

The Art of Happiness

"Follow your bliss. Find where it is and don't be afraid to follow it." ~ Joseph Campbell

We are Our natural state of being is to be happy. When you remove all the uncomfortable emotions we humans can experience (and they are numerous), you're left with happiness. So it's easiest to define happiness by what it is not.

Pleasure or happiness is one of those words that really mean, "I feel good emotionally." People use different terms to describe what feels good for them. For someone it might be excitement, passion, exhilaration, fulfillment, freedom, feeling fully alive with inspiration and joy. For another it might be more peaceful, content, capable, hopeful, satisfied, and comfortable feeling. Whatever you call it, it just feels darn good.

Happiness does not always appear to be obvious goals because of the intermediate goals we believe are necessary to achieve happiness. But in the end, we do what we do to feel good.

Awareness is the first step in the creation process. As you grow in self awareness, you will better understand why you feel what you feel and why you behave as you behave. That understanding then gives you the opportunity and freedom to change those things you'd like to change about yourself and create the life you want. Without fully knowing who you are, self acceptance and change become impossible.

Having clarity about who you are and what you want (and why you want it), empowers you to consciously and actively make those wants a reality. Otherwise, you'll continue to get "caught up" in your own internal dramas and unknown beliefs, allowing unknown thought processes to determine your feelings and actions.

If you think about it, not understanding why you do what you do, and feel what you feel is like going through your life with a stranger's mind. How do you make wise decisions and choices if you don't understand why you want what you want? It's a difficult and chaotic way to live never knowing what this stranger is going to do next.

Who's the expert? When we want good, solid information, we turn to the experts. So, who are you going to turn to for information about yourself? Who's the expert? You.

Owning Your Emotions If you're going to work towards happiness, you will need to know who controls your happiness. It's a fairly common belief that a person can make another person feel bad. "She made me angry."

I can understand cause and effect in the physical world. I push the pencil and it rolls. I drop a glass and it shatters. But cause and effect don't translate very well into the emotional world. I think people have difficulty understanding this concept of responsibility for their emotions because they make no distinction between influence and control.

Make Happiness an Intention How often do you base whether you'll be happy or not, on the circumstances and conditions in your life? "When this happens, I'll be happy. When I get this house, car, relationship, job, this problem is solved, have self-esteem, get out of this marriage (the list is endless) ... *then* I'll be happy."

Accept Yourself Self-acceptance is being loving and happy with who you are NOW. Some call it self-esteem, others self-love, but whatever you call it, you'll know when you're accepting yourself cause it feels real good! It's an agreement with yourself to appreciate, validate, accept and support who you are at this very moment, even those parts you'd like to eventually change. This is key... *even those parts you'd eventually like to change*. Yes, you can accept (be okay with) those parts of yourself you want to change.

Beliefs are any ideas you think are true about yourself, others, and life. Clarity about what you believe, who you are, what you want, and why you want it can be like a beacon on a clear night, guiding you to the fulfillment of your desires. Unfortunately, most of us aren't aware of our beliefs, many of which we acquired as children. You can live your whole life unaware of how your beliefs are effecting your feelings, thoughts and actions.

Gratitude