

Total Happiness – 1 of 5 – May Happiness Be ~ Shinzen Young

00:00:00 You know what mindful awareness is, at least as I say, one person's paradigm.

00:00:23 You also know that mindful awareness, concentration, sensory clarity, equanimity are cultivatable

00:00:30 skills.

00:00:31 That's an enormous discovery.

00:00:33 So that these skills exist is a huge discovery that any human being who wants to, who's willing

00:00:41 to allocate a reasonable amount of time and energy can cultivate these skills.

00:00:47 And yes, the cultivatability of these things is utterly extraordinary.

00:00:53 And this is the great contribution of Asia to have discovered systematic ways to cultivate

00:01:01 these things.

00:01:02 And specifically India, give credit where credit's due.

00:01:07 Indian culture developed this like no other culture ever did.

00:01:14 Science arose in the West.

00:01:16 It's a real Western thing.

00:01:17 It now belongs to the whole world.

00:01:19 The systematic ways to cultivate concentration, power, sensory clarity, and equanimity arose

00:01:26 in India.

00:01:27 Now they belong to the world.

00:01:29 That this is cultivatable and cultivatable to whatever extent you need it.

00:01:36 This would be the gospel, I would say, of Buddhism.

00:01:40 It is gospel meaning the good news.

00:01:43 While there's the Christian version of what the good news is, the Buddhist version of

00:01:47 the good news is anybody who really wants concentration, clarity, and equanimity can

00:01:52 have as much of it as they need.

00:01:55 If I had to put it in a phrase, if somebody said, why practice mindfulness, I would say

00:02:02 for total happiness.

00:02:07 That phrase, total happiness.

00:02:09 Which for me is a technical term.

00:02:15 It's a technical term.

00:02:17 Highly technical term.

00:02:20 Now to call it happiness, some people might object that that sounds frivolous.

00:02:28 However, in point of fact, the Buddhist greeting in the Pali language, the language that is

00:02:36 closest to the Buddha himself is Sukhihato, which is usually translated, may you be happy.

00:02:45 But actually, if you look at it grammatically, it's not may you be happy, it's may happiness

00:02:52 be.

00:02:53 It's a third person singular imperative.

00:02:58 May happiness be.

00:02:59 Of course, implying to you, but to everyone.

00:03:03 It's universal happiness.

00:03:05 Enlightenment in the sense of nirvana or nirvana was referred to by the Buddha as Diptadhamma

00:03:13 Sukhavihara.

00:03:14 Diptadhamma means in the here and now.

00:03:19 Sukha means, in this case, we could translate happy.

00:03:23 And vihara means abiding.

00:03:25 Abiding in happiness in the here and now was the Buddha's reason to do this practice.

00:03:34 What he promised that people were going to have.

00:03:36 So it's not ridiculous to define happiness as a technical term and then sort of look

00:03:43 at that.

00:03:45 So if you ask the average person, what makes you happy?

00:03:53 What do you mean by happiness?

00:03:56 The first answer you'll probably get is something like this.

00:04:01 I'm happy when I get what I want.

00:04:08 What they're thinking of primarily is, I'll be happy when I get the conditions that I

00:04:17 want.

00:04:18 Objective conditions.

00:04:20 Ordinary people, what are the things that they would want to get that would make them

00:04:25 happy?

00:04:26 Security.

00:04:27 Security.

00:04:28 Sex.

00:04:29 Sex.

00:04:30 Sex.
00:04:31 Sex.
00:04:32 Sex.
00:04:33 Good sex.
00:04:34 Relationships.
00:04:35 Health.
00:04:36 Health.
00:04:37 Good weather.
00:04:38 Good weather.
00:04:39 Good job.
00:04:40 A job.
00:04:41 Some people want money.
00:04:42 Money.
00:04:43 Recognition.
00:04:44 Reputation.
00:04:45 Recognition.
00:04:46 Fame.
00:04:47 Power.
00:04:48 Good family life.
00:04:49 Personal freedom.
00:04:50 Freedom of expression.
00:04:51 Food to eat.
00:04:52 Good food.
00:04:53 Good food.
00:04:54 Good food.
00:04:55 Good food.
00:04:56 Good food.
00:04:57 Good food.
00:04:58 Good food.
00:04:59 Good food.
00:05:00 Food to eat.
00:05:01 Water to drink.
00:05:02 Air to breathe.
00:05:03 Vitality.
00:05:04 Strength.
00:05:05 We covered it.
00:05:06 Probe a little deeper.
00:05:09 Well, people are thinking, get objective conditions that I want.
00:05:15 Well, I use the word objective conditions.
00:05:18 Circumstances.
00:05:19 It's not just that we want to get certain things, we also want to avoid certain things.

00:05:24 We want to get a good reputation, but we want to avoid being shamed.

00:05:30 We want to avoid all the opposites of the good conditions.

00:05:37 If you had certain good conditions but couldn't avoid certain other bad conditions, then you

00:05:44 wouldn't be happy.

00:05:45 So there's also the notion of get conditions I want and avoid conditions I don't want.

00:05:57 For example, I'll be happy when I have a good job and my sister doesn't bug me anymore.

00:06:10 If we analyze a little bit more deeply and ask the question, well, how do we even know

00:06:20 what our conditions are?

00:06:25 The only way that we can know what our objective conditions are is through sensory experience.

00:06:33 The parts of sensory experience that ordinary people call self are their body experience,

00:06:44 their physical and emotional sensations, and their mind experience, their visual thoughts

00:06:51 and internal conversations, internal talk.

00:06:59 Most people would say that I am my body, I am my mind.

00:07:08 When we talk about the sensory experience part of happiness, what we get is I'm happy

00:07:17 when I get sensory experiences I want and avoid sensory experiences I don't want in

00:07:26 body, in mind.

00:07:29 I have a certain control over my image and talk.

00:07:32 There is what might be called a motor component.

00:07:36 Thought is something you do, it's an action, it's a form of karma.

00:07:40 But from another perspective, thought can be looked upon as a sensory experience because

00:07:46 thought comes to you through a visual means, which is mental pictures, and an auditory

00:07:54 means, which is internal talk.

00:07:57 In the West, mental experiences are not ordinarily thought of as a sensory experience.

00:08:04 But I think it's very important to be able to conceptualize thinking as a tangible sensory

00:08:14 experience.

00:08:15 Because what's tangible is trackable, and what's trackable is tractable.