

Being Happy

David Tuffley

*Pleasure is spread through the earth
In stray gifts to be claimed by whoever shall find.
~William Wordsworth*

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Introduction

True happiness, lasting happiness can be achieved through a process known as Self-Actualisation, or Self-Realisation. This is a natural state and within the reach of all human beings. It comes from having satisfied all of one's human needs.

This is the kind of happiness that cannot be obtained through the acquisition of things. The fleeting gratification in receiving goods or services is not true happiness. That is an illusion created by our

global consumer society. I am not suggesting that you should avoid having nice things, just that they are not a source of true happiness.

Truly happy people are Self-Actualised (SA) people, so called because they are a much fuller expression of their unique human potential than non SA people. The state has been given many labels, *enlightened* or *awakened* being two of them. In Zen, it is described *Satori*.

While you cannot order happiness on demand, you can create the right conditions in yourself for Self-Actualisation to occur. This eBook describes what these conditions are, and how you might go about creating them. The rest is up to you.

Maslow

The humanistic psychologist Abraham Maslow is well-known for his ideas on a hierarchy of human needs. Basic needs must be satisfied before higher order needs are felt. The hierarchy is represented as a pyramid, with the basic needs at the pyramids broad base, and with self-actualisation at the apex. A Self-Actualised person has found a way to satisfy all of his or her lower needs and has cultivated the conscious awareness of their highest self. They allow this awareness to express itself more fully in their lives.

The achievement of Self-Actualisation is recognised by Maslow as a human need, so in a sense it is everyone's birthright to be happy.

The need for Self-Actualisation asserts itself once we have satisfied the lowest-order needs for food, shelter, sex, then middle-order needs for safety and security, then the higher middle-order needs for love and belonging. Above these is the higher-order need for self-esteem. The highest need of all, sitting like the capstone of a pyramid is the need for Self-Actualisation.

The annals of various religions tell us that a person can achieve enlightenment with only some or none of the higher and middle

order needs being met, and with only the barest of lower-order needs like food and shelter being satisfied. This is more difficult, requiring you to become an ascetic recluse and engage in mortification of the flesh in order to free yourself of these normal human needs. This eBook is not recommending this course of action. Our body is not an impediment to happiness. Quite the opposite, it is a great ally. We owe it to ourselves to take the best care of our body that we can by eating well, getting enough exercise and rest, and avoiding toxic and/or addictive substances.

Self-Actualised (SA) people, whoever they are and whatever the circumstances of their lives, tend to approach life in the ways described below:

Experience things fully, vividly, selflessly

Self-Actualised (SA) people throw themselves into the experiencing of something; concentrating on it fully, allowing it to totally absorb them.

The only way this can be done is to be (a) *mindful*, that is fully awake in the present moment and (b) fully *accepting* of the circumstances of that moment.

This is easier said than done because most of the time we impose judgment on situations and in the process of doing so, we alienate ourselves from it. Soon we are thinking we would like to be somewhere else.

In terms of achieving your full potential as a human being, mindfulness is about using an evolved part of your brain that many people do not use. It lies dormant, waiting for the command to awaken.

You can awaken this part of your brain simply by deciding (and following through on the decision) to observe the on-going activity in your own mind. Using a computer metaphor, you activate a monitoring program that watches what is going on.

Eckhart Tolle calls this a *new dimension of thought*. There is the part of you who thinks your normal thoughts, then there is the part that observes you thinking those thoughts. Previously there was only the thinker. Now there is the thinker and the observer.

Awakening the observer is an important aspect of becoming Self-Actualised.

Mindfulness also helps you to stop thinking so much about the past and the future by removing the dimension of time from your thinking.

In the Now you observe the world of phenomena in a judgment-free way. You accept it without mental resistance, understanding that this resistance is what prevents you from experiencing every moment as the best moment.

End of sample