

*How to live A Purpose-Driven Life and Becoming  
a Better YOU*

*And Be Happy Now!*



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## Book Description

Are you happy? Are you looking for ways to be happy in life? Do you feel like your life has lost meaning? Do you want to live a purpose-filled life and usher in a new splash of sunshine into your life?

If this is you, then you have come to the right place!

One thing that is important to note is that the search for happiness is a popular pursuit among many. We all have different sets of challenges in life – each one of us making a conscientious effort to be happy. That in itself is a task!

What is interesting is that when people seek happiness, what they are really after is pleasure – more sex, good food, TV, and movie time, partying with friends, new cars, body massages, and relaxation, among others.

While pleasure is something great, it is not an equivalent of happiness! Bear in mind that pleasure is correlated with happiness, but is not the cause for it if you ask an adulterer who shattered their family or a drug addict how their pursuit of pleasure turned out. They will tell you that pleasure did not bring them happiness.

In other words, pleasure is a false God!

Here, we will discuss;

- What real happiness is
- Common forces driving people
- Importance of living a purpose-driven life
- The secrets to living a happy life

- Reasons why you need a gratitude practice to be happy
- Steps to achieving happiness
- Actionable tips for a happy life

So, what are you still waiting for? Come with me and let's learn how to be happy in life no matter what your circumstances say.

Happy Reading!

## Introduction

So many people today ask where they can find happiness. Is there a specific place one can go to be happy? Is there a secret formula that can help one find happiness?

According to research, it is evident that happiness is not something that you can find anywhere specific. The truth is that you can be happy with how you live your life. It does not matter how much money you have or do not have, the place you live in. The trick is for you to find happiness in everything that you do – raising your children, your job, or your marriage – you can fill your life with the happiness you want doing the things that you love.

There is no exact recipe for finding happiness. Take a moment to think about your life. What is your perspective on happiness? What is it that you hold very dear to you? What are some of the core values you uphold? – love, respect, and honor.

When you think about the things that can immediately make you happy, those are the things you need to engage in to be happy. It is important to note that the things that make your friend or family happy may not be the same things that make you happy.

You must allow creativity into your life. This is exactly what will inspire you to focus your mind and energy on things you love doing. It is this form of creativity that, in turn, translates to acts of mindfulness – something that allows you to stay present at the moment – hence creating happiness.

The truth is that you will not derive happiness from one specific thing. However, it is in how you do every task. This is what makes the whole difference.

Ever heard of the phrase, "Enjoy what you do, and you will never have to work a day in your life?" Well, that is very true!

*"Happiness depends on yourself."*

- Aristotle

According to Aristotle, there are two forms of pleasures; lesser and greater. Even though they may seem similar to each other at first, the truth is that they are inherently different.

What is important to note is that lesser pleasure refers to those things that will offer you instant gratification – sex, eating junk, sleeping in late. While on the surface, these things may seem to hold the key to happiness; the truth is that they delay their arrival.

Just think about it for a moment – you overeat fried chicken because you succumbed to your desires and eventually end up bloated and disappointed in yourself. You eventually regret why you had to eat all that at once – that was instant gratification!

According to Aristotle, it is our lesser pleasure that is to blame for our perennial gratification in life.

On the other hand, greater pleasure goes a long way in offering us genuine and long-term satisfaction. For instance, when you lose weight, you feel better than when you just eat a cake at the moment. However, to achieve this greater pleasure, you need abstinence, determination, and

grit. In other words, to be happy, you have to be willing to pay the price. It means that you have to drop off anything that stands in the way of your happiness so that you can pursue meaningful pleasures. It means getting up every morning and feeling happy about how your body looks, your work, and the people that you spend your time with.

What you will learn here is that you will not be happy by chasing fleeting and short-lived pleasures. Instead, you have to be willing to open your eyes wide, see through the fog, and make the right decisions for you. Each moment comes with temptation, but you have to overcome them so that you can attain long-term happiness.

You will be happy no matter what, when, and if you realize that pleasure is a false god. In fact, according to research, it is evident that people who focus all their energy and time on material things often end up emotionally unstable and less happy in the end.

Note that pleasures will come and go. Try as much as you can not to fixate on them. If you do, they will just numb and distract you from what truly matters. There is always something more meaningful that you can do to find happiness ultimately.

Come with me!

## Chapter 1 What is happiness?

This is a question that many people keep asking. What is the meaning of real happiness?

Well, the truth is that happiness is a mind feature that stems from having a positive mental attitude that integrates an intention not to hurt others. It is the desire to be happy with life just the way it is. It is a way of being!

Think of happiness as the way you are less the neuroses. In other words, it is your original state without the belief that it is bought or the fear that you will find it somewhere else. The reason why so many people are not happy is that they keep searching for happiness elsewhere and are never contented with the kind of life they are living.

If you are going to be happy, then you have to let go of the “destination addiction” so that you can start enjoying where you are at now. Realize that you can never be happy if all you do is the search for what happiness is composed of.

Happiness is an elusive state.

In other words, it is the desire that motivates the moves we make and yet still seems to escape our grip. In our pursuit of happiness, we miss what truly matters and are blinded by short-term pleasures, poor decision-making, and false friendships –we end upright, we started- in search of happiness.

To be happy, you have to think about these basic principles;

***Prioritizing long-term happiness***

What are you searching for today? One thing that is important to note is that not all pleasures are the same. If you are trying to find happiness in life, you must have foresight about the future. Without that, then you are setting yourself up for misery.

Before you hit that snooze-button or eat that bag of potato chips, think about your long-term happiness. Ask yourself whether you will thank yourself for that decision tomorrow. You have to learn how to make a distinction between momentary gratification and lasting satisfaction – when you do, it becomes easier to attain true happiness.

### ***Surround yourself with the right friends***

There is a wide range of friendships – those based on personal gains, mutual pleasures, and virtue. One thing you need to understand is that friendships will bring you happiness if they uplift and motivate you to be a better version of you. When you enrich your life with meaningful relationships, you stand a better chance of gaining true satisfaction.

### ***Give freely***

Be it your knowledge, time, money, or support; there is nothing that brings us so much happiness than seeing others happy because of our actions. According to Aristotle, the virtue of generosity is one of the most important spices of life – a life well-lived.

That said, happiness is indeed a difficult goal to achieve. However, when you choose to take small steps in the right direction, you will live a happy life no matter what. Happiness is everywhere around us. All you need to do is tap into it.

## **Chapter 2 Common forces driving people (Philippians 3:10-14)**

Recently, I bought a travel mug – a luxury in-car accessory. This mug is vacuum-sealed, and it keeps my drink hot for an entire journey. Knowing that it is handy, I decided to use it to carry my hot Arabica coffee to a conference early in the morning. Dressed in a white dress, I did not imagine that the coffee would spill and leave a stain on it. Getting to the conference that morning, everyone could notice the stain, and that made me quite uncomfortable – who wouldn't?

The same thing applies to us in life. There are so many things that drive us – fear, regret, ambition, and even anger! Some of us have the desire to please others or accumulate material wealth. If you live a purpose-driven life, you will not be worried about the simple mistakes or flaws in your life. Those flaws are the coffee stains on your clothes – they do not define who you are!

The forces that God designed to drive your life are not those of anger, remorse, fear, resentment, wealth, materialism, or guilt. They are for you to know and love him, be part of a family, be Christ-like, serve God, and introduce others to His purpose.

Without your God-given purpose, you will not look at the things that you have. Instead, you will be distracted by “coffee stains” in your life. You will be driven by destructive influences and lose your happiness.

Some of the common forces driving us and prevent us from living a happy life include;

### ***Guilt and fear***

Part of what is standing in your way of happiness is the inability to let go of the past. The inability to hide from what happened in your past. You have allowed guilt to drive you by letting your memories manipulate your way of life. When you let the past take control of your future, your God-given purpose becomes limited. Every mess that you make in life should not limit you from being happy.

The scripture tells us that God promised us through Jeremiah, "For I know the plans I have for you... plans to prosper you and not harm you plans to give you hope and a future." This is an indication that God is not concerned with what your past is like. He is more concerned with you having a happy future. This explains why Paul insisted that "forgetting what is behind and pressing on to the goal."

What is in your past that is holding you back from being happy?  
Whatever it is, let it go and open your arms wide to embrace happiness in your life no matter what.

### ***Anger and Resentment***

Did you know that holding on to hurt and resentment is something incredibly destructive? Did you know that these things steal your joy and happiness?

Well, one thing you need to bear in mind is that if you don't forgive others for their wrongs, this will only open the door for resentment. The thing with resentment is that it can either clam up or blow up. When it clams up, you will internalize anger that will reap you of your happiness. When it blows up, then you will end up showering other people with the fallout, hence ripping off their happiness too.

You need to realize that we all are human and far from perfection. Therefore, if you don't forgive others for their wrongs, how do you expect to be forgiven? Understand that forgiveness opens the door for healing, joy, and happiness. Unforgiveness imprisons you in the past and locks you out of the potential to change.

When you resent others, it will hurt you more than the person you resent. By choosing to hold on to the pain through resentment, you continue to give away your happiness.

Your past is in the past! There is nothing you can change about it. Holding on to hurt will only cause you more bitterness.

Today, decide to search your heart for any unforgiveness. Let go of all the hurt and resentment you have piled up in your heart. Choose to live for the future so that the power of the past is broken. This is how you open the door to everlasting happiness, no matter what the conditions are like.

### ***Wealth and Materialism***

It is one thing to desire something, and it is quite another when you let passion consume you. One mistake that many people make is believing that the more they acquire in material wealth, the happier they get. They think that wealth will make them happy, secure, and important.

Well, it is quite the opposite!

One thing you need to note is that material wealth will only offer you temporary happiness.

Think about it for a moment – owning your dream will make you happy. But how long is that going to last? The car will not be brand new forever.

Its value will not remain the same forever. The fact is, self-worth is not the same as net-worth. What you need to understand is that your value is not measured by how much valuables you own.

The scripture tells us that the most valuable things in life are not things!

If you want to be happy, the first thing is for you to ask yourself what the driving force in your life is. What is your ambition? What is it that motivates you? What is your intention?

If you are going to live your God-given purpose and set yourself up for happiness, then you have to let go of all these three destructive things – guilt and fear, anger and resentment, and wealth and materialism.

So, what is your God-given purpose? Are you living that purpose? What if you started living your purpose, how would that benefit you?

Read on!

## **Chapter 3 Importance of living a purpose-driven life**

So many people think that it is not possible to find their passion and hence happiness in life. If this is you, then think again!

One evident thing is that you can go from not knowing what your life's passion is to finding it, pursuing it, and even earning an income from it. You may be thinking, "so what if I find my life's passion?"

Well, the truth is that when you know what your life's purpose is, you will be inspired to be your better self. It is what will engage you in your healing, self-awareness, finding greatness, and operating in an abundance mindset.

Today, you have to decide to live a purpose-filled life and set yourself up for all the following benefits;

### ***Giving meaning to life***

Without the divine presence in your life, then life is without meaning. Without meaning simply means that there is no significance in living. You may think that the greatest tragedy is death, but the truth is that the greatest tragedy is living a life without purpose.

This is a life sentence!

It is important to note that we were made to have meaning. Through the divine presence in our lives, we find hope – which is an essential part of life. Without hope, you cannot cope.

According to Dr. Bernie Siegel, it was easy to predict which patients would go into remission by just asking them whether or not they thought they would live to a hundred years. The truth is that hope comes from us

having a sense of purpose – and it is in that purpose that life has meaning and offers you happiness.

### ***Simplifies life***

There is no single athlete that succeeds by doing everything. Success comes from specializing. When Josh Salzman was asked what the secret to his great physique was, he answered – exercise. It was just one thing!

Finding happiness in life comes from concentrating on one thing – purpose!

The problem with human beings is that we go around involved in thousands of things all at the same time. When we are all over the place, we lose focus on what is truly important – God's purpose for our life.

This does not mean that you neglect all else in your life. Instead, it means that all else is subordinated to your goals. When you lack a clear purpose, it means that you do not have a foundation on which to base all your decisions – time and money.

You cannot be happy if your life is cluttered with choices that are made based on pressures, circumstances, and emotions. When you don't have a purpose, you will be overworked, stressed, tired, and tense. However, with a purpose, life is simplified.

Your purpose in life is what defines what you do and how you do it. In other words, it is the standard that helps you assess what activities are essential and which ones are not.

If you worry too much about what others will think of you if you don't do what they want you to do, then you are giving them all your power to be happy. Realize that your happiness does not depend on anyone else other than you alone. The time you have on your hands is sufficient for you to do the will of the divine.

Remember, a life that is driven by purpose leads to a simpler life and a sane schedule. This is how you find meaning, and that meaning is your source of happiness.

### ***Focus on life***

Let us start with a story of Eric Liddell, an Olympic runner whose story has been retold over and over again in the film Chariots of Fire. He ran chest out, legs and arms pumping with fury and head held high as he went on to win the Olympic Gold medal.

What is special about him is that when people criticized him for spending too much of his time training rather than doing missionary work, what he said was that God created him for a purpose and made him fast too. He said that through running, he feels happy.

What about you today, do you feel happy doing your God-given purpose? Do you look back?

One of the rules of making it to the finish line a winner is never to look back. The life we live in today is full of challenges left, right, center – all of which try to rob us of our happiness. The trick to remaining happy no matter what comes your way is not looking over your shoulder.

Looking back will make you fall, lose confidence, or slow you down. It is what stands in the way of living a happy, fulfilled life. The secret is for

you to focus on the finish line. When you take your eyes off the divine, you will be distracted by all the noises around you. However, when you fix your eyes on being happy, you will not only make the right choices that bring you happiness but also do everything with so much joy in your heart.

Just like Lee Strobel once said, "if you cannot sing 'Amazing Grace' with tears in your eyes, then you don't get the meaning." Today, take a minute to evaluate where your focus is at. Is it on what makes you happy, or is it on people? As yourself, whether the Divine grace grips you, motivates you, and helps you stay put.

Find your life's purpose, and you will find happiness!

## Chapter 4 What are the secrets to living a happy life?

We have already mentioned earlier that happiness is something elusive. But have you thought why that is the case?

The truth is that our brains have evolved to survive and try as much as possible to keep us safe. While there are times when we experience happiness, bliss, and contentment, we are often plagued with negative feelings.

But, how do we find happiness in life irrespective of all the circumstances we go through?

One thing you must bear in mind is that it takes practice to cultivate happiness. In most cases, we must be willing to reset the baseline. Happiness will not happen overnight. Here are some of the secrets that will help you live a happy life;

### ***Focus on the positives***

If you want long-term happiness, the most important thing is for you to retrain your brain to adopt a positive outlook of life. Instead of focusing on what is going wrong in your life, count all the positives in your life. Try doing this at least three times a day for three months. This way, your brain will automatically have a positive mindset.

You can also choose a positive mantra for the day. For instance, you can go with such phrases as "This is a beautiful day. I am so grateful for everything I have." This way, you are setting yourself up for success. When things don't turn out the way you expected them to go, you will not lament about it. Instead, you will have a positive perspective on things.

Trust me; there is always a silver lining in life no matter what the situation is like.

### ***Celebrate small wins***

We all have gone through difficult situations at some point in life – that is natural. However, what most of us fail to recognize are the little wins that often go unnoticed. If you are going to be happy, then you've got to start celebrating all the wins in your life, no matter how small they may be.

Each day, you have a to-do list. At the end of the day, if you have checked off all the boxes on your to-do list, then that is a win worth celebrating. Did you manage to clear all the unnecessary emails filling your inbox, that is a win? When you take pleasure in little achievements, you are setting yourself up for eternal happiness.

Trust me, they all add up!

### ***Find a work-life balance***

If you ask people what they do for leisure during the day, 99% of them will tell you that they work all day and don't get the time for fun. The truth is that work should not be the only thing we do. If you want to be happy, you have to be willing to pursue activities and interests that go far beyond your job.

Take a minute to think about the hobbies you have. Do you spend time with friends and family – even if just for a meal? Do you work out?

These things outside your job are what bring balance to life and lowers your stress levels so that you can express yourself better, have fun, and be happy.

### ***Practice mindfulness***

One of the ways you can achieve happiness in your life is if you take time every day to practice mindfulness. The thing with mindfulness is that it brings your awareness and attention to the present moment. It is about you trying as much as you can to be non-judgmental and accept how you feel.

Being in the present, aware and curious is what will usher in sunshine into your life. It is what will help you accept the things you cannot change, lower stress, and have a clear perspective on things that matter the most in our lives. It is through mindfulness that we can gain peace and affirmation in who we truly are – that is happiness.

### ***Embrace creativity***

Some people think that creativity is something depressing and moody. However, according to research studies, there is evidence that shows engaging in creative activities regularly goes a long way in making one happier.

Today, make a point each day to put your imagination into good use. Creativity brings more enthusiasm that has an effect of bringing you long-term happiness and a sense of well-being. Such creative activities include; painting, musical performances, writing, and drawing, among others.

### ***Do what you love***

If you hate what you do, then it is damn hard to be happy. Take a minute to think about your job; does it make you happy?

Don't waste another minute of your life living a joyless job – even though it may be paying the bills. What is it that you consider interesting to you? Is there something you are passionate about? Then start focusing on that and build a life in that area. When you do this, you will look forward to each day because your work offers you a high degree of satisfaction – which will cause your happiness factor to multiply exponentially.

### ***Spend wisely***

We always think that having lots of money brings us more happiness. However, it is how you spend your money that determines how happy you will be. The secret is to spend your money wisely – however much it may be.

Think about it – if you spent your money traveling, dining, and going to concerts, you will be happier because you are sharing that beautiful experience with other people.

What you need to realize is that material possession will eventually fade away. However, experiences are what helps us to define life's purpose and the things we are passionate about.

After graduating from college, I landed what most people called "a dream job" in the corporate industry. I earned a dream salary, traveled the world, and enjoyed meeting new people. However, that was not where my heart was. I was not happy there. I was always passionate about culinary arts.

I eventually quit my corporate job to pursue culinary arts – cooking daily. Well, this came with its challenges, but I was happy here.

Today, you may be struggling to do something that you don't love. It may be earning you a good salary, but if you don't love it, then it is harder to be happy at it. You have to decide to allow passion to meet the real business sense. Here are some of the lessons I learned doing what I love;

### *Lesson 1: Treat your goals as recipes*

Even when doing something that you love daily, it does not mean that you will love it all the time. The trick is for you to segment your goals into bite-size chunks you can pursue daily. This way, you will have a clear vision – something that will help you stay calm and focused on the process.

You must ensure that you keep your ultimate objective in mind.

Appreciate where you are at in the present rather than always going back to the past. Remind yourself constantly that you are learning, and each time you do, you are drawing closer to your dream.

### *Lesson 2: know the people that came before you*

When I first started my career in cooking, I had to know what successful people in the field knew – Thomas Keller, Giada de Laurentis, Jean Georges, among others. This is what helped me understand the landscape better – successes and mistakes others made.

This is not so that you can take the exact path as them but to help you understand what they went through to get to their achievements. You learn from their experiences and get to your destination faster.

### *Lesson 3: Have something to offer*

When you do something that you love, you have something new to learn. At the same time, you have something to offer others. If you are going to grow and be happy, you have to be willing to give something in return. It could be making a meal for family or giving others recipes that they do not know. This way, you get to build trust, opening them up more so that you get what you are looking for.

### *Lesson 4: Seek help from experts*

You will never know everything in this world. You don't have to stress yourself out over things that you can seek help from others. If you don't have a skill, then the chances are that you already know someone who does. Thoughtfully use your networks and resources.

### *Lesson 5: Be ready to be uncomfortable – physically and mentally*

Happiness does not come easy. One of the greatest lessons I have learned over the years is that most gratifying experiences are those that make you uncomfortable about what you are doing. There are times when what you need to do to be happy is terrifying at first. But you have to gather the courage to get your feet wet and lose sight of the shore.

To achieve your dreams and get to your destination, you have to rise to the occasion. Success could just be around the corner for you, but you have to get up and go after it.

## Chapter 5 Steps on how to achieve happiness

### ***Step 1 Cultivate an attitude of gratitude***

One of the ways you can achieve happiness in your life is to cultivate an attitude of gratitude. When you give thanks for all you have will make you happier and more satisfied.

Look around you, no matter what the situation may be. There is always something to be grateful about – both tangible and intangible things. When you spend every minute of your life, acknowledging all the things you have in life – good or bad – you will realize that there is more good than bad. You will realize that your sadness, depression, and anxiety diminish to usher in a new light of happiness.

You may be wondering why it is important to practice gratitude. Well, here is why;

#### *Gratitude causes a mindset shift*

If you are going to experience a change in your life, then something has to happen – Change. Waiting for your life to change is pretty passive when looking for happiness. You will indeed experience valleys in your journey of life. But it is also true that you will experience good breaks.

If you get stuck in what did not work out, then the chances are that you will miss out on opportunities for the solutions knocking at your door. However, when you open your heart and eyes to gratitude, things will begin to fall into place for all that you do. If you are doing business, you need to be proactive rather than passive. This way, your mindset will change, and you will start to experience satisfaction and happiness in every area of your life.

The trick is for you to start by keeping a gratitude journal of all events you are thankful for each day. When you focus on who came to help you each day, the opportunities that presented themselves and how each day played out and made your tomorrow better will go a long way in helping you realize that you are well taken care of. It will prove to you that you are capable of success and that in itself will bring you happiness and joy in all you do.

### *Gratitude opens the door for solutions*

When you adopt and an attitude of gratitude, what you are doing is turning away from problems and paying attention to a solution. It takes you from a habit of complaining about having a positive mindset.

This is a skill that you and I need in this life. This is what will help you make the right choices in life. Where other people see problems, choose to see solutions, and watch how happier you become.

To start, simply keep a mental checklist of triggers. What are some of the things that set you off into a complaining and annoyance mode? These are what we call complaint triggers. Take time each day to observe them as they pop up. Note them down and at the end of the week, spend at least 20-30 minutes brainstorming about them and possible solutions.

If you choose to see opportunities in every problem, the chances are that you will solve each pain point – not only for yourself but others too. Trust me; a gratitude attitude has a ripple effect that echoes through your startup, making you and those around you happy.

## *Gratitude is contagious*

I don't know about you, but I hate being in business with jerks. I don't like people who spend most of their time complaining or whining about this and that. It is depressing!

Such people will steal your joy and happiness.

Look around you, are there people who are always whining about everything instead of finding solutions to challenges? Respectfully, distance yourself from such people. There are many positive people out there who are smart, pleasing, and talented to be around.

People who are grateful for every experience in life often exude positive energy. The energy we exude is contagious, and you will do good things together with positive people when you come together.

Today, choose to watch the words you use. Your words inform your actions. Instead of complaining about things, look for the silver lining in it, and express gratitude for it. Be the change that you want to see in the world, and you will start to experience so much happiness in all you do.

## ***Step 2 Establish meaningful relationships***

One thing you need to note is that love, friendships, happiness, and community go hand-in-hand. As human beings, we have a fundamental need to belong and connect with others of our kind. We always want people who will support us, be there, and understand us as we go through the ups and downs of life.

The truth is that without such meaningful relationships, we would be lonely, sad, and isolated. However, when we pursue happiness with others, we also become happy.

The only problem comes in when we compare ourselves to others. We want to compare what we have to what the people around us have. One of the major contributors to this is social media – which has a way of making people feel that they are less than others.

Think about it – when you scroll through the newsfeeds on Instagram or Facebook or other platforms and see your friend, schoolmate, or colleague driving the latest car, living in a posh neighborhood, or having a dream family, how does that make you feel when you have none of that?

When you open the door for envy and resentment, that will rob you of happiness. You stop appreciating what you have and start seeing all the things they have, and you don't.

According to Aristotle, surrounding yourself with true friendships is the key ingredient to long-lasting happiness. Someone once said that whosoever has no friend is like a wild beast or a god. While there are introverted people, the truth is that social interaction goes a long way in helping you be and stay happy. It is through meaningful relationships that life has color and meaning.

That said, not all relationships are equal. Some relationships will also rob you of your happiness. These are toxic, stressful, and unhealthy relationships. If you want happiness in your life, some of the relationships that you need to stay away from including;

*Those in which both of you are seeking fun*

Here, the chief interest to gain pleasure. In other words, each one of you is a utility with which to have fun. For instance, those relationships in

which you maintain just so that you can mutually satisfy each other's desire for sex.

### *Strategic relationships*

Here, both of you enjoy each other's company as long as there is something to gain from it. In other words, you are only together for selfish interests and prospects of leveraging the other to your advantage.

There is only one kind of relationship that you should keep – the true and virtuous ones. This is one in which you create a union with people who are more like you and whom you care deeply about. In other words, your joys, sorrows, and disappointments are shared. Neither of you wishes the other anything evil. You don't use each other for power or selfish gains.

Now, take a minute to go through all your relationships. Do they fall under the above categories? Are they true and virtuous? If it is, then you know that you stand to gain more happiness each day. If not, then start dropping them one by one.

Realize that for happiness sake, you need to surround yourself with genuine and meaningful friends – not those seeking utility and pleasure. Look for people who share concerns and your best interests – those who are appreciative, honest, and empathic.

*"The best friend is the man who in wishing me well wishes it for my sake."*

— Aristotle

What you need to understand is that true friends are those who supersede status, honor, and wealth. They don't have terms and conditions. They are not contractual. Instead, they offer you both virtue

and enjoyment – offering satisfaction to our emotions as well as intellectual desires.

*“A true friend freely, advises justly, assists readily, adventures boldly, takes all patiently, defends courageously, and continues a friend unchangeably.”*

– William Penn

### ***Step 3 Become self-compassionate***

Let’s think about it for a moment, if you were to embark on a journey with someone for several years, how would you consider that relationship between the two of you? Would it be important to you?

Well, the truth is that you would try as much as possible to get along with that person. In other words, it would be prudent to ensure that the relationship between the two of you is positive and supportive.

This is exactly what the journey of life is like, except that our constant companion is our inner critic — the voice inside your head.

Unfortunately, for so many people, that relationship with the self is not so positive.

*“You can search throughout the entire universe for someone more deserving of your love and affection than you are yourself, and that person is not to be found anywhere. You, as much as anybody in the entire universe, deserve your love and affection.”*

– Buddha

But how can you overcome your inner critic so that you can foster self-compassion - acceptance and boost your happiness?

### *Step 1: Practice forgiveness*

The worst thing you can do to yourself is beating yourself up for your mistakes. The truth is that you are not perfect, and if you are going to encourage happiness in your life, you must learn how to be gentle to yourself whenever challenges confront you. The reason why your friends and family value you are because of who you truly are and not because you are without fault.

*“There is no sense in punishing your future for the mistakes of your past. Forgive yourself, grow from it, and then let it go.”*

– Melanie Koulouris

Beware of times when you draw your self-worth from perfection. You don't have to act in a specific way to be worthy of love and happiness. To remind yourself that you are worthy of happiness is to place a sticky note next to your workstation or in your wallet to remind you to act in a kind and gentle way to yourself.

### *Step 2: Employ a growth mindset*

One thing you must understand is that your growth or fixed mindset directly influences your happiness. We all face challenges in life, and yet we don't experience the same level of happiness. Why is that? Because there are those of us, who think of challenges as impossible obstacles. If you are going to be happy in life, you have to change your mindset – and choose to see challenges as opportunities for growth.

In other words, happiness comes from embracing challenges rather than avoiding them. You have to persist in finding meaning in them without giving up. Whenever you find yourself self-criticizing or comparing yourself to others, try as much as you can to draw inspiration from other

people's successes and strengths rather than allowing yourself to feel threatened.

### *Step 3: Find the right balance of generosity*

There are three major types of reciprocity styles, namely, taker, giver, and matcher. Of all three, givers are the most generous people. One way you can employ compassion is by being generous. However, what is interesting is that givers can both be most successful or least successful mainly because they often fall into the trap of selfless giving that they end up ignoring their own needs and ending up unhappy.

If you are going to make generosity work for you, you have to ensure that you also pay attention to your wellbeing. Ensure that you are aware of your needs before you can select a recipient of your generosity.

Finally, you must have fun while being generous. Your giving is what makes the whole difference, and that is where your happiness comes from. While doing that, do not forget to give back to yourself. When you do good to other people, you become happy – but only when that act does not lower your level of wellbeing.

### ***Step 4 Uncover the power of self-awareness***

Did you know that how we perceive a situation is not always accurate? There are many times when we are not truly objective with the situation at hand. The truth is that each one of us has filters and explanatory styles that skew our perception of the world around us.

Growing up, we are often conditioned by our parents or caregivers. In other words, we model ourselves after our caregivers – based on their values – and that forms the blueprint of how we perceive the world.

*“Knowing others is intelligence; knowing yourself is true wisdom.  
Mastering others is strength; mastering yourself is true power.”*

— Lao Tzu

Before you can be happy, you must know yourself better than anyone. In this century, there is barely enough time just to sit alone and think. Every moment is often rushed from the time we arise in the morning to the time when we retire to bed. What is even interesting is that as we try to catch sleep, our minds are still racing and thinking about one thing or the other.

If you are going to be happy, you must have time for self-awareness. You can achieve this through introspection. Simply identify a quiet place to sit, close your eyes, and look deep inside yourself. Reflect on everything that you have done throughout the day, week, month, or year. How have you treated people around you? Try as much as you can not to self-judge. Allow your thoughts to flow without letting yourself be distracted.

The most important thing to bear in mind is that you can only find happiness when your mind is at rest. One of the best ways to just switch off, kick back, and be happy is through meditation. This will have a great impact on your tolerance, mood, and general outlook on life.

*"How you love yourself is how you teach others to love you."*

— Rupi Kaur

Self-awareness is about the values that you hold as your guiding principles. This is your scoring rubric through which you get to evaluate others and yourself concerning self-worth and ideals. This is what helps

you to not only strengthen your relationships but also promote creativity, a sense of wellbeing, and happiness.

### ***Step 5 Presence***

If you have not noticed, our thoughts often revolve around the past and the future. What we fail to realize is that the reality lies in the present moment – everything we are experiencing at this moment – right now.

Most of us try as much as possible to escape that reality. What is important to bear in mind is that staying in the present moment helps us to be fully engaged in our lives. This is how you will begin to have a deeper appreciation of your life.

So many of us are excited about the future that we fail to live in the present. What is even worse is getting stuck in the past. Living in the *now* is one of the things that you should cherish because once that moment is gone, it is gone forever.

When I was in completing High School, I was so consumed by the thought of going to college that my final days just went by like that. The last days in High School will never come back again, no matter what. The most interesting thing is that when I joined University, the same thing happened – starting my career took all of my attention.

While this may have worked out for me to some degree, I failed savor every moment that high school and college had to offer.

It is true that we all must have a vision for the future, but we should not neglect everything that the present moment has to offer. It is the present that will help us to develop into what we need to be in the future. We

forget what our important priorities, values, and principles are that all there is in our minds is to make a living and earn extra bonuses.

You can still have a vision and plan for the future while you live in the present moment. The reason why we are not happy is that we don't appreciate the things we already have, where we are at in life, and instead focus all of our energy, time and resources building what we don't have.

None of us knows whether we will ever get to that future. We are busy building today. The most valuable asset when you get to that future is the memories that you created by living every moment of your life over the years. Start living to the fullest today – right now!

The last thing you want is to regret all the time you had and did not enjoy it while on your death bed.

### ***Step 6 Fewer expectations***

According to research, it is evident that happiness is based on whether things are going better or worse than expected, and not necessarily how well they are going.

So many expect to make it big in life that when it happens, the joy and happiness in their life diminishes. The secret to being happy is to get over your expectations. Realize that life is dynamic – there are times when things work out as planned, and there are other times when things don't go according to plan. In that sense, every single success – big or small – is a delight.

Let's consider an example where a child was given a pile of horse manure by his parents, who wanted to test his level of optimism. Suddenly the

child's eyes were filled with so much delight, and he dived into the pile and started digging.

When his parents asked him what he was doing, he said, "With this much manure, there must be a pony in here."

Just imagine how disappointed the child was when he couldn't find the pony.

When your expectations are low, the horse manure as a gift may just leave you very happy. The truth is that when you lower your expectations so much, you are setting yourself up for happiness. This is one of the best ways to have something to be grateful for when things turn out to be good than you expected.

When you don't have expectations, then you don't risk disappointment. When you don't expect people to be good to you, you will be appreciative when they change their behaviors and treat you even with the least level of kindness. If you want satisfaction, have fewer expectations, but if you are looking for improvement, then you need to up your expectations.

The trick is that you have to be willing to manage aspirational gaps – the gap between what is and could be, what you have, and expect. Happiness is about managing your expectations adequately.

### ***Step 7 Affirmations***

There is a saying that we are what we think. Everything that we think is phrased in words. This means that there is power in every word we use to talk to ourselves whenever we are in thought.

So, why is it that you don't use your words freely to your advantage?

Positive affirmations go a long way in creating a positive change in your life. You can use positive affirmations to switch from a negative mindset to a more positive one. You can use positive words to gain more clarity about a certain situation and steering you towards your goals.

Here are positive affirmations that will bring you happiness in your life;

- The universe is in support of me
- I am more than enough
- My heart is open and ready to radiate love
- Everything I need is right here right now
- My dreams will come true one day

When you use these words, your mindset shifts towards growth, and that greatly impacts your happiness level. Try it today and cultivate that culture – you will be amazed how transformed your life will be.

### ***Step 8 Confidence***

Every day, people ask me why I am so happy. The very first thing I tell them is that it is because I love who I am and am confident in what my life purpose is.

Are you in love with your life? Are you confident about your purpose in life?

One thing you need to understand is that happiness and confidence go hand in hand. Unfortunately, many people consider happiness something transient – experienced when they treat themselves to the best dinner or the best dress or spa treatment. This is something that will pass in a split second, and you are back to square zero.

Real happiness comes from a deep sense of wellbeing and trust, peace, and satisfaction. It comes from a different place than it reaches your eyes and paints a smile on your face. The truth is that confidence forms the foundation for all our happiness – making us feel safe, secure, and with a purpose. It makes us feel loved and respected.

If you were asked to write what would make you happy, what would it be? Many people would talk about money, cars, children, freedom, power, investments, homes, among other material possessions.

What you need to realize is that YOU and YOU alone are responsible for your happiness. It is in knowing who you are, what you consider important, and how to get it. In short, confidence is what will help you get ALL you want – everything that will make you happy. It is through the confidence that you will have the drive to go after your goals, improve your sense of self-worth, and help you understand that you deserve happiness.

## **One last word**

Indeed, happiness does not work in the way we have perceived it in the past. The truth is that it operates in a reverse manner. When you complete a marathon, you become happy compared to when you eat a bowl of ice cream. When you raise your child right, you become happier

than winning your video game. When you successfully start a business and struggle to make money, you are happier than purchasing a new dress.

Do you want to know the funny part? All of these activities are quite unpleasant. Even though your efforts and struggles may fail at some point, you are happier because they are meaningful moments of your life. There is pain, anger, despair, and struggle, but yet at the end when we finally make it, we look back and smile with so much joy.

Why is that?

Because it is such things that allow us to be our authentic selves, when we pursue things that bring out our true selves, we become happy irrespective of the pain and negative emotions that come with it.

This explains why you will find people happy in war and others sad at a wedding!

It is not completing the marathon that makes you happy. The truth is that happiness comes as a result of accomplishing a long-term goal. It is in knowing that you gave it your all to raise your children right. It is not about money – it is about beating all the odds with the people that matter the most in your life.

When you try too hard to be happy, what you are saying is that you have not yet inhabited your ideal self. In other words, you are not aligned with the values and principles you wish to uphold.

If you are going to be happy, you have to find that happiness within you and know that you are enough! When you decide to pursue what is in you actively, happiness will occur in your life. It does not matter where

you are at in life; there will always be something more to do for you to be extra. It is because your ideal self is just around the corner.

It is not enough to just dream big. You have to do something about those big dreams. When you make the first move to pursue your passion and life's purpose, you start to feel the joy and satisfaction of the whole process. It will inspire you to go further.

Today, choose to let go of all imagined results and start going after the life you want and deserve. Get your ass off your comfort zone and start living.

Don't try too hard to be happy, just be.



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