

# Quest for happiness



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## Soul search

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hat does happiness mean to you?" I asked this question on a social networking site recently and surprisingly no two people gave the same answer. Happiness meant different things to different people. For one, it was getting in touch with a long lost friend and restarting from where they had left off. Another found happiness in being close to loved ones, whereas a few found it in being pampered, in being spoiled and even in being updated about their friends.

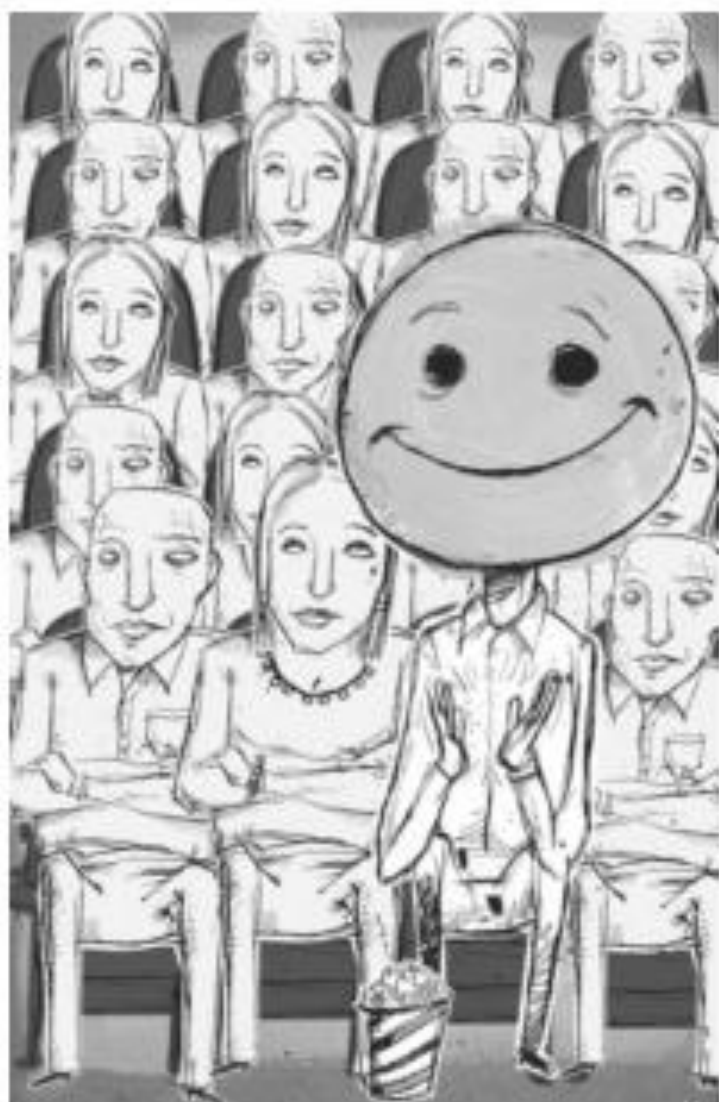
It is interesting how all of us derive happiness from so many different sources. For some of us it comes from other people, whereas for others the source is internal. Yet happiness is a state which all of us constantly strive to be in.

The desire to be happy is almost universal, yet the way we fulfil this desire usually varies. Happiness is relative in terms of the fact that what gives us happiness now may not necessarily be a source of happiness later. When achieving something for the first time, we usually are elated, but every time that success is repeated the degree of happiness we derive from it goes down. We keep raising the bar. I don't think there can ever be a universal and permanent definition of happiness. Yet in fact we always have permanent sources of happiness if we look within.

The simplest mantra to happiness is — just be here and now. When we are in such a state, neither are we carrying the baggage from the past to bog us down nor do we have any expectations from the future. Being in the here and now is being completely aware of the present. Our complete focus is on current happenings, our behaviour and reactions. This makes it very easy for us to feel emotion in its purest form, especially happiness.

Some people dedicate their happiness to someone else's perception of them — will others approve? What will they say? For them it is all about looking good in the eyes of others. Their entire focus of life, relationships and success is based on what a neighbour, colleague or usually an insignificant other will think and say about them. For them being happy about their child's good scores is dependent on what their neighbour's child scored. Rather than being proud of their child for his/her good performance, their focus is on the first rank that their child did not get. In this constant comparison they lose out on most of the wonderful opportunities that their life provides. Happiness is not what others think of you, it is what you feel within.

Then there are some who don't permit themselves to be happy yet keep striving for it. They need a solid reason to be happy and most often their pursuit of happiness just remains a pursuit. They keep telling themselves, 'I will be happy when I own this' or 'when I have achieved this' — always waiting for a goal to be happy and as soon as they achieve what they had planned, their focus moves on to the



next goal. In the process they don't enjoy the journey towards the goal or the goal itself. Happiness is never the goal; it is the journey and what that journey turned you into, what you learnt from it.

Another category of people are those who keep working on becoming better than the others, believing that it will make them happy. These people want to be superior to everyone around them and they usually do manage to achieve this on the professional front but when it comes to their personal relationships and the relationship they share with themselves, they lack in superiority and the richness of some very basic and beautiful feelings. This state eventually robs them of

happiness.

There are many other such categories and people who want to find happiness when the truth is that happiness is everywhere if we choose to see it. It is our outlook towards ourselves and our lives that decides how happy we will be. In fact the more we look for happiness, the more we won't find it.

Another important way to ensure your happiness is to have clear ideas and priorities. Introspect and figure out what truly gives you happiness. Is the neighbour's viewpoint so necessary? Are the so-called goals so very important that they take you away from the basic and essential experiences of life? Is it so necessary to always be number one? Happiness is not the same as perfection, superiority and success. Nor do you need to find it.

Anything and everything can make you happy. An unknown child smiling on the road can make you happy; just having friends could make you happy; the safety and security of a home and family could make you happy. In fact, the anxiety that we so often use in our electronic communication could also trigger happiness.

Think about it!

**Happiness is not same as perfection, superiority and success. And you do not need to find it. Anything and everything can make you happy**

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