

Total Happiness - 2 of 5 - Ordinary & Extraordinary ~ Shinzen Young

00:00:00 The sensory nature of thought seems to go very, very deep into the unconscious thinking.
00:00:13 Audio-video. And as far as I can see, underneath that audio-video is subtler audio and subtler
00:00:21 video, and underneath that is subtler subliminal audio and subtler subliminal video. And underneath
00:00:27 that, well, who knows? An ordinary concept of happiness for the body is you get pleasant
00:00:34 sensations in the body. And the body is happy if it can avoid unpleasant sensations. Well,
00:00:44 the mind is happy if it can get answers to things, and the mind is happy if it can avoid
00:00:50 confusion, if it can avoid muddle. And muddle can be very intense. The aging process can
00:01:01 muddle our minds very severely. Strong emotions can do the same. Losing our mental capacities
00:01:09 is not going to happen to every person, but it's certainly going to happen to some people.
00:01:16 So not only do we start to get discomforts in the body and lose bodily abilities, but
00:01:23 we start to get confusion in the mind as we get senile, we get older. Then if we're old
00:01:31 and we have illness, on top of that, we can be in very confused states. Even people that
00:01:37 were very smart, very together in the ordinary sense in their lives can end up very muddled
00:01:47 mentally. And of course, the extreme cases are dementing diseases like Alzheimer's and
00:01:54 so forth. It's going to happen to some of us, okay? The job of the mind is to know stuff,
00:02:01 to get answers. And when it can't get answers, or worse still, its very ability to get answers
00:02:09 is compromised and perhaps permanently compromised, then the mind's not very happy. So two things,
00:02:15 gets answers, avoids the don't know and the muddle for the mind. Body is happy, gets pleasant
00:02:22 sensations, physical, emotional, avoids unpleasant sensations, physical, emotional. So that gives
00:02:29 us a way to think about ordinary happiness. Mindfulness, skills, increase all these dimensions
00:02:42 of ordinary happiness. In contradiction to the pole called ordinary happiness, there's
00:02:49 another pole that contrasts to that, which could be called extraordinary happiness. Let's
00:02:56 start with body experience. What we think we want is to avoid unpleasant sensations,
00:03:05 but what we really want is to avoid the perception of suffering that comes with unpleasant sensations.
00:03:12 Perceived suffering equals intensity of discomfort in the body divided by mindfulness. As concentration,
00:03:27 clarity and equanimity get bigger, even though the intensity of the discomfort remains the
00:03:34 same, the perceived suffering will diminish. And if mindfulness becomes big enough, the
00:03:45 perceived suffering due to physical or emotional discomfort in the body can be dropped to effectively
00:03:52 zero. That's liberation from suffering of that sort. Mindfulness is directly related
00:03:59 to a dimension of extraordinary happiness, where our concern in the extraordinary happiness
00:04:06 domain is not get rid of uncomfortable touch or feel in the body. Our concern is get rid
00:04:17 of uncomfortable touch and feel if it's appropriate or if you can, but when you can't or when
00:04:23 you should be experiencing those things because they motivate and direct you, under those
00:04:30 circumstances, experience them mindfully so that they become more poignant and less problematic,
00:04:40 although that seems somewhat contradictory. They're experienced more deeply, but the suffering,
00:04:47 the perceived suffering due to discomfort drops. So mindfulness pays off both ways.

00:04:54 It allows the discomforts in the body to fulfill their function because you're having a complete
00:05:00 experience of them. You're bringing concentration, sensory clarity and equanimity to them. That's
00:05:04 called a complete experience. That's not called getting rid of them. Get rid of them if it's
00:05:09 appropriate or you can, and it's appropriate, but when it's not appropriate to get rid of
00:05:17 them or you can't, it would be appropriate but you just can't, then the mindfulness will
00:05:23 allow you to experience that discomfort with diminished suffering and in the most extreme
00:05:28 case, no suffering. In the dimension of extraordinary happiness, our goal is essentially not to
00:05:35 avoid discomfort in the body but to avoid suffering in the body by having a complete
00:05:41 experience of discomfort in the body. Likewise, in the domain of extraordinary happiness,
00:05:48 our goal is not merely to have pleasure but to have fulfillment. Now it turns out that
00:05:57 fulfillment equals pleasure multiplied by mindfulness. Small pleasure, a lot of mindfulness,
00:06:06 a lot of satisfaction. Bad news, big pleasure, not very much mindfulness, I can't get no
00:06:15 satisfaction. The Imelda Marcos phenomenon. How many pairs of shoes will satisfy you if
00:06:24 you don't know how to derive fulfillment from pleasure? 100 times 0 is still 0. 1000
00:06:31 times 0 is still 0. 2000, I think that's what she eventually got up to. But it couldn't
00:06:37 deliver the goods. I can't get no satisfaction. The dimension of extraordinary happiness,
00:06:46 our concern becomes not merely getting pleasure but deriving fulfillment and eventually enormous
00:06:56 fulfillment from whatever pleasure is there. The preoccupation with avoiding discomfort
00:07:05 is replaced with the noble quest for freedom from suffering. And the preoccupation with
00:07:16 getting pleasure is replaced by the noble quest of achieving total fulfillment, which
00:07:25 of course implies no more drivenness. But does not imply for a moment a lack of dynamic
00:07:34 motivation. You can have conditions that are producing pain in the body and there's no
00:07:40 pleasure in the body, still happy. Extraordinary happiness is happiness independent of conditions,
00:07:48 external object of conditions. What it mainly depends on is your base level of mindfulness.
00:07:56 And that's good news because we can elevate our mindfulness as far as we want. So that
00:08:03 we can be in the realm of extraordinary happiness, there's no limit as to how happy we can be.
00:08:09 What about the mind? In the world of extraordinary happiness, the mind's not preoccupied, not
00:08:18 in this or that question. It is interested in the question. And extraordinary happiness
00:08:25 comes about when the mind gets the answer to the question. And what is the question?
00:08:30 The question is, what am I? When the mind's got an answer to that, it knows its source.
00:08:38 I would call that salvation, to know your source directly. And I would call that wisdom.
00:08:46 The preoccupation with this or that question is in the realm of extraordinary happiness
00:08:56 replaced with the preoccupation with the question.