

he can do well, plus the wisdom to know that his place, no matter how important or successful he is, never counts very much in the universe. A man may very well be so successful in carving a name for himself in his field that he begins to imagine himself indispensable or omnipotent. He is eaten up by some secret ambition, and then good-bye to all contentment. Sometimes it is more important to discover what one cannot do than what one can do. So much restlessness is due to the fact that a man does not know what he wants, or he wants too many things, or perhaps he wants to be somebody else, to be anybody except himself. The courage of being one's genuine self, of standing alone and of not wanting to be somebody else!

*Lin Yutang*

### 3. W. Beran Wolfe



#### TO FIND HAPPINESS WE MUST SEEK FOR IT IN A FOCUS OUTSIDE OURSELVES

THE ROOM was empty, except for the man who sat writing. But for him it was filled with people and with voices.

*"Help me or I'll commit suicide!" . . . "What's the use of it all?" . . . "I'm lonely, doctor" . . . "I hate my job!" . . . "I have no time for friends."*

W. Beran Wolfe had just passed his thirtieth birthday. He was young, as psychiatrists go; but he was old with the agonies of other people. He thought of the men and women who had come to him for help—the bitter and frightened, the anguished and confused—all of them desperately unhappy, and all of them seeking some tranquil adjustment to life.

His mind turned to Epictetus, a humble Greek slave in Nero's Rome, lame and poor but serenely content. "If a man is unhappy," wrote Epictetus, "remember that his unhappiness is his own fault; for God has made all men to be happy."

How true that is, the young psychiatrist reflected. People are unhappy because they look inward instead of outward. They think too much about themselves instead of things outside themselves. They worry too much about what they lack—about circumstances they cannot change—about things they feel they must *have* or must *be* before they can lead full and satisfying lives.

But happiness is not in having or being; it is in *doing*. That was a point he must emphasize and make clear in this book he was writing. Almost every human being could be happier at once if he realized this basic truth and accepted it.

He thought again of those ghostly malcontents, crowding the corners of his room. Most of them had one trait in common: a selfish concept of life. Absorbed in their own interests and desires, they failed in their human relationships, and so created their own unhappiness. He must make them realize that the only ambition consistent with happiness is the ambition to do things with and for others—that the only way to find happiness is to look for it in a focus outside themselves.

He glanced again at the last three words he had written: "*What is happiness?*" There was no hesitation now; he knew what he wanted to say. The words came swiftly as he began to write.

If we want to know what happiness is we must seek it, not as if it were a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, but among human beings who are living richly and fully the good life. If you observe a really happy man you will find him building a boat, writing a symphony, educating his son, growing double dahlias in his garden. He will not be searching for happiness as if it were a collar button that has rolled under the radiator. He will have become aware that he is happy in the course of living twenty-four crowded hours of the day.

Just as no one can be happy in work which is centered entirely about his own person and deals exclusively with the satisfaction of his own

immediate needs, so no one can be entirely happy in social relations which focus only in himself and his immediate and narrow sphere of influence. To find happiness we must seek for it in a focus outside ourselves. . . .

If you live only for yourself you are always in immediate danger of being bored to death with the repetition of your own views and interests. It matters little, for psychological purposes, whether you interest yourself in making your town cleaner, or enlist in a campaign to rid your city of illicit narcotics, or whether you go in for boys' clubs. Choose a movement that presents a distinct trend toward greater human happiness and align yourself with it. No one has learned the meaning of living until he has surrendered his ego to the service of his fellow men.

If you pride yourself on your ambition, take a mental inventory of its ends, and ask yourself whether you desire to attain those personal ends and forgo the opportunities of being happy, or whether you prefer to be happy and forgo some of the prestige that your unfulfilled inferiority complex seems to demand. If your ambition has the momentum of an express train at full speed, if you can no longer stop your mad rush for glory, power, or intellectual supremacy, try to divert your energies into socially useful channels before it is too late. . . .

For those who seek the larger happiness and the greater effectiveness open to human beings there can be but one philosophy of life, the philosophy of constructive altruism. The truly happy man is always a fighting optimist. Optimism includes not only altruism but also social responsibility, social courage and objectivity. Men and women who are compensating for their feelings of inferiority in terms of social service, men and women who are vigorously affirming life, facing realities like adults, meeting difficulties with stoicism, men and women who combine knowledge with kindness, who spice their sense of humor with the zest of living—in a word, complete human beings—are to be found only in this category. The good life demands a working philosophy of active philanthropy as an orientating map of con-

duct. This is the golden way of life. This is the satisfying life. This is the way to be happy though human.



The career of Dr. W. Beran Wolfe was tragically short. He died at thirty-five, having in his brief lifetime helped many to a better knowledge and understanding of themselves, and to a happier way of life.

That influence continues, perpetuated by the book which grew out of his practice and is based on his experience with unhappy, maladjusted people. The paragraphs above are the most frequently quoted, for they embody his basic philosophy: that the way to find happiness is not in the possession of material things or even in personal accomplishment, but in doing things with and for others.

"Almost every human being can be happier than he is," wrote W. Beran Wolfe one evening in the quiet of his study. To those who desperately need such reassurance, his words bring the promise of hope and fulfillment. They have the same enduring quality as that famous phrase from Epictetus, as inspiring today as it ever was—"God has made all men to be happy."



Unless we think of others and do something for them, we miss one of the greatest sources of happiness.

*Ray Lyman Wilbur*



To me there is in happiness an element of self-forgetfulness. You lose yourself in something outside yourself when you are happy; just as when you are desperately miserable you are intensely conscious of yourself, are a solid little lump of ego weighing a ton. J. B. Priestley



There is no happiness in having or in getting, but only in giving.

*Henry Drummond*



I believe the root of all happiness on this earth to lie in the realization of a spiritual life with a consciousness of something wider than mate-

rialism; in the capacity to live in a world that makes you unselfish because you are not overanxious about your personal place; that makes you tolerant because you realize your own comic fallibilities; that gives you tranquillity without complacency because you believe in something so much larger than yourself.

*Sir Hugh Walpole*



Happiness is a perfume you cannot pour on others without getting a few drops on yourself.

*Ralph Waldo Emerson*

## 4. William S. Ogdon



HAPPINESS CANNOT BE BOUGHT; INDEED,  
MONEY HAS VERY LITTLE TO DO WITH IT

HIGH in the *Times* Building, which towers like a beacon above one of the busiest corners in the world, a newspaperman sat at his desk. Just being in this office again, hearing the busy clack of the typewriters, feeling a part of the pulsating life of a great newspaper, was sheer bliss. *William S. Ogdon was home.* He was a civilian again, in newspaper work again . . . and he was happy.

In Hawaii, in Guam, through all those lonely months in the Pacific, William Ogdon had dreamed of New York, and of the blessings and comforts of life in the United States. A man gets to know what he misses when he is away from it. Nowhere in the world were people surrounded by so many opportunities and advantages. Nowhere in the world today could people be so happy and secure.

That is how he had felt, returning to America. And he had