

Lesson 1: Happiness

Who doesn't want to be happy?

Most people do but some shun themselves from happiness, for others happiness can be illusive. The truth is that happiness is a state of mind not a personality trait. So then you ask how does the happiness I desire become a state of mind. The answer is attitude. A positive mental attitude attracts happiness and a negative mental attitude attracts unhappiness. So the next questions are how and why?

Abraham Lincoln said, "It has been my observation that people are just about as happy as they make up their minds to be." This is a very true observation. The happiness you desire begins first with your state of mind - your mental attitude. If you are feeling negative about your circumstances whatever they may be then guess what your circumstances will continue to be negative. If you are feeling positive about your circumstances even if they are not particularly favorable you will be positioned to rise above your circumstances.

Happiness is a state of mind you can control but learning how to control it is perhaps an exercise that is easier said than done. The lesson then is to learn how to exercise your state of mind - your mental attitude. For some the exercise begins with baby steps whereas for others a simple decision is all that is required. You can simply choose to not allow the events of your days, anticipated or that have already occurred to rob you of your happiness. When you choose to keep your happiness meter in check you will find to your delight that your attitude toward the events of your day will magically be altered in that they will appear to be less annoying or menacing than they were previously. In fact you will find that you will have a most productive day and may be inclined to ask yourself why you don't do this every day.

A strange synchronicity occurred while I was writing this lesson. Beautiful instrumental music was playing in the background and near the end I heard the words, Are You Happy?

You have the power within you to attract or repel happiness with anyone in your circle of life. However, happiness begins not only from within but it begins right at home. When you find yourself either being repelled or repelling someone in your home environment take a moment to collect yourself. Open your mind to new possibilities, a new way of thinking and perceiving the situation.

Most often you are either repelling a family member or a family member is repelling you because your personalities are clashing but they don't have too. The lesson to remember is that opposites attract and like repels in this manner. When two people in the home environment are opposite in personality they can become irritable with one another only when the right to exercise their individual personality is being dominated by the other. In other words your mate or your children must be recognized for their own distinct character traits and appreciated for those traits as well.

Now the same goes for those who are like in personality and have a strong tendency to repel each other. You know, my wife bugs me (which may be true!), or my husband drives me up the wall (which may also be true). The point is that like personalities will by the nature of their being have a strong tendency to over react to the other. In other

words, they will react to the other based on how they react to themselves thereby making the assumption that the other person will react likewise. The resistance becomes intolerable and somebody or something has to give.

In either of these cases, the giving has to start with just one of the two which will ultimately affect the other in a positive manner. If you, dear wife or mother, insist on running the ship your way then expect to have resistance. However, when you stop and take into consideration that your spouse or your offspring have their very own identities and their own approaches to the matters of life you will be way ahead of the game. When you lighten up and allow the other members of your family to just be themselves you might be surprised to find that they are not the enemy. The same goes for you too dear dad or father. No one is the exception to the rule.

Now you are probably wondering if I am practicing what I preach. You bet! It took years for me to learn how to recognize and appreciate my spouse for who he is not who I perceived he should be. Men need space to and they need to be allowed to express themselves in the home. My husband likes to have quiet time all to himself to do whatever he likes to do whether I perceive it being productive or not. Through trial and error over the years I have learned to appreciate his personality rather than to make unreasonable demands on him. The ability to communicate effectively is your greatest asset.

The same goes for my husband too, he had to step up to the plate and recognize me for who I am and appreciate my personality rather than criticize me for my personality. It's an ongoing process but with time and commitment it gets easier and easier to blend our separate strengths and weaknesses into a harmonious relationship while still allowing ourselves to be individuals with the freedom to express our individuality.

Whether you choose to have a positive mental attitude or a negative mental attitude either attitude will affect your outer circle of life. The kind of friendships you attract will be in exact proportion to your mental attitude. Your friends will either be a good influence on you or a not so good influence on you just as you will have the same exact influence on them. There is something to be said about being in the wrong place at the wrong time with the wrong people - it's the truth. Be careful of the friends you attract and as far as the friends go that are already in your circle of life make every effort to begin to display a positive mental attitude when communicating with them. One of two things will occur, you will either part ways or your friend will begin to think positive too. In this case you both benefit.

Above all remember that you cannot be responsible for another person's behaviors nor can you "fix" them. The only person you can fix is yourself and when you fix yourself you inevitably affect others through your positive mental attitude. However, you must remember that everyone has the right to choose their behaviors regardless of how wrong you think they are based on your own perceptions. The matter of perceptions can be dangerous territory and will be a topic of discussion in an upcoming lesson.

If you really want to be happy then by all means refrain from gossip. I am very serious because whether or not you believe it there is an immutable universal law in operation called the Law of Cause and Effect. When you allow yourself to indulge in gossip you are putting yourself at risk to experience the undesirable affects you will

attract back to yourself (Law of Attraction). Not to mention you may seriously damage another person when you openly engage in criticism when in truth you really don't know what the underlying factors are in that person's life. Maybe what they need is your friendship rather than your criticism. In all cases, two wrongs never make one right.

Just remember that the manner you don't like to be treated is exactly how anyone else doesn't like to be treated so think before you act or react. Try doing something positive beginning with your family first. Maybe you can stick a note of inspiration or encouragement where your spouse or child will find it later in the day. It could be something catchy but never should it be sarcastic. Imagine their surprise when they come across this much unexpected act of thoughtfulness on your part. Hopefully you won't be a day late and a dollar short but take the risk anyway. As it is said, "nothing ventured nothing gained." Do not resort to your preconceived anticipation of how that person will react. Just do it!

One last thing: In all cases and under all circumstances you are what you think. I repeat, you are what you think - always. And what you think will be returned to you because the same laws that govern the universe also govern the spiritual and mental planes equally. They will be manifested in terms of what you desire or what you don't desire and more of it, always proportionate to your thinking.

I sincerely hope you have enjoyed this first lesson. I'm assuming that since you took the time to read this lesson that you are interested in changing something about yourself and your circumstances. If so then I encourage you to come back and read all the upcoming lessons. I promise you will have embarked on a journey with me to understanding yourself in ways you may not have ever given thought too.

May the blessings of happiness prosper you in all your ways ~

Linda