

What is Happiness?

by Lion Goodman

What is happiness? And how can I get some?

The quest for happiness is as old as humankind. Where does happiness come from?

If you were walking down the street and noticed a sandwich shop, you might go in and order your favorite sandwich. How did you know what to order? You have a memory of eating that type of sandwich before, and you liked it then, so you expect to like it again. Your desire begins with an idea or a memory (of the sandwich) or a sensation (of hunger). You anticipate the end result (enjoying the sandwich, feeling satisfied), and that attracts and focuses your attention. You take actions that are in alignment with those thoughts, feelings, and sensations, and your hunger is eventually satisfied.

What about happiness? You have memories of being happy. And you probably seek out the same kinds of activities and actions that were associated with happiness in the past. If you experienced happiness while riding a bicycle, you'll probably go riding again and again. If you were happy on a date, you will most likely go out with that person again. We fill our lives with actions that "should" make us happy, based on the "it felt good the last time" principle. Unfortunately, this rarely works to make us happy, because happiness is not like hunger. It can't be satisfied with something outside of ourselves because happiness is not based on a physical need. Rather, happiness is a phenomenon of the mind, or inner self. Happiness is self-generated.

Most people look for happiness outside themselves, and for good reason. We are bombarded with thousands of advertising messages every day, telling us that if we use this make-up, buy this car, smoke those cigarettes, wear this brand of clothes, or eat at that fast food restaurant, we will satisfy our desires for happiness. We will suddenly have satisfying relationships, joy and laughter, sex appeal, and satisfaction.

It's not just advertising that convinces us that we should seek our happiness outside ourselves. We believe our parents: "If you become a doctor/lawyer/engineer you'll live a good life." We believe our religious leaders: "If you believe what we believe, you'll be saved/enlightened/joyous." We believe our friends: "If you _____ (fill in the blank), you will be happier."

Where does happiness really come from? We know that it doesn't come consistently from anything outside ourselves, although we spend tremendous amounts of time and money trying to achieve that tenuous state. It must, therefore come from within ourselves. Is it possible to generate happiness anytime you want?

Try this experiment from the book ReSurfacing: Techniques for Exploring Consciousness by Harry Palmer: **Smile until you feel happy.** It may take only a moment, or it might take a few minutes. Try it right now.

Now take a minute and try another experiment: **Think to yourself, "I'm happy" until you smile.**

Did you notice that there was nothing outside of yourself that was required for you to experience happiness? And if that is the case, why aren't you happy more often?

The source of our *unhappiness* is likewise within us. There are four main causes of unhappiness:

- 1) Our attachment to what is, or what we have (and our concomitant fear of loss) – such as staying in a relationship that isn't working;
- 2) Our desire for what isn't, or what we don't have – for example, wanting the body of a supermodel;

- 3) Our resistance to that which we are experiencing in this moment – such as fear, anger, loneliness or sadness; and
- 4) Our limiting beliefs about ourselves and about the world around us – “I don’t have any business skills” or “Everyone else is much better than I am.”

What does it take to be happy? It takes an honest, vulnerable, and open-minded assessment of what stands in the way between you and being happy. It takes time, attention, and practice. It takes tools that work. It takes a careful examination of your belief system. It is our beliefs that cause us to create or attract the situations and events that we experience as our lives. Most of these core beliefs are transparent to us. They are constantly operating, but are below the level of our conscious mind. What does it take to uncover them and change them?

During my 30 years of self-exploration, I discovered numerous valuable techniques and teachings, philosophies and exercises. They each moved me forward toward my goal of being happy, and I came out of each one with a “workshop high.” But I had to take another workshop to get that feeling again. This was my form of “sandwich” – my attempt to gain happiness from an outside source. Then, through luck or fate, I discovered a set of tools that I could use to generate my own happiness. During the nine-day Avatar® Course, I found that I had a transparent core belief deep down beneath my unhappiness: “I’m not a happy person.” Using the Avatar tools, I “discreated,” or disappeared, that belief. What emerged was a natural state of happiness that flowed easily out of me and into my daily life.

Using the Avatar tools and techniques, I can now create any state of consciousness I wish to explore. I can change my mood at will. When I find myself reacting, I can quickly find the source of the reaction, and clear it up. I no longer have to wait for the next workshop, because I am the leader of the workshop called “my life.”

The Avatar Course is a nine-day exploration of beliefs, one’s consciousness, and one’s true self, or spirit. More than 80,000 people around the world have transformed their lives with Avatar, and have become happier people as a result. Each person who takes the course uses these neutral tools to create the life they want. Some use it for economic and material success. Some use it for spiritual advancement. Others use it to explore extraordinary beliefs and dimensions. The Avatar techniques have had a profound impact on every person who has taken the course. People become happier, more peaceful, and more capable of managing their lives. Graduates of the program become more pragmatic, more compassionate, and more in tune with their higher selves. What would you like to change about your life? I suggest that you try happiness – you’ll probably enjoy it!

Lion Goodman is a licensed teacher of The Avatar® Course and a personal transformation coach. Avatar Courses are held around the world every month. Call 415-472-8500 in the U.S. for more information, and for course dates and locations. Visit www.AvatarBayArea.com to find out more and try other exercises from The Avatar Course.

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First published in Cosmic Link Magazine, September-October 2002 issue (www.cosmiclink.org)

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