society and as a unit in nature. Write down what you are taking or giving in each of these examples. Are there any other levels at which you live? What do you conclude from this exploration?

b. List three instances when you are happy and three instances when you are unhappy. Are the happy instances related to harmony at some level? Are the unhappy instances related to disharmony at some level? What was the reason for continuing to be in disharmony (even for a moment)? What do you conclude from this exploration?

Do this exercise in a group too, and share your observations with each other.

- In the analysis of your list of desires (question 1, above), find out which desires or what part of each desire are continuous (that you want to continue every moment). E.g. you may want to continue to have lots of good friends. If you really look into it, you want to have a feeling of acceptance all the time. You may not want your friends to be physically around you 24x7, so the desire for lots of good friends can be split into 2 desires:

Contd...

Original Desire	New Desire(s) – Original desire has been split into many sub-desires
Lots of good friends	
	Feeling of acceptance for me in my friends – continuous
	Being physically in the company of my friends – temporary (not continuous)

Desire	Continuous	Temporary
Good health	Always	
Feeling of acceptance for me in my friends	Always	
Being physically in the company of my friends		Whenever I want
Tasty food		Whenever I want
Lots of money		Whenever I want
Understanding my natural acceptance	Continuous	
This is just a sample list. Please make your own list		

Part 3: Projects and Modelling Exercises

You may like to revisit this part of Test Your Understanding after reading through the complete book once and self-exploring all the key proposals. With that, you may have some (or many) aha! moments in which something clicks for you, you understand a proposal. What you have understood may be expressed in various creative ways which appeal to different people. This part is for you to give a creative expression to your understanding. Of course, you can do this in a group also. Creative expressions may be in the form of sketches, drawings, paintings, clay models, sculptures, songs, poems, music, dance, audios, videos, games, puzzles, stories, skits, plays, dramas, charts, diagrams, plans, survey questionnaires, blogs, something on social media and so on. It is the story of your own life – and it matters. While some hints are given above, please feel free to share your real aha's in your own way!

“Happiness is to be in a state of harmony. Unhappiness is to be forced to be in a state of disharmony”.

1. My state – making effort for excitement or happiness?
2. State of the society – making effort for excitement-escape or happiness?
3. Ultimately, I want happiness, regardless of the profession etc.

Part 4: Your Questions

Write down your questions or doubts in your note-book. If any of the previous questions have been clarified by your self-exploration of the proposals so far, please mark them as answered. We would like to discuss the questions remaining unanswered in your self-exploration.