

How To Find Your Inner Happiness

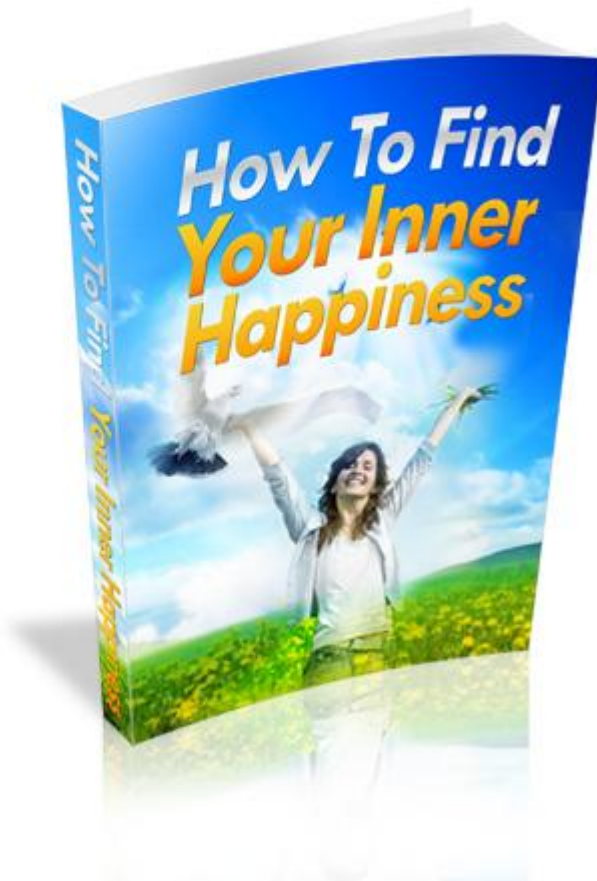


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Chapter 1: Happiness - What Is It?

There is an old saying that goes like this: “One man's heaven is another man's hell”. In plain terms this means we all view what is heaven to us or what is hell to what is relative to our lives. We can take this same idea and apply it to the meaning of happiness. How we view happiness is personal based on our lives, values and lifestyles. Happiness to me may be unhappiness to you. For example many of my friends say to me “You have to go out” and I say “Why?” They feel I need to party and go out to enjoy my life. That's their definition of happiness. I like to be home and do what I want with no pressure. This is happiness to me. Everyone is different is what I am illustrating. To get to the point, I don't need to constantly be entertained outside of my house to be happy while they do. Thus, we do not have the same definition of happiness as it applies to our lives.

The only exception to the definition of happiness where one should interfere in what happiness is to person; is when another person's definition of happiness affects others (or even themselves) in a negative way or hurtful way. If someone enjoys hurting another at the expense of another as a form of happiness then they have a serious problem and they need to seek professional help. In this case their happiness is distorted because it involves harming themselves or others to gain a sense of happiness. One's happiness should not be based on physical or emotional pain of another, and this is even more serious if the other person is not a consenting adult. That crosses the boundaries. If a person is happy at the expense of another's suffering there no justification this person is sick mentally. This is especially true if the other person does not wish to be hurt. In this case they are inflicting their happiness on others who want no part of it. This is a mental problem that needs addressing

immediately.

By definition happiness is defined as a state of mind or a feeling that is characterized by contentment, love, satisfaction, joy or pleasure. The word as by definition “happiness” is approached in philosophy and religion as a state of being. This is especially true if one embraces a particular ideology based on the premise of “Happiness” as the philosophy of that particular religion.

There are two basic schools of thought in relation to the idea of happiness. One is that we get our happiness from external things like living a prosperous life. The other school says in order to be happy it has to start from inside our beings first. Some philosophers and religious thinkers tend to define the idea of happiness as a state of being as a result of living a “good” life which is of course relative formulated by what their perceptions of a good life is. They approach happiness as a state of being in which one is flourishing as opposed to an emotion from within us that we radiate to the world. There are however other philosophers and religious thinkers that do hypothesize that happiness comes from an internal state of being first and then happiness can trickle into the physical world.

Psychology attempts to define happiness according to one's mental state of mind and the positivity one executes in one's life. Science on the other hand, attempts to define happiness as with what happens when we are in a state of happiness physically and biologically to us.

While it is hard to concretely measure happiness because it is also culturally and socially defined , there are general consensus across the board which are included in defining what happiness is.

Regardless of the person, place or culture; the universal idea of happiness is based on positive emotions and activities that permeate into a person's life based on that culture's definition of happiness.

There are three kinds of happiness that universally all people seem to agree on: pleasure, engagement and meaning in one's life.

There are also certain general attributes that are associated with being happy. These are:

1. Relationships
2. Love
3. Social interactions
4. Extraversion, marital
5. Status, employment,
6. State of health,
7. Freedom as in a democratic sense
8. Optimism
9. Religious involvement
10. Income
11. Proximity to other “happy” people.

The order of these general attributes are not necessarily as how I wrote them. They are ultimately based on a person's value system in relationship to what they perceive as happiness. For instance I may think love is the most important aspect of happiness while others may think its economic security. The order of things that make us happy vary depending on the person's life.

Many times happiness is defined by ethics of a particular group or belief system. Ethicists may argue as to how they believe humans should behave as the foundation of what they believe one should define as happiness. There is what is called mundane concrete happiness and spiritual happiness. For example, Buddhism is premised on the idea of happiness as a central theme. In order to achieve “Nirvana” or “Everlasting Peace” one has to raise their consciousness beyond the mundane state of happiness. Buddhists believe to be happy one has to have loving kindness and compassion

for all living beings. Buddha taught that if one acts and speaks with a pure mind surely happiness would follow like a shadow.

Al-Ghazali (1058-1111) the Muslim Sufi thinker wrote the Alchemy of Happiness, a manual of spiritual instruction throughout the Muslim world and widely practiced even now. About one hundred years later, the Hindu thinker Pantanjali, author of the Yoga Sutras, wrote quite exhaustively on the psychological and ontological roots of bliss. Bliss is an extreme form of Nirvana in Hindu terms. In the Yoruba religion it is believed that “Iwa Pele” or good character promotes happiness and happiness brings Ire or blessings.

The philosopher Aristotle wrote in 350 B.C.E the Nicomachean Ethics in which he states that “happiness” (as in doing well and being well) is human's desire for their own sake unlike riches, friends, wealth, honor or even health. He also observed that people sought things like riches, honor and health not only for the sake of those things but in order to be happy.

In psychological terms today, some psychologists practice in what is called “Positive Psychology”. It is believed that Positive Psychology is a true way to promote happiness within a person. Martin Seligman one of the founders of what is called “Positive Psychology” wrote a book entitled “Authentic Happiness” which describes happiness as “positive emotions and “positive” activities. He further categorizes emotions related to the past, the present or the future in defining happiness. Positive emotions related to the past include satisfaction, pride contentment and serenity. Positive emotions related to the future include optimism, hope and trust. Present positive emotions are broken down into two categories namely pleasure and gratification. Pleasures in relation to the body and higher pleasures are called “pleasures of the moment” and usually are a result or involve a physical stimulus. In positive psychology it is believed that

the most profound sense of happiness comes from having a life of meaning. This means one's life is purposeful and fulfilling due to one using one's strengths and virtues in a purpose greater than one's own immediate goals. One is in a state of happiness because they are content with who they are inside emotionally and can be happy with the world because they know what they want out of life and how to attain it.

Physically biologists and scientists are looking at the brain and biochemical body changes to help them understand happiness. There are biologically chemical reactions that occur in the brain and body that allow us to differentiate between positive and negative occurrences. These changes are what gives us either a positive or negative state of mind.

Social factors are among the most important things that make human beings happy. Their relationships with others are a key source of happiness as their interaction with other people. A widely published study in the British Medical Journal reported that they saw that happiness seems to spread from person to person within a social network or group. Research was done over a 20 year period and found that clusters of happiness spread up to three degrees of separation. What that means is that happiness tended to spread through close relationships like friends, siblings, spouses and even next door neighbors.

The research also noted that happiness spread more consistently than unhappiness in a given network. The structure of the social network also had an impact on happiness. For example, those in the inner core like close friends and family members were happier than those on the peripheral edge of the network (those who were not at the core of close friends or family; but may casually know someone in the inner circle.) This study concluded that happiness can be spread

like a virus. When one person is happy in a close social network it spreads to the others in that network through interaction with the source of happiness.

It is safe to say that regardless of the society or country one may live in everyone wants to be happy. Only you can say if you are happy or suffering from life's struggle. No one person can tell another person that the other is happy. A person can only speak for themselves regarding happiness. In reality there is no such thing as a problem free life. However in order to experience some sort of happiness in spite of the problems we may have; we have to come to terms with the problems first. In this way we can come to some kind of terms with ourselves and create a state of being within ourselves to work through the problems. The idea is to handle these things without letting them take our sense of self away. How we choose to react to the challenges, tragedies and suffering that life throws at us is based on our inner strength. Happiness is found when we can overcome the obstacles and pain that life gives us and remain intact and in fact stronger because of them. Our sense of accomplishment to persevere and overcome life's obstacles is the groundwork to happiness likened to climbing a mountain and finally reaching the top.

Chapter 2: Our Brains and Happiness

Science research has come up with two major findings in relationship to our brains and our emotions. The first is that unlike what was thought previously; it is found that emotions do not come from a single source that emits the emotions in the brain to the body. It is found that different emotions stem from different sources in the body. Another noted find was that men and women's activity patterns in the brain and body vary in relation to their emotions. These patterns between men and women do not mirror each other they are distinct based on gender.

These things were found when fast imaging was done on various subjects that allowed the researchers to snap images when different emotions occurred in both men and women. These images have allowed researchers to draw new neurological maps depicting emotional activity. Previously it was believed that the limbic system, which is a ring of structures around the brain stem was the emotional center for humans. These snap images show that when emotion occurs activity occurs both in the limbic system and beyond to other parts of the brain and body. It was also noted that happiness and sadness are not registered the same way in the brain. Both have independent patterns of activity based on those two different emotions. This was according to a report done in the American Journal of Psychiatry in March 1995.

Because happiness and sadness occur in different parts of the brain we have the capability to be happy and sad at the same time. For example, when a child leaves to go to college we may be happy they reached that milestone but are sad to see them go. Dr. Mark George, a psychiatrist and neurologist at the National Institute of Mental Health in Bethesda, Md., conducted a study on 11 subjects. When they felt happy he noted there was a characteristic pattern of

decreased activity in the part of the brain; the cerebral cortex which is the region of the brain we use for forethought and planning. The parts of the brain located in the temporal-parietal area of the cortex, located just over and a bit behind the ears, and the right prefrontal lobe, just behind the forehead used in complex planning shut down when we are happy.

The Dr. also noted that when the same subjects who volunteered for this research also volunteered to receive injections of cocaine or morphine it proved a point. It showed that when the drugs were in their systems the same neocortical areas became less active as well. In these cases the brain activity was like that of transient happiness ranging to ecstasy.

Another change noted in the limbic system was the amygdala. This is a pair of almond shaped structures in the limbic system. This part of the limbic system activates during sadness, but changes when we are happy. The left one seems to shut down a little while the right goes up. Dr. George also found that men and women process emotions differently. When women are sad their the anterior limbic system is activated much more than men's are. Also women seem to experience a more profound sadness than do men.

The idea of reward is an active brain process that occurs when something pleasant stimulates us. The feelings of liking, wanting and learning rewards are all activated in different parts of the brain. When we experience pleasure it is coded by neural activity in many brain sites including the prefrontal cortex, amygdala, thalamus, nucleus caudatus, nucleus accumbens and the ventral pallidum. Again the regions that act in the brain differ partially between the sexes and sex hormones which are also involved in these processes.

Emotions can be contributed by two sources; the chemicals the brain produce and the nutrition we take into our bodies. When we don't get

the right nutritional intake it effects the chemicals our bodies produce including the ones associated with being happy. The brain chemical serotonin is a neurotransmitter or hormone which is produced in the brain. It is the neurotransmitters that carry messages between the nerve cells. The substance that produces serotonin in the brain is an amino acid tryptophan.

It is certain aminos in the body that causes us to have a feeling of well being. Serotonin is once such amino acid that helps us maintain a happy feeling. It also helps us control our moods by helping us with sleep, anxiety and depression. When our bodies don't produce enough serotonin we experience states of depression and anxiety.

It has been found that certain foods like bananas and turkey have a specific protein which helps the body convert them to the chemical serotonin. It has been found that poor diets do contribute to depression as eating junk food because they do not help in the production of serotonin.

Science has not figured out what triggers hunger or appetite but have noted that serotonin is involved. It is known that eating carbohydrates releases the chemical serotonin. Thats why you find people eating sweets or carb rich foods when they are depressed. The reason is the body is craving those to release the serotonin to give way to a better feeling or mood. Many people comfort themselves with sugar and carbs when they are sad or under stress. When the brain produces serotonin the mood is eased. It is also noted that eating complex carbohydrates produces tryptophan in the brain which also has a calming effect.

It has been found that protein produces alertness. Protein produces dopamine and norepinephrine, which promote alertness. Protein meals containing essential fatty acids and/or carbohydrates are

recommended for increased alertness. Salmon and white fish are good choices. Avoid foods high in saturated fats; including consumption of fried foods, such as hamburgers and French fries, leads to sluggishness, slow thinking, and fatigue. Fats inhibit the synthesis of neurotransmitters by the brain in that they cause the blood cells to become sticky and to clump together. When this happens the result is poor circulation, especially in relation to the brain.

A balance of chemicals in the brain and body is achieved when the diet contains a combination of complex carbohydrates and protein. So an example of a balanced food for the nutrients mentioned in the preceding paragraphs would be a turkey sandwich on whole wheat bread. This is a good combination because the turkey is high in protein and tryptophan, and the whole wheat bread supplies complex carbohydrates.

Consume more carbohydrates than protein if you are nervous and wish to become more relaxed. Eat more protein than carbohydrates if you are tired and wish to become more alert. A depressed person who needs his spirits lifted would benefit from eating foods like turkey and salmon, which are high in tryptophan and protein. Beware: The body will react more quickly to the presence of sugar than it does to the presence of complex carbohydrates. The increase in energy supplied by the simple carbohydrates is quickly accompanied by fatigue and depression. This is where the term sugar rush was created from.

Serotonin management includes both diet and paying attention to the little things that make you feel good. The idea is to consciously include both factors in your daily routine. We know, instinctively, that pampering ourselves is a way to make us feel good. Unfortunately many times we do not take time to schedule pleasant

things into our daily lives. Things like pleasant surroundings, favorite music and food, or even quality time with loved ones into our daily agenda can make the difference between feeling depressed or feeling good. When we take the time to do these little things it helps with our serotonin levels. Just getting out of bed and into a warm shower elevates serotonin levels, making it easier to get into a positive, constructive frame of mind.

Generally speaking, depression if it is mild enough can sometimes be managed without prescribed medications. Aerobic exercise, watching your carbohydrate & alcohol consumption, getting up early and moving, even if you don't feel like it, forcing structure on your life, using meditation and imagery (if you can concentrate, which depends on how depressed you are), and seeking a support group or psychotherapy, have all proved helpful in combating bouts of unhappiness.

A study that is ongoing was conducted by a group of psychologists using a survey on happiness. People were asked to rate their levels of happiness from 0 to 10. Most people's level were at 6.7. If something traumatic or sad happened like a divorce or death the point level went down by one or two for at least a year or two. It took about two years for the level to go back to 6.7. Likewise things like falling in love or winning the lottery caused the level to go up a point or two for the following year to two years. At the end, of the two years it went back down to the 6.7 again. The conclusion from this study was that a slight increase could be sustained with the little daily pleasures as opposed to big live events. So if you do small things every day that make you feel good or happy then you can sustain an overall better state of being happy as opposed to the one great event that may occur now and again. Its incorporating the little things that you enjoy in your daily routine that makes the difference with your state of happiness. For instance if you like flowers buy them one in a

while.

Taking time to smell the flowers implies a willingness to be spontaneous. It is easier for some people to be more spontaneous than others. Make a detailed list of little things that you enjoy and include them in your activities. Actually schedule a time of day to go for a walk, create or listen to your favorite music, read a poem, meditate, spend quality time with family and friends, paint, exercise, or just play. Make a pact with yourself to try it, just for a few weeks, then see if your over-all well being is not improved.

When our serotonin levels are low we experience depression and sadness. Some people have clinical reasons for serotonin levels being low and when medically diagnosed it is treated with various medications like anti depressants. There are times when serotonin levels may be low due to chemical imbalances and hormonal reasons. These too are treated with medication with doctor supervision. Many times the body craves carbohydrates and sugar when the serotonin levels in our bodies are low. This is because they boost the levels in our blood when we eat them. It suggested if you feel the sugar cravings to use healthy carbohydrate alternatives as a way to boost your serotonin levels without adding on the calories.

Chapter 3: What Makes Us Happy

From doing research for the first two chapters of this book I think it is safe to say that happiness is a state of mind that the body reinforces. Happiness is subjective even though there are some general ideals that everyone on the planet share as to what is constituted as happiness. The question then becomes is there a one shoe fits all formula for attaining happiness. I would think that because happiness means different things to different people the formula can be applied but the results may vary according to one's definition of what happiness is perceived by them.

It is also a factor that our temperaments, personalities and even some genetic factors (which give us a predisposition to happiness or depression) all go into our making of what we perceive happiness to be. Circumstances we control play about 10 to 15 percent of the equation of making us happy. Those 10 to 15 percent include economics, education, looks, and those kind of things. These are things we have some kind of control over even if it's not complete.

It's quite obvious that people with money seem to be happier because they have more time to do things that make them happy. They do not have to worry about money to pay for things or activities to make them happy or their daily necessities for survival. They don't have to worry about keeping a roof over their heads, feeding themselves or a family and having warm clothes in the winter. Poverty is not a source of happiness by any means. But on the other hand money alone is not enough to make a person happy. Case in point, look at all the rich people who turn to drugs and alcohol to create and keep the happy mood going. Many of the people in this category do not have what they consider a loving relationship. **You cannot buy real friendships or real love with a dollar.**

There are across the board triggers that make everyone happy. Those things include being in love and sex and doing activities like listening to your favorite music. Things like watching a funny movie, doing a fun activity makes one happy at the moment but it isn't long lasting.

Based on studies in order to turn that 10 to 15% into your favor it is suggested that developing good social skills, getting married or cohabitating, and pursuing goals that one finds purposeful for their life all adds to the 10 to 15 percent of increasing one's happiness.

Good social skills creates friendships and bonds. It is found that married couples who love each other have 30 percent more sex that is pleasing and of quality than single people. Living together falls into this category if the relationship is loving and committed. When one feels their life has meaning to themselves and the world they feel good about themselves and about how others perceive them. Once again enjoying the little things in life also plays a big part in happiness day to day. Always trying to create and maintain positivity goes a long way to happiness as opposed to bouts of being pleasant once in a while.

The first thing that positivity psychology as well as the gurus of happiness espouse is the idea of gratitude as part of the happiness equation. We need to be happy for what we already have. Most people are consumed with being sad over what they do not have, instead of giving thanks for what they do have already. When we have gratitude as a tool it helps affirm the little specks of goodness that we do accumulate in our lives.

The next thing in the happiness equation is the importance of relationships. We are social creatures by nature. Those that aren't

may have experienced things that make them not so opened or turned off to others. In that case they were emotionally scarred in some way. The need to bond and interact with other like beings is a characteristic that human beings carry since prehistoric times. It took people working together and forming family units in the caves to survive. People need people in their lives to feel loved and cared for.. When someone cares for us and we care for them in turn it puts us in a good frame of mind. When we are in a loving relationship that gives us nurturing and support it puts us in a happy state of mind. Giving and receiving love is very important for the happiness equation. For me it is the most important.

It's important to focus on our strengths as a person as opposed to dwelling on our weaknesses in order to be happy with our selves. When we consume ourselves with what is wrong with us it immobilizes us. When we think we don't make the grade or aren't good enough we are filled with sadness and depression. Its recommended for you to laugh at your weaknesses instead of cry about them. More important focus on those parts of you that are strong and capable. Keep in mind that no one is perfect even if they are perceived to be. When you start appreciating those things that are positive about yourself it reinforces your state of being in a positive fashion making it easier for happiness come into your life.

Here is a list of 10 things Psychiatrists say makes us happy:

- 1.As It was pointed out (science agrees) savor each moment that is enjoyable. It helps reduce overall depression when we think back to that happy moment. It helps create more serotonin the chemical that keeps us in a good mood.

2.Avoid Comparisons

Trying to keep up with other people that we think have it all can be

hard when we don't have what they do. Our country and the American Mystic is very dominated by who has and who doesn't. This destroys moral and esteem. Focus on what you accomplish and have in your life and don't worry about what others have.

3.Warning* Don't Make Money a Priority.

Yes we all need money to survive and no one wants to be poor. We get that. But those that put it high on their list of priorities are the ones prone to low esteem, depression, anxiety and fear. Money is necessary for survival in our society but it should not be a gauge for happiness. The more we look for satisfaction in material things the shorter the enjoyment is. We should not become defined by things we have instead of who we are inside. Research has also showed that money seekers also scored lower on vitality and self actualization tests.

4. Have Meaningful Goals

When we strive for certain things it gives us a sense of purpose. Research has also shown that people need a sense of purpose to thrive. Just existing creates depression and sadness because a person feels like they have no purpose in life or reason to live. Harvard's resident happiness professor, Tal Ben-Shahar, agrees, "Happiness lies at the intersection between pleasure and meaning. Whether at work or at home, the goal is to engage in activities that are both personally significant and enjoyable."

5.Taking Initiative

When one takes initiative at places like work it makes the experience more meaningful and pleasant. One of the major sources of unhappiness and depression is people hating their jobs. When we feel in control and rewarded for our efforts it makes for a happier experience.

6. Friends and Family

People who are happier have good friends and a loving family. This does not include being the life of the party with shallow acquaintances. This is deep supportive meaningful relationships which are an integrative part of one's life. It's not just having acquaintance relationships or friends that's the source of happiness. Its having close, meaningful and loving ties between people who truly care for one another that makes for happiness.

7. Smile

Smiling goes a long way even when you don't feel like it. It makes you start to appreciate the glass being half full as opposed to half empty.

8. Say Thank you like you mean it-

This goes back to the idea of gratitude. Showing gratitude generates happiness for both parties. Research by Martin Seligman, founder of positive psychology, revealed that people who write “gratitude letters” to someone who made a difference in their lives score higher on happiness, and lower on depression and the effect lasts for weeks. It also showed people who expressed gratitude were more likely to succeed in life.

9. Many studies and research shows Exercise helps with depression. It boosts the “feel good” endorphins biochemically and give you a sense of accomplishment.

10. Help others

Helping others is very rewarding and gives happiness. When you give happiness you receive happiness. This includes listening to others, passing on knowledge and forgiveness.

Finally Respect is another key factor across the board the creates happiness. When we feel respected we are happy, when we respect others they respect us. Happiness is a two way street when we make others happy they return it in kind.

Chapter 4: Finding Peace From Within - How To Create Happiness

It's safe to say that when we feel at peace its easier for us to also start to feel happiness. Our society does not promote nor support our lives to be in a state of peace. Everything we do has either pressure or tension attached to it in some form.

According to the dictionary “internal” means having to do or situate inside the body; and also relating to, or inside the mind. “Peace” is defined in the dictionary as a state of calm and quiet; freedom from disturbing thoughts; and an agreement to end hostilities. So, in the real world many times we do not have peace. Instead, maybe for some up to a few times a day we have to fight the onslaught of anger, hostility and power games which are integrated into the American lifestyle. Unfortunately many people gauge the success of their existence by utilizing these things mentioned above as a means of survival in this world. They find themselves using hostility, anger and power games to feel successful in their daily endeavors or even worse, are victims of these things every day all day long. So there comes a point when we are saturated by the negative feelings and energy that we lose focus of what it means to have peace in our lives.

Ideally to have happiness one would think you need to be free from anger, hostility and power games constantly bombarding you. So in order to achieve this with those things going on around you; you have to learn how to find peace within yourself. In order to do so you have to combine all your thoughts and feelings into one state of being that creates tranquility and harmony for you when you need it. One effective way to do this is honor your emotions even when they are not productive and then acknowledge them and finally let them go so you can move on to a peaceful state. So many times people

keep their hostile and angry emotions repressed. What happens is these emotions seep to the surface anyway in behavior that's less than humanly acceptable as an outlet for those emotions. One has to find a way to express these emotions in appropriate ways so they can be released from our systems constructively. This is what gives way to inner peace.

Here are some steps you can use to constructively release not so peaceful emotions:

1. **You need to listen to yourself-** This means get in touch with your emotions and know how you are feeling. The reason we fly off the handle so often is that we deny the feelings of anger, resentment and rage. By saying to yourself “yes I am angry” or better yet out loud it helps dissipate the feelings you are holding. When you suppress negative feelings you risk the possibility of harboring real out of control anger. When anger is uncontrollable we become consumed by it. This type of anger can even be dangerous for not releasing it constructively. When we flip out many times its due to feelings we didn't even know we had inside. Its also because we refuse to accept those feelings and thoughts consciously not allowing ourselves to express them keeping them bottled up inside. That's why people who don't express themselves in some form in terms of a positive release even if the feelings aren't are time bombs waiting to explode.
2. **Accept responsibility for your feelings-** If you are angry with someone don't blame them. There is nothing wrong with taking responsibility for the anger you feel towards someone. The difference is if you start to take responsibility for your feelings even if they are negative. For instance you can say out loud; “I am taking responsibility to respond to the fact that I don't like

the way you talk to me” as opposed to “you are making me angry” When you use the second statement you are giving others the power to control your emotions. Taking control of your negative emotions and owning them is not easy to do. It does take practice. Keep in mind when you blame others all the time for your feelings you really view yourself as a victim. This is because in your mind they are doing things to you “to make you act in certain way” instead of acting how you want to based on their treatment of you or your situation. When you say I am not going to be a victim of anyone then you start to act differently.

3. **Talk about your feelings-** Find a close friend or someone you trust to express your pent up emotions with. If you feel they are too personal for even your close people then you may decide to speak to a professional about them instead which is Okay also.
4. **Accept yourself-** When you accept yourself with all your weaknesses and flaws you can also accept your strengths. No one is perfect and when you accept all of you, you will start to feel peace.
5. **Stop constantly judging yourself-** When you judge yourself you are setting yourself up to feel you are not good enough. Constantly self criticizing yourself means you think you have to be perfect and if you aren't you are not worthy. When you get into this frame of mind you will never make peace with yourself. You will never have peace either around you because you will never be satisfied and feel you are always falling short of what's expected of you.
6. **Let go of the past-** Accept all that has happened in your life embrace it and then let it go. The past is over. Reliving the past or constantly trying to recreate the past does not make way to a

future for yourself. If your past was so terrible and you cannot forgive those that have violated you, forgive yourself for being in that situation and let those people and experiences die. When someone is dead they are gone once and for all and you can find peace they will never hurt you again. You can then start to heal the hurt and find peace for yourself.

6. Practice gratitude- Be grateful for all the things you do have in your life and about the things in yourself that are good. When we pay attention to the things that are good and give thanks for them it increases our thoughts and energies. Being thankful for whatever good we have in our life helps create a sense of peace, love and even abundance which are all things that promote inner peace as well.

7. Learning to relax- We all need time out. It helps maintain our balance and harmony. Do whatever you need to do that makes you relax daily. Different people relax in different ways. Some exercise, some read, some meditate. Whatever it takes to unwind take even 10 minutes a day for yourself.

Finally if you have trouble expressing your feelings verbally, write them down. You can say what you want this way freely without worrying about who will hear it. Studies show that people who write their feelings are able to let things go and move on better than those who can't express themselves.

Life is not good when we do not find peace within ourselves. They say money can even buy sex as physical love but it cannot buy peace within ourselves. In order to find peace you have to live by peaceful rules. As I did my research on finding inner peace I came across some rules of peace to live by that I thought were useful.

1. The first rule of peace is to accept that most people do not care about living by peace. Look at the governments in the world

and how they conduct their peace keeping techniques. They claim they are creating and maintaining peace through war.

The first step of incorporating peace into your life is to actually be honest to yourself in claiming that you are a peaceful person. Does your behavior promote peace. You have to acknowledge that your behavior in the world and to others may not create a peaceful way between people if it doesn't. If you do this first you can then understand what it is to be peaceful instead. Your behavior may actually encourage hostility, anger and resentment which all catalysts for war. If you can't see your contribution to the creating of non peaceful ways then you are an offender of creating turmoil. If you want peace you have to promote peace.

Rule #2- Know that there is no peace for the offender and promoter of wars. War can be as simple as constantly attacking someone you assume is weaker than you verbally. It's a fact that we should acknowledge that some people are just plain evil and cannot be changed. Once that is understood then you are just as bad as the offender when you condone their behavior. If you go along with someone who behaves in an offensive or aggressive way then you are supporting their behavior and are not promoting peace.

When there is conflict peace is obtained when the grievances on both sides are felt they are met. If you see there is an aggressor in your life then you need to sit down with this person and talk to them seriously. Have a one to one with them to let them know that their behavior is not acceptable. Point out they are creating hostility and anger which is going to get them into a war with you or another unnecessarily. In order to have peace you and those around you have to really agree that you are going to conduct living your life peacefully. If they can't adhere to that then they need to move on to others who share their same mentality of violating peaceful energy.

Liars do not promote peace. They pretend to honor the peace treaty but do not in reality. So tell them if they intend not to keep their word that you need to not deal with them unless absolutely necessary like at a job only. There will be no personal interaction otherwise.

3. There is no compromising between good and evil intentions. If you give in to evil you will not be happy. That means if you give in to bullying or becoming a bully you will not have peace. The underdog always fights even if its passive for its freedom.

4. In order to have peace that which you consider evil, wrong or harmful has to be destroyed for you in your life. Whenever you feel like you have to make a deal with something or someone that goes against your grain; it will always be a source of disharmony and you will never find peace that way.

Finding peace within ourselves in today's world takes a lot of work. It's not as easy as people would like you to think. In a world that does not promote peace we have to really search deep within ourselves to find that place in us that is peaceful.

Here is an exercise to help you learn how to let go of whatever is preventing you from finding peace inside of yourself.

1. On a piece of paper write down five things that you feel are preventing you from finding peace in your mind. These things may include old hurts, fears, loss and stresses. Put next to each thing you wrote who is being effected the most by these things. Most likely you will find that it is you who is the one that is affected by what you wrote down.
2. On that list look at where you put yourself as the one that was affected by the thing on the list. Think about each thing on the list that has effected you for the next 5 minutes. Embrace the

hurt and pain it causes. Look at your situation to see if anything has changed. Then consciously say "I release myself from it(whatever it is)"

3. This process does not release things right away it takes work. You may have to write a list every day until you finally start to really let go of what's on that list. In the process of letting go it does make you aware of what is blocking your inner peace so you can work on it. Keep in mind to release something you have to change your mind set. Ask yourself when you are trying to change your mind set, who else is losing sleep or suffering from what is taking peace from you. Many times there won't be anyone else. This is really the first step in letting go; when you begin to realize you are the only one crying over what is bothering you. Give yourself permission to stop feeling bad so you can move on.
4. Now change your thoughts to something pleasant. For example you can think about redecorating a room and money is no object or (this works for men) the car of your dreams. This trains your mind to shift from what is bothering you to moving forward.
5. As you do these little exercises daily you will see that you will have less of these feeling bad episodes. You will notice that more time will pass in between the periods when you do feel upset from those things that took you from feeling peaceful. Put up sticky notes if you have to with positive reinforcements.
6. Once a month review the list and check off those things you have moved on from. It doesn't mean you have forgotten them. It means that it no longer consumes you and you can come to

terms with them. This is the main step in finding inner peace.

Lastly Find something or someone you love to focus on when the negativity starts to creep up. There is nothing better to heal those negative and up peaceful thoughts then love. It can be a loved one or even a hobby but loving something will take the place of the pain eventually so you can move on and find a sense of peace

Chapter 5: Happiness, Sex, and Money

There are always analogies drawn between happiness and sex and money. They say you can buy sex but you cannot buy love. There was a study done in relation to income, sex and happiness. It used random sampling of 16000 Adult Americans. The paper concludes there is a strong correlation between sex and happiness. It also signified that greater income did not necessarily mean more sex or more sexual partners. More income did not buy either. The typical average American has sexual intercourse 2 to 3 times a month. Also it is married people who have more sex as opposed to those who are single, divorced, separated or widowed.

Another interesting find in this study which was titled “Sex, Money and Happiness: An Empirical Study” conducted by David G. Blanchflower and Andrew J. Oswald of the National Bureau of Economic Research paper # 10499 Issued in May 2004; also found a correlation between education and sex. The happiness of people with higher education levels was affected much more greatly than those with lower educational levels in terms of sex. Also the number of partners that created a maximum of happiness in that study was one. It was also noted that higher educated females had fewer partners than those that weren't as educated in general as a sexual history. The same study also concluded that increasing the amount of sex from once a month to once a week increased the happiness level to the equivalent of getting a 50,000 dollar a year raise. You do the math on the happiness level that sex can thus bring to a person.

With these things in mind we can say that sex makes people happier than money. This is not to say that having more money which ultimately makes life easier doesn't make us happy either. What it is saying is that money may bring a certain amount of happiness to the equation of one's life but it is not in comparison to a strong sex life

with one partner.

What was also interesting is that the study dispelled the myth that if you have more money you get more sex. There was no indication that the more money you have the more sex you get. What was found is that usually higher educated people do make more money; and sex does seem to have a happier effect on the educated as opposed to those who aren't. It is a general consensus that the more education you have the more income you do generate.

The happiest and ones getting more sex are those that are happy in their marriages by as much as 30 percent more, even over single people. The economists estimate that a happy marriage is one that is lasting and generates the equivalent of \$100,000 dollars a year of happiness. Divorce on the other hand depletes happiness by \$66,000 dollars annually. What all this means is that people who get more sex on a regular basis are richer in happiness.

Likewise there was a study done May 2001 issue of Journal Of Sexual Research in which Georgia University State Researchers found people who were involuntarily celibate frequently had unhappy feelings. The man feelings were anger, frustration, self doubt and depression. The conclusions of the study was that these feelings were generated by the missing of having sex in their lives. It seems sex and a person's psyche feed off of one another.

Another interesting thing is that it appears that the males sperm has an anti depressive effect on females. There was a study done by a psychologist named Gordon Gallup PhD. He noted that women who had unprotected sex had lower levels of depression than those that used condoms. There was a follow up to the study and it also noted that women who stopped having sex that were not using condoms got depressed more than women who stopped having sex with condoms as well. It was also noted that women who do not use

condoms are prey to the rebound relationships because they are going through a type of sexual withdrawal because of non condom sex.

Whether sex is with a condom or not there are feel good endorphins that are released during sex and orgasms. The endorphins which are the brains natural pain killers and feel good drugs wear off in about an hour. Being receptive to touch also makes for happier people all around. People who are less depressed and experience less anxiety in their lives are ones that have physical contact with other people. Touch is just as crucial in the happy equation. It is said it's good to have a minimum of 4 hugs a day. Old people tend to die quicker because they don't have people that touch them physically in their lives many times. Babies die without touch. These are other factors to consider in the happiness and sex equation. It's just not the sex its the quality including the type of touching. People that engage in foreplay tend to enjoy the sexual experience much more than those that don't. It also creates a level of intimacy that just intercourse alone doesn't.

Many times empty sex without love leaves a person feeling worse than without the sex. Good sex is based on mutual trust between two consenting people. Trust is built on love. If love isn't in the equation the relationship does not last usually very long and neither party will ultimately be happy in the long run. Sexual compatibility is also a factor for happiness. Two people have to be on the same page to have a fulfilling sexual relationship. This is where the happiness comes in. They understand each other's needs and know how to fulfill one another to maintain the happiness. It is pretty safe to say that anyone is happy when they have love and good sex together in one relationship in their lives.

Chapter 6: How To Have A Happy Relationship

All people whether they admit it or not want to be in or have a happy relationship with someone. This means a relationship that works with someone and thrives with the person. To make a good relationship that is happy; both parties have to be willing to go that extra mile.

When you meet someone and you are mutually attracted and start a new relationship everything seems good in the beginning. Many times as relationships wear on, the two people start to take each other for granted. The truth is once you get the person of your interest and you two are together; trying to impress them fades. As the relationship changes and becomes familiar it brings with it a sense of security and familiarity. The more you get to know the other person the more relaxed the relationship becomes. You stop being on your best behavior because you don't feel like you need to try and get the person anymore. Its official you are together.

Now what happens is the eccentricities and quirks start to come out. You start to realize that everything that your partner does is not cute anymore. Also what you wrote off as cute behavior before with that person is now annoying. Your relationship at this point also starts to fall into a routine. We all know that not all relationships are not meant to last. They are a part of our growth and development. With those types of relationships we move on until we find someone that clicks in all the ways a relationship needs to in order to be happy. If you feel you met the right one and are in it for the long haul there are some things that you can do to avoid the pitfalls that make relationships unhappy.

The first thing you have to remember is respect and affection are very important in a good relationship. It takes two to make a

relationship work. It cannot be an all take or all give on one side when there are two people. There has to be Mutual understanding as well as compatibility. You both should share the same vision as to where you both want the relationship to be and where you want it to go. You have to work as a team. This doesn't mean that you won't have different interests from each other. There's nothing wrong with people in a relationship having different interests but you always come back after the time apart and do things as a team. The team should also come first before the other interests or people in your life. If your interests aren't something your partner cares for; discuss what your plans are in regards to an activity concerning your interest. Always remember to include them in your plans even if they decline the invite. If they decline then ask them if it's ok when you plan to do your activity. Always let them feel they are part of your life. If you like to go to an exercise class but your partner doesn't, let them pick you up after if they want to. This way they don't feel like you are excluding them from your activities. Resentment and insecurity many times creeps in relationships when a person feels like they are being left in the dark or left out of their partners life in some way.

Many people forget that their partner should be actually their best friend and not treat them as any less. Relationships fail because people do not do this. They put their friends ahead of their relationship which is a no-no. Your partner will be in situations in your life where your friend would not be remember that.

Every relationship is unique and different. But you know you are in a happy one if :

- 1.You can laugh and enjoy each other's company
- 2.Feel Safe and Supported
- 3.Provide Safety and support for each other
- 4.Share your feelings and ideas

5. Respect Each other

6. Prefer each other's company to friends

It's always best to be honest in a relationship. Honesty creates trust. As you spend more time with someone the trust level increases as the honesty is maintained. No one likes someone who lies to them. A lot of relationships fail because one of the parties lies to the other. This is particularly true if the person is compulsive with the lying.

This is where the idea of communication comes in. You have to keep the lines of communication opened between the two of you. This means talking about feelings, what's going on in your own life and what's happening in your lives together. You should talk freely and openly all the time. When people share their feelings and opinions with one another they get a better sense of each person's personality as well as their likes and dislikes. This is also a way to work out any kinks that may arise. It also lets you see what each other wants from the relationship as well as one another.

Another important thing to remember in a happy relationship is to listen to each other. Nothing is worse when you are talking to someone and they are not paying attention to a word you have said. This is also part of good communication. If possible practice active listening instead of passive listening. Many an argument has taken place between couples when one accuses the other of not listening.

Active listening means stopping everything else one is doing to listen. We can't always do this but it's good to try when we are able to. If you are watching TV turn it off. Try and look at the person. Don't anticipate what they are going to tell you. Here is a few things to keep in mind so you can be a good listener.

1. No Passing judgment- Let the person say what's on their mind before you condemn them

2.Interrupting- Nothing is ruder than to interrupt someone who is pouring their feelings out to you

3.Criticizing- The best way to stop someone from expressing their feelings by talking to you is to criticize them while they are doing so. Let them finish and then depending on what was said respond.

5.Giving advice (unless it's asked for) Sometimes people want to just get things off their chest and may not be looking for advice, in this case don't give it to them unless they ask for it.

When you do this the person talking feels like you are letting them get what every they need to say across. When they finish you can respond in kind. The communication should not stop if you are mad or angry either. If it's hard for you because you get mad then tell the person you are angry with them or sad with them and why at the time you feel that way. This way neither one ends up harboring resentment.

This also goes into learning how to fight fairly. No relationship is perfect. people disagree and fight with each other; but there is a way to do it. Fighting is actually healthy if it's done constructively. But if you keep fighting over the same things then there is something wrong. This indicates an unresolved issue and needs to be handled effectively.

When you get mad you don't want to put your partner on the defense. In fighting fair you need to realize that your partner isn't your enemy. You may not like their behavior but you are with them because you love and care for them. When you are angry, instead of saying to them “You did this”, or “You did that” use “I did not like”, or “I felt hurt when you”.... Start with you first and how it affected

you. This will disarm the other person and get them to listen to your grievance.

Fighting fairly also means being specific about the issue you are fighting about. For example if you are annoyed that he didn't do a chore don't bring up everything you don't like that he doesn't do in the house. Just that chore if that's what the argument is about. It's easier to resolve a problem if you are specific about it. This addresses the immediate problem rather than throwing in all the things that bug you for an argument specifically about one issue. You have to keep the fight relative to the current issue at hand and not bringing up previous incidents either. If you constantly rehash the past you will not move forward. Your partner can't change the past. They can only rectify the current situation. Also try and not use statements that you know will hurt your partner intentionally. Finally kiss and make up, move on.

This brings us to agreeing to disagree. It's okay for you to have a partner that has different opinions that you do. They may also have different ideas on things and interests all that is well and good. That actually might be what attracted you to them in the first place. Respect their right to an opinion but you do not have to accept their opinion. The only exception would be if someone is trying to get in between you and your mate. In that case it's important for you to present a united front to that person that is causing the problem .In all other cases it's okay if you:

1. Agree to disagree.
2. Try to see the other persons point of view.
3. Accept that your opinion doesn't need to change if you truly feel its valid and not unreasonable.

This is where respecting the other person regardless of the differences because you love them comes into being. In terms of arguments and managing differences of opinions between two

people there should be some guidelines that both use.

The guide lines are:

- 1.Its important for you to be able to speak up about something.
- 2.Sometimes if you don't make your feelings clear about something that is bothering you, the person won't know and keep doing it.
- 3.Holding feelings about something back breeds anger and resentment.
- 4.Many times a person will do something that may hurt or offend you because they honestly don't know that it does until you tell them about it.
- 5.More times than not if something is bothering a person it will come through in how they act towards the other person and even in facial expressions. The person will know something is wrong by your actions but may not even know what it actually is. You may say fine but are acting otherwise. A healthy happy relationship is one where you can trust yourself and your partner enough to be able to tell them how you feel and it be okay.

As a happy couple in a happy relationship you should have collective goals that you work on together. Just as you support each other with your personal goals the same goes for the goals you make together. If you are thinking about any major changes personally in your life it's important to discuss them together as a couple. Also learn to use the best strengths each of you has to get things done as a team. Your partner may have different strengths and or weaknesses than you. So if he is a better organizer that's his job and if you are better with handling the money then maybe making the budget is yours.

Although you love spending time together there may be times when one partner needs some space to be alone. You have to respect each other's space as well. He may want to be in another room to do something by himself or take a walk as you might also and its all

good. There is nothing wrong with taking time for yourself and spending some quality time alone. You may want your nails done with the girls and that fine. He may want to play ball with the boys. As long as both of you respect the relationship and put the relationship first then space is healthy.

The bottom line is a happy relationship is one that is nurtured so it can grow. You have to build your relationship as you learn from one another. You take from each other the strength the other has and build up the weaknesses as well. Accept that you have short comings just like them and both of you will grow together.

Chapter 7: How To Be Happy and Single

There are times in our lives when where we find ourselves alone by choice; or will find ourselves being on our own in spite of wanting a relationship with someone. It could also be we are in between relationships and took time out. On the other hand we may have just gotten out of a relationship either by choice or the person left us. There are some people who prefer to be alone for whatever reason. We always hear that relationships and interaction with friends and loved ones is key for us to find happiness. However, those times we are alone or single does not mean we have to be miserable does it?

The answer is NO.

There are some people that handle being alone or single better than others. If you do find yourself alone or single; the first thing you need to do is structure your time. It has been discovered that if you keep busy with constructive activities in your life it can help with feeling alone or lonely . Even if you have to map out a schedule of activities so you have a full itinerary hourly then do so. You will also see that your life is quite full based on how much you pencil in. Include those things you've always wanted to do but didn't have time before because your life was interwoven with someone else. Think of it as now you are free to do what you always wanted to do and don't have to answer to someone about doing it. This is the best way not to feel aimless or hopeless, like there is nothing going on in your life. In actuality if you can start to view yourself as being self reliant instead of being alone or without a relationship then you will start to feel differently about being on your own.

You have to view your time as time to have a relationship with yourself. Get to know yourself. Many times people don't know themselves so they don't know what they want out of life much less

from a relationship. Include your own personal quality time in the choices you make with your activities. Do things that you enjoy for yourself to make you feel good about who you are. This is the time to do things that you couldn't necessarily do because you were in a relationship and actually didn't have time for yourself until now. Also pamper yourself when you can. Keep yourself attractive for you. That's the best way to feel good about yourself.

Even if you are alone it doesn't mean you didn't or don't have friends. If you do feel pangs of loneliness reconnect with your friends. True friends will understand. Friends can be loving and a source of support. It's important to still have a feeling of love even if its you giving it to yourself. When you love, love reaches out and it attracts more of the same. If you are trying to attract a new person into your life the best way to do it is to have a good life yourself. That means you are not desperate to find someone but are willing to open yourself up for the right one. When your life is meaningful to you and you are satisfied you will create energy around you that is so positive that it draws people to you.

Its important not to isolate yourself or become introverted because you are single or alone. The best suggestion that they give is to build yourself a community. By that it means having people who care about you in your life who are there for you and you care about them and are there for them as well. When you have meaningful relationships with people it fulfills a type of need and void. The more happier you are with your life in general the more will come to you because you are opened to it. Many single people who are alone feel disconnected and alienated from people. It ultimately affects the quality of their lives. They act as if the only way to be happy is in a romantic or intimate relationship with a mate. In these cases they need to try and find groups that have like interests with them to help them get back in the swing of things. It's okay to go to the gym,

exercise, buy flowers, go to a show or do things alone and actually enjoy them also.

Live your life in the here and now mode. Don't consume yourself with the what ifs and what will become of me. Take life moment by moment and enjoy things as they come to you. Keep your past in the past. You cannot change what has happened to you. But you can control what will happen in your life if you take things step by step. Try and make your life purposeful. Make each day you wake up a reason for doing so. Have a vision of what you want to do and where you want to be in your life and keep that in focus. Life is too short not to do what you want.

You shouldn't feel like a failure if you are not in a romantic relationship. In fact a relationship should not define who you are. It is you who defines and decides the type of relationship you should have with another person be it friendship or romantic. If you yourself don't feel like a complete person within yourself, how can you be part of someone else's life. You have to understand who you are, what you are about and what you want in order to make it work with a partner.

Yes, two people become one in a relationship but they are two individuals coming together by choice. Many times those people who don't feel complete in themselves will stay in relationships that they are miserable in just to say they have someone. In those cases it's like they are alone anyway. So, when a relationship like this ends this was not a relationship where two people wanted to be together anyway at least not for the right reasons. They came together out of a need to have a relationship because of fear of being by themselves. When you can stand on your own and feel like a person on your own then you are ready to be with someone out of feeling for the person as opposed to desperation. When two whole people come into a

relationship they can complete each other because they are strong enough to share themselves without losing who they are in the relationship. They don't define themselves by the relationship it is they who define what the relationship will be to them together.

Loneliness is ultimately a state of mind and being. It doesn't mean that you can't find love. Love makes the world go round. Not being with someone doesn't mean that you are not defined as a person because you are single or alone. You should know who you are and what you are about whether you are in a relationship or not. Too many times people settle and say its ok. In actuality they are not happy because they sold themselves short. When the right one comes along and you are happy you can change your status from single to in a relationship quite easily. The difference is you are doing it because you want to and its right for you. Not because you are desperate and can't handle being on your own that you settle for being with someone who isn't the best choice for you.

Chapter 8: Learning How To Say "NO"

In our pursuits of happiness we know what makes us happy and we know what doesn't. This includes knowing what we want and what we don't want. In order to maintain our happiness there are times we have to say "NO" to people and choices. It may not be easy to say the "NO" word if people or situations are counting on "Yes" from us but that is not the point. We have to ultimately make choices for our lives and our path to happiness not for others. This is especially true if what people want us to say yes to isn't what we want for ourselves. Many times when we feel we wanted to say no to something and don't we feel trampled upon and like we should have stuck up for ourselves.

The main obstacle to mastering the word "no" is the guilt we feel when we do say no particularly if we care for the person. When we do this we feel that we are letting down somebody who asked something of us. Saying no without the baggage it leaves behind takes practice. The first way to start learning to say "No" is with a simple but effective exercise. You start with making a list of all the things that are your priorities and things that mean a yes to you. Anything that is asked of you that is not on that list and you want to say no to; then do so. This keeps your mind focused on what you want first and what makes you happy instead of always giving in to others requests or demands.

It may feel quite uncomfortable at first, not accommodating someone that you normally do. Keep in mind that for every time you say yes you are putting your priorities and needs aside for that person you say yes to. If you have a significant other and you need their support in this matter you can discuss it with them first before you start with saying "NO" to those that expect you to do things for them.

If saying “NO” on the spot makes you guilt ridden then buy yourself time and say I'll think about it. This buys you time to prepare yourself to say no without being pressured to cave in from the person asking the favor. This is true also if someone is giving you an invite that you want to say “NO” to also. When you muster the strength to finally tell them “NO” do so without giving reasons or excuses. Don't over explain or defend your answer either. Its far better to say; “No, I won't be able to help you” or “No, It's not possible for me to do that” or “thank you but I can't attend”. When you answer with a definite no they can't say “well maybe another time”. When you aren't assertive with a definite “NO” it gives the other party leeway to try and barter with you.

An interesting assignment you can give your self is to consciously count all the times you say “yes” to things that you really don't want to in a week. These are things you wished you said “No” to. At the end of the week add up all the times you said yes against your true feelings. This will show you that you need start to see you have to stand up for what you want to do for you. You have to tell people that your priorities have changed if they keep insisting and what you may have done before in terms of saying “yes” you are no longer doing.

When you start to understand that the idea of saying “Yes” and “No” is also about boundaries and what you will do and what you won't; people that were used to having their way with you may try to cross boundaries to make their point or get their way. Here are some guidelines you may use if you need to. If its a significant other you need to establish boundaries with them as well. Vent any strong emotions that you or your partner may have on this issue before the two of you before use the guidelines.

1. The first thing in saying “No” when setting a boundary in relation to another person is that you want to use simple and direct language. This leaves no room for misinterpretation on the part of the person.

2. If the person is angry you are setting a boundary with you:
Say first “If you continue to act this way I am leaving the room. Do not yell at me or act aggressive with me. I will not take that behavior from you”.

3. To set a boundary with personal phone calls at work: here is an example of what to say.

“I will have to call you later, I've decided to take all personal calls in the evening in order to get my work done”

4. To say “no” to extra commitments:

“Although your need is important I have to decline because I have to take care of my family's needs”

5. To set a boundary for someone who is critical
example: "It's not OK to talk about my weight, I'd like to ask you to stop."

6. To buy yourself time when having to make a tough decision:
"I have to sleep on it. I have a policy of not making tough decisions right away"

7. To back out of a commitment:
ex: "I know I agreed but I cannot give it the attention it deserves, so let me try and find a replacement"

8. To set boundaries with an adult child and lending him or her money:

"I love you very much but won't be lending you money any more. You need to take more responsibility for yourself."

When you set your personal boundaries you do not need to defend yourself, debate or over explain your feelings. You can be gracious but firm and if you meet resistance repeat your statement.

Another source of unhappiness we face is when we are hurt or take things personally because of our own weak internal boundaries. An internal boundary is our own invisible protective shield that we use to check a comment out first before taking it in. An example of this would be if someone calls you "arrogant" stop and consider the statement before taking it in. Using your internal shield gives you time to ask the following questions:

1. How much of this is true about me?
2. How much of this is about the other person?
3. What do I need to do (if anything) to regain my personal power or stand up for myself?

The last question is very important because learning to stand up for yourself and learning to say no means to stand firm with your boundaries. This shield when you use it is especially good when dealing with difficult and critical people. In this way you are intact and their statements do not weaken the shield. The shield helps you decide if it's worth answering or not. In this way you do not let what they say get to you because you analyzed their comment before you respond.

Once you start to see who you are and what you want you can start to feel happy because you are doing what it takes for you to be happy not what others want for their happiness. It doesn't mean you

are to be selfish and thoughtless, it means if there is something asked of you that makes you really unhappy or takes you out of your zone of being happy then you have the right to say no and not feel bad or guilty about your decision.

Chapter 9: So How Do We Become Happy

Happiness is relative to a person's needs. It is a state of mind. What makes one person happy may in fact cause misery to another. So in the quest for happiness we must first listen to our selves and follow our path that our inner selves tells us is right for us. What may make you happy may not be what the majority of people do every day to be happy. It's okay to be different. The first step of happiness is that you don't necessarily need to follow any group or do what your friends do; or tell you to do if it doesn't make you happy. You have to ask yourself are you really happy with what you are doing in your life? Or are you just like a sheep following the flock with no consideration for what you really want.

If you decide that you are not happy in your current situation or with the current things happening in your life at the moment then the antidote is to change it. It's that simple but it may be a process. Some things we can change right away, and some take time. It doesn't matter what you have been conditioned or programmed to do, be it a job, relationship or lifestyle. If you are not happy you can fix it and change things around. Life is too short to do something or be with someone that does not bring you happiness in your life. Don't worry about appearances or what others may think. It is ultimately your life and your choice no one else's.

Don't worry about finding happiness. Do what you like for yourself and your life and you will find yourself to be a happier person. Sometimes we get so consumed in trying to find "Happiness" that when we don't think we have it we become more unhappy. I can't stress enough that happiness is a state of mind. That's why we can feel sad or happy based on our state of minds.

There is no such thing as perfection. So if you are gauging happiness

by perfection then you sadly may never be happy. Happiness is about tolerance. No one is perfect. If you learn to accept people and situations for what they are you will find yourself a lot happier. If you refuse to let go of the idea of perfection then prepare to live your life disappointed, offended at times and lonely. You don't have to put up with crap that's not what I am talking about but you can move on from situations and people that aren't cutting the mustard without making it a catastrophe. Let go and move on and live your life to the fullest. If you care about someone enough you will forgive their imperfections as they will forgive yours.

Learn from your mistakes. If you learn what made you unhappy then why would you continually do the same things. Learn from them don't live them again. You don't have to live with mistakes, you make them, learn from them, grow from the experience and move on. Happiness is about growth. It's interesting because to be neither attached or detached is devoid of feeling life to the fullest. The problem is if you don't feel or get attached to some things you won't experience joy in the human sense. If you disengage from living you lose both the good with the bad. So you need a happy medium. In life pain is inevitable, without it we can't experience happiness. Many people become attached to the idea of being detached.

Happiness requires action. If you want to be happy you have to make it so. And once you attain happiness you have to keep on working to keep it. Happiness is based on practice. The more you incorporate the practicing of things promoting your sense of happiness the happier you will become. Happiness is like momentum. Just like the law of physics and physical inertia. It takes more energy and force to move an object than to actually keep it moving. Once an object is moving its easier to keep going. The fact is once an object is in movement it takes more force and energy to stop the momentum than to let it keep going. So is the mind with the state of happiness. It

may take a lot effort from you in the beginning to get your mind in a happy mode. But once, the idea of happiness sets in and takes off after awhile it will be effortless. In fact it will take more energy to stop the happiness than to keep it going.

The other thing that helps with happiness is the role models we choose to model our happiness by. We have to choose people who we look up to and want to be like when we think of happiness and the people we want to emulate. Remember happiness is freedom not mental slavery. Never underestimate the power of mental programming. How do you think people do things like become suicide bombers based on a notion of going to the ultimate heaven based on their sacrifice for eternal happiness. Mind programming can send people to wars or make people peaceful. Free your mind for your happiness no one else's.

We are all products of social programming. Governments, media, educators and parents influence us all the time. Its used in advertising, propaganda for various things as in churches and schools. We are all products of our environments. They tell us how we are supposed to look and how we are supposed to feel. In this respect we need to de program the negative scripts imposed on us. We have to re write the scripts to suit us in a positive fashion based on our own personal needs. This doesn't mean that there is no right or wrong. Yes, if you hurt another because it makes you happy for no good reason then you are wrong. I am talking along the lines of pressures put upon us that we cannot live up to and it makes us unhappy. For example if you are never going to be a size 2 that should not make you want to die. Accept who you are and then you will be happy anyway. I am talking about those types of reprogramming mind sets in relation to things society bombards us with.

Likewise what we associate with mentally also contributes to our states of happiness. Advertisers know this well. That's why they set up the happiest of conditions in their commercials based on the premise of you using their product. They lead you to believe that the answers to your happiness is based on buying that product. So with this in mind if you are not happy then you need to consider changing your mental associations with what is making you unhappy. They could be people, things or situations.

Happiness is a pattern of thought. It is based on a pattern of behavior that we repeat. For instance have you noticed that people pick the same type of friends over and over again or repeat the same mistakes time and again? This is because we are creatures of habit. So, if the habits are not working for you or making you unhappy you have to break them and change your mind set. A good thing to practice is as soon as you start to think negative immediately replace it with a positive thought instead.

Usually happiness is based on a decision. Most of the times bad decisions are based on misinformation or lack of information. So when it comes down to making important decisions that will affect your state of happiness you need to ask yourself do you have all the information to make a good decision. Did you validate the information. Always examine the evidence as well as taking time to evaluate your actions and reactions to make sure it is the right decision for you.

Happiness is also open mindedness. When you limit yourself based on prejudices, stereotypes or narrow thinking you are putting yourself in a box. You may miss out on something that could be great. Also happiness is based on good instincts. If you feel something isn't right then go with your gut feeling. Don't sell yourself short. If a situation or person doesn't feel right then don't

deal with them. There is such a thing as red flags if you see them waving it means turn the other way. There's nothing wrong with going in a different direction to save yourself from a disaster in the making.

If you want to be happy then you should surround yourself with happy people. Happiness rubs off. You should always try to befriend those that show support, success, optimism, are cheerful and good company to be around. This doesn't mean you drop friends that suffer a misfortune or hardship. Quite the contrary your role is to offer them support. I am saying use good judgment and avoid those people who are harmful to your being and are negative to you and your state of happiness.

As I mentioned in earlier chapters happiness is about gratitude. If you start being thankful for whatever little you have things will start to look better to you.

Learn to have fun. Do things that you enjoy at least once a week minimum. If you never stop working it leads to mental and physical exhaustion. When you get tired and run down it is an opened door for depression and stress. When you take a break and relax you replenish your body and mind. This keeps you healthy and energized which is the right state for happiness.

Although I have not spoke about money in this book too much I would like to mention money now. Poverty does not lend its self to happiness. We know that it's a given fact. If you are starving or homeless you cannot be happy. You have to know how to plan and take care of whatever money you do have. A comfortable life is a happy life. You don't have to be rolling in money but it is nice to be able to afford life's little extras. If you take care of your money it will take care of you. We need to be realistic. Some people are more successful than others. The truth is when a person usually has

phenomenal success in one thing the rest of their life is lacking. They usually pay a heavy price at the expense of another area of their life. It's okay to pursue your dreams but not at the expense of not being happy and missing out on things because of it. If this is the case you may have to let go of some unrealistic expectations at the expense of your happiness.

Many times in order to be happy we have to adapt to the changes that life brings to us. Everything in life goes through a cycle, the seasons, the months, plants, relationships you name it. Its better to live in the now, and enjoy the moment for what its worth than getting caught up in the forever syndrome. It's unrealistic or over romantic to think that nothing changes and stays the same forever. If you are holding your happiness based on this you will surely suffer in the long run. People, places, ideas, all things change and grow sometimes together and sometimes apart. Do not resent change. It's okay to fight for what you believe in and want but understand if its not for you then let it go and move on. When you don't you miss the benefits of the next cycle that is to come. Likewise learn to say yes to those you love and care about including yourself. Say no to those people and things who pressure you and your life with no fair reward. Try to be wise when you do make your choices based on analysis; not blame, but what is really the situation at hand.

Finally I have to say many people spend their time wasting living in the moment. They take the time at hand for granted and think about regrets from the past and worries about the future. They forget how to enjoy what is in front of them at the moment. And then its time wasted. Being happy is a state of mind that goes with you from one moment to the next. Time waits for no man and neither does happiness. It's there but you have to grab it while you can.

Chapter 10: Conclusion - Are You Really Happy?

Most of the time we look for the obvious to determine if a person is happy or sad. The truth is some people have been living in unhappiness so long that they forgot what its like to be happy anymore. It takes the average adult half of their adult lifetime to really recognize their own unhappiness. This does not include people who had miserable childhoods or have had a history of abuse. Those fall in the category of obvious reason. Many times by the time a person realizes they are not happy they are in their late middle to older years. When this realization occurs in our Mid life we usually see it manifest as a mid life crisis.

Here are some of the symptoms that we may not even realize is part of the clues to unhappiness:

1. Being obsessed with the fact that life is not fair
2. The outlook on life is very negative as it is towards others. Their first reaction to people would be to doubt them and assume the worst about them.
3. Unhappy people have low self esteem, are very sensitive as a result and very insecure
4. Their standards are ridiculously high. No one can live up to them as far as they are concerned. This also includes them not living up to their own standard. It can be in relation to looks, achievements or ethics.
5. Besides being very critical they are also offended at the drop of a hat. They secretly criticize themselves and do so about others openly.
6. They tend to be highly argumentative because they have to always be right.
7. They are self righteous and blame others all the time for anything that goes wrong. This is all the time.
8. Their happiness is always attached or associated to events,

things or others. They view everything in terms of status or a competition. This includes how they view their homes, cars, partners, jobs and bank accounts.

9. Their smiles aren't real you can see it in their eyes and their laughs are not heartfelt even if loud.
10. Unhappy people tend to exaggerate negative events. They get depressed more often than normal and it lasts for longer periods than considered normal.
11. Their language for the most part is critical and negative.
12. They tend to be lonely. This is because of their negative dispositions and because they have trouble relating to others at a deep level.
13. Because they are control freaks they exhibit higher degrees of fear, worry, stress or anger.
14. Due to the fact that they focus on their negative experiences they become emotionally exhausted and can burn out very easily when faced with a crisis.
15. Since human beings are creatures of habits unhappy people are attracted to negative situations such as watching tragedies, war and court television programs all the time.
16. Being unhappy they miss out on life's simple pleasures.
17. They engage in less sex and if they do its routine usually void of sensual enjoyment.
18. Unhappy people use things of escapism to be happy like workaholics, drug addicts, alcoholics, food addiction and engaging in macabre practices.

The average unhappy person does not display all of these symptoms. If they were to it would be a serious condition that we would be addressing and the person would probably be totally dysfunctional. If you are not happy the key is to look at all the above symptoms and see just how many of them you display. Then you would look at yourself honestly and say what is really the root cause of your

unhappiness and what are you doing to overcome it. Lastly how can you improve your life so you can be happy.

Here now is a check list of the common thoughts and behavior characteristics of a happy person:

1. The average happy person is not concerned with whether life is fair or not they want to make the best of life period
2. Happy people tend to view life as an adventure rather than a test. A journey full of fun rather than an ego trip. They see things more like a game than a competition.
3. These type of people are not so attached to false ideas of perfection in terms of image or lifestyle. They want to live life, learn as they do, and develop themselves and enjoy it as they do.
4. Happy people are secure in their own skin. Other people's opinions and events are not as important to them. Like everyone they appreciate a nice compliment but they do not seek external validation and never compare themselves to others to define their own self worth.
5. People that are happy tend to be less judgmental of others. They can be open and accepting of others including more tolerant of other peoples mistakes. They don't get offended at the drop of a hat and are less critical of others and themselves in general.
6. They have less need to control events and other people. When they do use control it is a consciously planned as opposed to an obsessive or emotional reaction to things. Their need to control is not an obsession.
7. Happy people have more peace, courage, hope and confidence. They feel less fear, anxiety, worry, stress or anger than unhappy people.
8. People like to be around them because of their relaxed demeanors. They tend to be less inhibited, happy, spontaneous and fun to be around.

9. Because of their open minded and positive disposition they can easily relate to people and vice versa. Happy people can build strong relationships with others. People are supportive of happy people.
10. They have the capacity to be successful for what they set out to do because they do not focus on being preoccupied with negative experiences. This helps them with their mental capacity and energy levels to succeed.
11. Happy people are attached to other happy people and situations. They will watch a comedy over a murder.
12. Happy people love the simple pleasures, they can enjoy a sunrise, a good dish, a job well done, good conversation, a good night's sleep, love and passion.
13. They are generally more cheerful and less depressed.

Now just as you looked at the first set of guidelines to see how many you have if you are unhappy do the same to see how many you have as a happy person. The next thing to ask yourself if you do have some is how do you maintain the ones you have and improve the quality of happiness you already have.

There are three types of people in relation to happiness. They are the: RW's, WR's and the RR's.

RW's are the people who do the Right things for the Wrong reasons. These people are successful on the outside but sad or unhappy inside. Then you have the WR people, they do They do Wrong things for the Right reasons. WR people have good intentions but cause needless suffering to others. Finally we have the RR people. RR's do the Right things for the Right reasons. These are the happy people who enjoy life. Unfortunately there aren't enough RR's.

There is no such thing as a pain free life. Emotional pain is a valuable tool because it serves as a gauge to let us know that we

have to re examine our environments and values. This does not include things we cannot control in our lives these are situations we put ourselves in. Pain is useful to let us know that what is causing the pain has to be eliminated if we want the pain to stop. This includes those things we can change if we are unhappy.

Our society is programmed for quick fixes. Many times in order to change from an unhappy state to a happy one requires a process of change that starts with our mind set. Yes there are medications or drugs available to change the chemicals in our brain and reduce the stress to induce a sense of well being in us. But these are not permanent cures. These are temporary. To truly experience happiness we have to undergo change and development which is a continuous process. In addition to mindset happiness is also contingent upon the choices we make in terms of values and lifestyles. When we make those choices work for our lives we tend to be happier people in a happier state of being.