

## **Journey of Happiness**

The purpose of life is to remain happy and peaceful and make others happy and peaceful. Happiness is a journey, not a destination. We are in charge of our Happiness. Not anybody else. There is no better time to be happy right now. So let us be happy now.

Depending on physical mental and spiritual states of a person, there can be three levels of happiness i.e. pleasure, joy and bliss. In **Pleasure**, happiness is sought from the outer world, it is short lived and physiological & instinctual. Pleasure is sensual experience and is perceived in eating good food, listening music, enjoying fragrance & good visual input, sexual pleasure etc. The substrates for pleasure are dopamine(DA) and serotonin,(Se) while driving force is catecholamines. These all are brain chemicals: neurotransmitters. **Joy** is mixed as it brings happiness from inner and outer world, it is longer lasting and psychological. Service to mankind, success, money, awards, achievements and simple spiritual practices lead to joy. In addition to DA, Se, NA; Vasopressin, prolactin and oxytocin are substrates for joyful activities as well as social recognition and bonding, leading to joy. **Bliss** is where mind ceases and consciousness becomes identified with the universal consciousness, achieved by mindfulness practice, yogic ascent and meditation. It's a state of being. Main substrates here are endorphins, GABA and endocannabinoids & no more dopamine, serotonin. These three levels are tamasik, Rajasik and Satvik..... Body, mind & spirit.

Happiness can be measured with neuropsychological testing, advanced EEG, fMRI and PET scan. Different components of happiness are found in different areas of brain e.g. laughter responses are generated in pre-frontal cortex. Good events activate rostral anterior cingulate and amygdala etc..

Happiness of a person is determined half of the times by his/her genes (20%), circumstances (10%); monetary status (affluence) and health (20%). Rest half of the happiness really comes from morality, attitude, relationship management & spirituality of a person. Some people are born happy, a gene effect. Oscar wilde said correctly "Some cause happiness, wherever they go, others wherever they go". Circumstances do pass away. They cause temporary effect on over all life happiness level of a person. Money is important and needed for security, for education & standard of living. However more money & more success can't bring more happiness. In fact they take away morality, spoil relations & bring insecurity. Physical health is important. Ill health cannot allow us to remain in happy state.

To remain happy, health is vital so eat right, do exercise, get enough sleep, and learn to relax, laugh exhaustingly and love abundantly. Proper exercise, massage is good .Walking, running, gym, swimming is good exercise. Resistance training and weight lifting are good for muscles. Yoga and pranayama are excellent for physical health and mental strength & bliss. We must thank our PM Shri Narendrabhai for promoting Yoga at a global level. Food increase happiness level e.g. dopamine level can be increased by apple kauncha seeds, serotonin by banana, oxytocin by chocolate and endorphines by chilli pepper. Medical measures are psychological counselling and mood elevators and in future gene therapy might be available.

We have to improve relationships with our spouse, children, parents, friends and all people at our work place. We need to spend quality time with children and friends. We need to love our spouse, be honest and develop deep understanding. Give them freedom. We need to love our people, help them and forgive them if they hurt us.

By observing morals, one can be happier. These should be supplemented with wisdom and courage. Do not criticize. Do not compare yourself with others. Share love & things that we possess. We

have to let go our ego on small or big issues. We should watch our thoughts and emotions and improve them for better.

All these measures have their own limitation and depend on external world to some extent, while effects of spiritual practices are long lasting.

Cultivating 5 virtues can fill our lives with happiness & abundance. These are gratitude, appreciation, forgiveness, acceptance, kindness & compassion. Appreciate people for their smallest favours. Gratitude and appreciation can change our lives miraculously. These simple things will fill our lives with abundance and grace. Use soft & kind words always. Speak truth always.

Forgiveness is the important key to happiness. First to forgive is the bravest. Similarly ask for forgiveness if you have hurt someone. Be kind & help people. Help them in whatever way you can accept that you can't change so many things. Accept willingly. Acceptance is a great virtue. These along with humanity, justice & altruism can create plentiful Joy.

5 mental processes control our inner peace and happiness. These are attachment, thoughts, desires, ego and attitude. To remain in bliss, we have to cut down our attachment and control and purify quality of thoughts. With our thoughts we create our own universe and our future, because each single thought affects each and every cell of our body. Next we need to reduce our desires, check our emotions and turn them for positive. And above all our attitude should be positive. Life is 10% what happens to us and 90% how we react to it. Its all in our attitude how we react to any situations. We have to be polite and cut down our ego. Ego is our biggest enemy. So is anger. Forgiveness is the antidote to anger. Forgive people if they hurt you. Kindness is more important than being right.

Religion opens the door of happiness & peace. So follow religion, maintain ethics, forgive others. Spiritual path is the final path; so do spiritual reading, do prayer and chanting. Do mindfulness

meditation, vipassana, Samayik, pratikraman, Kayotsarga etc. types of meditation to achieve highest state of happiness. Righteous knowledge, righteous faith and righteous character are the three important keys of happiness. Meditation is the master key. It allows us to purity over thoughts, emotions & desires. It allows us to sublime our ego & attachment. So we must meditate daily.

So we should remember that it's not easy to find happiness in ourselves, but it is not possible to find it elsewhere. The road to success is different from highway to peace, bliss and longevity. If you really want to be happy, then just be yourself and have inner experiences. There is no way to happiness or peace, happiness or peace is the ways.

So the formula of Happiness :

Stop Comparing	Stop Expecting	Stop Criticizing
Start Sharing	Start Helping	Start Loving
Give & Forgive	Count Blessings	Enjoy Every Moment
Learn Music, dance, art	Read Great Books	Do Sport Activities
Do Gardening	Appreciate people	Thank Heart fully
Learn creativity	Be with nature	Enjoy Travelling
Accept Limitations	Do Yoga Daily	Do Exercise
Do Prayers	Do Chanting	Meditate Daily