

## Journey to Happiness and Peace

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The purpose of life is to remain happy and peaceful and make others happy and peaceful. Happiness is a journey, not a destination. There is no better time to be happy than now!

Depending on mental and spiritual states of the person, there can be three levels of happiness ie pleasure, joy and bliss. In pleasure, happiness is sought from outer world, its short lived and physiological. Pleasure is sensual experience and is found in food, music, visual input, sex etc. The substrates for pleasure are dopamine and serotonin, while driving force is catecholamines. Joy is mixed as it brings happiness from inner and outer world, its longer lasting and psychological. Service to mankind, success, achievements and simple spiritual practices lead to joy. Vasopressin, prolactin and oxytocin are substrate for social recognition and bonding, leading to joy. Bliss is where mind ceases and consciousness becomes identified with universal consciousness, achieved by mindfulness practice, yogic ascent and meditation. Main substrates here are endorphins, GABA and endocannabinoids. These three levels are Satvik, Rajasik & tamasik.

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..

Determinants of happiness are genes (20%), circumstances (10%), money (20%), morality and spirituality (50%). Oscar Wilde said "some cause happiness wherever they go, others whenever they go."

The keys to happiness are physical, moral, religious and spiritual.

To remain happy, health is vital so eat right, do exercise, get enough sleep, learn to relax, laugh exhaustingly and love abundantly. Proper exercise and food increase happiness level e.g. dopamine increased by kauncha seeds, serotonin by banana, oxytocin by chocolate and endorphines by chili pepper. Medical measures are psychological counselling and mood elevators and in future gene therapy might be available. Actually, Mathematics of happiness is entirely different.

By observing morals, one can be happier. This along with wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, altruism and spending time with children & friends would help immensely.

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

Religion opens the door of happiness. So follow religion, maintain ethics, forgive others, do spiritual reading, do prayer and chanting. Do mindfulness meditation, Patanjali raj yoga and various other types of meditation to achieve highest state of happiness.

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.