

ATTITUDES REQUIRED

TO BE

HAPPY

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BE HAPPY

AN INTRODUCTION:

I. CONTENTMENT

A. Most of us seek something or someone on the outside to make us feel satisfied and complete, but contentment is not found out there. It is an inner experience, the word itself, "contentment," carries the implication of content - to be at home with what you already contain. Realizing this can save you a lot of misdirected energy and put you on a more fruitful path.

B. Most of us believe that we'll somehow achieve contentment *just as soon as* we get a better job, find more satisfying relationship, buy a bigger house, retire, or attain some other goal. Our society conditions us to think this way. But with this approach to life, contentment forever eludes us. We continually banish our contentment to another time, a different place, a better circumstance.

C. *"Contentment grows out of a willingness to surrender preconceived ideas and affirm reality as it is. Honoring 'what is' is just the opposite of living out of a 'just as soon as' mentality . . . This book is about the dance between what we want and what reality presents to us."*

—from *Contentment*

You don't need to be a sage sitting on a mountaintop to be content, but these days it does require some uncommon thinking. While the forces of modern life - rampant advertising, unabashed consumerism, the persistent push to achieve and acquire more - continually pique our desires and push us *outward* in our quest for contentment, this wise and beautifully written book guides us inward, to a deep understanding of true, lasting happiness.

D. Who does not want contentment? Yet in our modern lives there is an epidemic of discontent. It is the tragedy of our times that no matter what we achieve, how much money we earn, or how many blessings come our way, more is never enough. For ever desire you fill, another one always follows just on its heels. You may own a house in Aspen and make more money than God or Bill Gates, but still the feeling of fullness keeps slipping away. That's because contentment is not the result of what you have or even what you do in life. Contentment isn't out there. Well, maybe there are small tastes of it out there, but those tastes stop satisfying after a short time and then you hunger for more. And try as you might, no amount of possessions, power, or prestige satisfies for long.

1. Consider a time when you were really content. Nearly everyone can think of moments when their inner yearnings were filled. Maybe you were watching your child eat his first birthday cake or take her first steps.

What a satisfying, fulfilling experience! Perhaps you were out fishing on a tranquil mountain lake or walking peacefully in the woods, far away from the deadlines and pressures of work and the insistent nagging of chores around the house. Contentment can also occur in work - those times when you seem to fall into rhythm with your tasks. Instead of glancing up at the clock every few minutes, you engage fully with what you are doing, and time slips by. Attainment of a goal may bring contentment for a while.

But such moments fade all too quickly. Often you don't know that you have walked across a corner of heaven until days and weeks later, when you become nostalgic for what is missing. Then you try to reproduce the conditions that led to your contentment. You bake another cake or return to the woods. But it's never quite the same.

Contentment is hard to maintain. These days, how does one realize inner stillness, satisfaction, and peace of mind?

Our society teaches us that the only reality is the one we can hold onto. It values outer experiences and material possessions. Accordingly, we look for contentment "out there" and live with a "just as soon as" mentality. "Just as soon as I get my work done, I can relax." "Just as soon as I can get married, I will be content" or, conversely, "Just as soon as my divorce comes through, I will be content." "Just as soon as I earn enough money I can spend time with my kids." "Just as soon as I get a nicer boss, a better job, a bigger house, a new car" And so our contentment slips through our fingers like quicksilver-another time, a different place, a better circumstance.

E. WHAT IS CONTENTMENT?

The dictionary informs us that it is the experience of being satisfied, of not desiring more than you have. This is a starting point, but it leaves out important elements of contentment, including the most essential aspects from a psychological perspective. What does it feel like to be contented? What are the conditions that produce contentment?

Recall again a satisfying time when everything seemed right: there was no need to alter what you were doing, who you were with, or where you were. During such moments, life is rich and full. The mingled buzz of worries, fears, and anxieties that so often circle your head like a swarm of hungry mosquitos is quieted. Instead of judging or second-guessing yourself, you are satisfied just to be. Even that old familiar voice of desire, the disturbance in your mind that cries like a needy and demanding child, *I want, I want, I want*, is somehow stilled. Contentment feels peaceful as the moonlight at the bottom of a stream, tranquil amid constant change.

1. Now. Here. This is it. Contentment gives you a different experience of time; your mind stops wandering into the past or the future. As modern people, we waste so much time wishing we were in a different circumstance, which of course is quite impossible. You could call contentment being in love with the moment, not just dutifully accepting it like an arranged

marriage but passionately, rapturously embracing the eternal now as your soul mate.

Can you be a "strong" person? It's not a matter of strength, but of choice and affirmation. You can choose to be a "strong" person, but you can't be a "strong" person if you don't choose to be one.

When this happens, you can either become frustrated and redouble your efforts to push reality around, or you can learn to accept, affirm, and even dance with what is given. This book is about the dance between what we want and what reality presents to us. It's all in the dance.

2. We live in an age of "I" consciousness. Humans dominate the physical world in a way no one thought possible. Our buildings and our cities are monuments to ourselves. Just look at the skyline of a major metropolis, the grandest buildings are symbols of human power, status, and control. Earlier in Western history, the tallest building was always dedicated to the divine. But as we've become skilled at controlling external reality, we also become filled with "God-almightiness."

Not too many years ago, the Shell Oil building in London was assembled floor by floor until its height exceeded that of the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral. There was an outcry in the newspapers and tremendous discussion that an old age had passed and a new secular age of commerce and business was replacing traditional values.

3. We equate freedom with the greatest degree of individuality and the maximum number of choices. Just as an experiment, see what it is like to live with fewer choices. This weekend, rather than going off to consume something, choose to soothe yourself by being quiet, taking a walk in nature, or arranging a simple dinner with friends.

Take an inventory of your life, and look for ways to simplify. Will a new car really bring you more contentment, or will it stretch your budget so you have to work much harder? How long will it be before its "newness" wears off? How about moving to a different house - will the opportunities for enjoyment be offset by worries and innumerable projects? Our doing, just for the sake of doing, is a major factor in modern discontent.

4. As part of our hunger for natural contentment, we romanticize pioneers, cowboys, and the "good old days." You can pass a shopping mall or restaurant and see a covered wagon, a plow, or a windmill displayed as decoration. Western movies or stories set amid quaint covered bridges in Iowa or located in the Alaskan wilderness resonate with modern people. This reflects our nostalgia for a golden age.

There is virtue in simplifying your life. It is worthwhile to look for ways to improve your diet, shorten your commute, lower your stress, reduce your debt, and set aside more time for friends and family. However, please be aware that efforts to simplify will ultimately fall short of making you content. Although

it may be your fondest wish, there is no going back to the Garden of Eden. Consciousness can only move forward, never backward.

Even with an organic garden and home-baked bread, modern people find themselves . . .
of doing or having. Rearranging me on the outside cannot produce contentment - at least not for long. Contentment is an inner experience resulting from your level of consciousness.

5. Anytime someone is irritating us out of our wits, we can assume that the cause of our irritation does not lie solely in the other person. At the time, it seems abundantly clear that the source of our discontent is "out there" - the store clerk who was rude, the unappreciative co-worker, the negative parent, or the self-centered mate. It's true, the qualities we project can be found "out there" - but they are not a conspiracy to undermine our contentment. Reeling in our projections won't eliminate stupidity and evil in the world, but it can help us sort out inner and outer realities and thereby eliminate a great deal of discontent.

II. WHO IS HAPPY - WHY?

A. Happy People Like Themselves

During the 1980s, no topic in psychology was more researched than the self. By 1990, four thousand scholarly articles a year - more than triple the number of twenty years ago - were exploring the roots and fruits of one's sense of self. Many showed the dividends of high self-esteem, as exhibited in a willingness to agree with statements such as "I'm a lot of fun to be with" and "I have good ideas." People who agree with such statements are less vulnerable to ulcers and insomnia, less likely to abuse drugs, more independent of pressures to conform, and more persistent at difficult tasks. When the going gets tough, those with strong feelings of self-worth keep going.

Most striking, however, is the connection between low self-esteem and psychological disorders, especially depression. Vanderbilt University psychotherapy researcher Hans Strupp notes that "as soon as one listens to a patient's story, one encounters unhappiness, frustration, and despair which find expression in diverse forms of psychopathology including psychosomatic symptoms, neurotic symptoms, and maladaptive character styles . . . Basic to all these difficulties are impairments in self-acceptance and self-esteem.

Listen to Norman, a Canadian college professor recalling his depression: "I [despaired] of ever being human again. I honestly felt subhuman, lower than the lowest vermin. Furthermore, I was self-deprecatory and could not understand why anyone would want to associate with me, let alone love me . . . I was positive that I was a fraud and a phony and that I didn't deserve my Ph.D. I didn't deserve to have tenure; I didn't deserve to be a Full Professor . . . I didn't deserve the research grants I had been awarded; I couldn't understand how I had written books and journal articles that I had and how they had been accepted for publication. I must have conned a lot of people."

Moreover, threaten people's self-esteem and beware their defensiveness. Put yourself in the shoes of the Arizona State University students who were walking along across campus when a researcher approached them to participate in a five-minute survey. You agree, and take a brief "creativity test." After then receiving the deflating news that "you have scored relatively low," the researcher asks you some evaluative questions about either your school or its rival, the University of Arizona. Would your sense of failure affect your ratings? The researchers, Robert Cialdini and Kenneth Richardson, found that it did. Compared to those whose self-esteem was not threatened, those who'd just botched the test gave higher ratings to their own school and denigrated their rival.

Other researchers extend the phenomenon: One experiment gave subjects a humiliating experience - accidentally knocking over a stack of someone's ordered computer cards (which were rigged to spill when the subject pulled out a chair to sit down). With their self-esteem temporarily wounded, the English-speaking Canadian subjects responded to attitude questions with increased hostility toward French-speaking Canadians. In another, Dartmouth College men who were made to feel insecure judged others' work more harshly. At Northwestern University, members of lower-status sororities were found to be more disparaging of other sororities than were members of higher-status sororities. The moral: People who feel, or are made to feel, insecure or unworthy will often re-establish their self-worth by putting others down.

1. In *Don Juan in Hell*, George Bernard Shaw anticipated the conclusions of countless research studies: "Hell is to drift, heaven is to steer." Summarizing the University of Michigan's nationwide surveys, Angus Campbell commented that "having a strong sense of controlling one's life is a more dependable predictor of positive feelings of well-being than any of the objective conditions of life we have considered." And the 15 percent of the populace who feel in control of their lives *and* feel satisfied with themselves have "extraordinarily positive feelings of happiness." Among these people, three in five - double the national average - report being very happy.

Psychologists have two basic ways to study the effect of any personality trait. One: Correlate people's scores on a measure of that trait with their other feelings and behaviors. Consider your own sense of personal control. Would you agree more that "I don't have enough control over the direction my life is taking" or that "what happens to me is my own doing?" That "the world is run by a few powerful people" or that "the average person can influence government decision?" Those whose responses to such statements reveal an "internal locus of control" typically achieve more in school, cope better with stress, and live more happily.

2. Compared to happily married people, unhappy couples exhibit far greater self-serving bias by blaming the partner when problems arise. In one survey, divorcing people were ten times more likely to blame the spouse for the breakup than to blame themselves. The findings go on, but enough, I am tempted to paraphrase Elizabeth Barrett Browning "How do I love me? Let me count the ways."

Many people object. They think of people who seem to despise themselves, who feel worthless and unlovable. If self-serving bias prevails, why are so many people self-disparaging?

Sometimes people's self-put-downs are subtly strategic. They elicit reassuring strokes. Usually, a remark such as "I wish I weren't so ugly" will at least elicit a "Come now. I know a couple of people who are uglier than you." Other times, self-disparaging comments, such as before a game or an exam, prepare for possible failure. The coach who extols the superior strength of the upcoming opponent makes a loss understandable, a victory noteworthy.

Even so, it's true: All of us some of the time, and some of us much of the time, *do* feel inferior - especially when comparing ourselves with those who are a step or two ahead.

Looking at all the dates Angela has, or all the honors Ian gets, can make their average friends feel klutzy. The deeper and more frequently we have such feelings, the more unhappy, even depressed, we are. And, as we've seen, lowered self-esteem can lead to a vicious judgmentalism.

Therefore, for most of us, "positive illusions" protect against anxiety and depression and sustain physical and mental health. We function best with modest self-enhancing illusions. We are like the new Japanese and European magnetic levitation trains, says University of Washington psychologist Jonathan Brown: We function optimally when riding high, just off the rails - not so high that we gyrate and crash, yet not so in touch that we grind to a halt. Most people do have a reasonably high opinion of themselves, and that fact of life goes a long way toward explaining why most of us are, indeed, reasonably happy and satisfied with life.

3. Happy People Have High Hopes.

Happy people enjoy high self-esteem, a sense of personal control, an optimistic disposition - and outgoing personalities. If "happy people are outgoing" sounds obvious, remember that's how most truths sound, once you know them. Likewise, told that optimism breeds cheer, you perhaps yawn. But the reverse also seems obvious. "Accustom yourself to the thought that the worst will befall you and that you will lose all you have," advised the French sage La Rochefoucauld. When things turn out better than expected, pessimists experience gladness; optimists more often live with disappointment - which would neatly explain the joy of pessimism, had things turned out that way.

4. Studies of the "I-knew-it-all-along phenomenon" reveal that, in hindsight, most findings seem like common sense, something you and I could have anticipated and explained. Told that people are attracted to others who are different from themselves. Joe Public responds, "You get paid for this? Of course people have different needs. That's why 'opposites attract'!" Told the truth - that studies show we are more attracted to those *similar* to ourselves, Judy Public reacts, "My grandmother could have told you 'birds of a feather flock together.'" (Does this hindsight bias itself seem obvious now that I've reported it?) Similarly, had it turned out that introverts are happiest, who could

easily rationalize that, of course! they are less stressed, more serene, more at peace with and by themselves.

Except it didn't turn out that way. Rather, in study after study, extraverts - sociable, outgoing people - report greater happiness and satisfaction with life. Robert Emmons and Ed Diener have repeatedly observed an extraversion-happiness link in their studies of American university students, as have Michael Argyle and Luo Lu in their studies of British students and Bruce Headey and Alexander Wearing in their national surveys of Australians. Paul Costa and Robert McCrae report the same with older Americans, among whom the "extraverts . . . show the *joie de vivre* that make many older men and women an inspiration to the rest of us."

The explanation seems partly temperamental. "Extraverts are simply more cheerful and high-spirited," report McCrae and Costa. Self-assured people who walk into a room full of strangers and warmly introduce themselves may also be more accepting of themselves. Liking themselves, they are confident that others will like them too. And such attitudes tend to be self-fulfilling, leading extraverts to experience more positive events. When researchers Keith Magnus and Ed Diener studied University of Illinois students, and restudied them four years later as alumni, they found that life had treated extraverts more kindly. Compared to introverts, extraverts were more likely to have gotten married, found good jobs, made new, close friends, and so forth.

5. Yes, work is both a bane and a blessing - but it's more a blessing. Or so it seems to those without work. People in almost every industrialized nation surveyed report markedly lower well-being if unemployed. Idleness may sound like bliss. Oh, to be able to escape the rat race and spend time sunbathing on a Caribbean beach, or curled up on the couch watching TV, or just vegetating. But as we'll see, when we get leisure time, many of us don't know what to do with it. After a time, inactivity becomes a curse as the empty hours tick slowly away.

A twenty-nine-year-old happily married father of two illustrates this. A year ago when business slowed, he was laid off as a packer in a publishing company. Since then, he has been receiving unemployment insurance and looking, and longing, for work: "I never much liked the job when I had it because there wasn't much to it except putting stuff in boxes and packing them up. But the people were nice and it was okay being there. Now I wish I had that job or anything . . . All I do all day is hang around. I stay home and the wife goes crazy; or I sit around with some other people on the block and there isn't anything to do. When I had the job, I felt like I was somebody - not much, but something. Now it's all a waste of time."

It's better to have work than be idle, but it's especially better to do work that satisfies. The turn-of-the-century Russian writer Maxsim Gorky anticipated the findings of many studies: "When work is a pleasure, life is a joy! When work is a duty, life is slavery." *Work* satisfaction impacts *life* satisfaction. (This is especially so for single people, who experience fewer of the stresses and satisfactions of marriage and family life).

University of Southern California psychologist Rena Repetti noted the effect of our work environment on our mental health when she studied the employees of thirty-seven bank branches. She found the more congenial and supportive the work group, the happier and less anxious the employees. For married couples, the satisfactions and stresses of work spill over into life at home. "When I've had a really satisfying day at work, I come home disposed to like and enjoy my family - and thus to end the day feeling blessed," reflected one man. Moreover, the social skills people learn in teamwork jobs can enhance family life. "From my job, I've learned how to relate more effectively with my husband," said an assembly team member. "It has really helped! After all, your family is a kind of team."

6. Through our work, we also identify with a community. My sense of community is rooted in the network of supportive friends who surround me on our department team, in the institution whose goals we embrace, and in the profession we call our own. This sense of pride and belonging in my group helps me construct a social identity.

Work can add *purpose* to our living. A vocation can be a calling to contribute something worthwhile, to leave a little legacy. "No task, rightly done, is truly private," said Woodrow Wilson. "It is part of the world's work." My own vocation - my purpose - is to advance truth and understanding through oral and written teaching. Others find meaning in designing or constructing products, in growing or distributing food, or in helping those in need of a service. Studs Terkel describes "the Chicago piano tuner, who seeks and finds the sound that delights; the bookbinder, who saves a piece of history; the Brooklyn fireman, who saves a piece of life . . . There is a common attribute here: a meaning to their work well over and beyond the reward of the paycheck." Happiness is loving what you do, and knowing it matters.

B. Happy People Are Courageous

Misery may love company, but company doesn't love misery. Although initially sympathetic and supportive, a depressed person's spouse and colleagues eventually tire of his hopeless attitude, the fatigue, the complaining.

Happy people, by contrast, are strikingly energetic, decisive, flexible, creative, and sociable. Compared to unhappy people, they are more trusting, more loving, more responsive. For example, as interviewers, they recall more of the positive behaviors of job applicants and rate them more highly than do unhappy interviewers. If made temporarily happy by receiving a small gift, people will report, a few moments later during a survey, that their cars and TV sets are working beautifully - better, if you took their word for it, than those belonging to folks who didn't receive a gift.

Happy people tolerate more frustration. They are less likely to be abusive and are more lenient. Whether temporarily or enduringly happy, they are more loving and forgiving and less likely to exaggerate or over-interpret slight criticism. They choose long-term rewards over immediate small pleasures. Given a chance to look at happy pictures (people laughing, playing) and sad

pictures (funerals, disasters), they literally spend more time looking at the brighter side. Sad people look more at the gloomy side of life, and prefer less upbeat people, stories, movies, and music.

Moreover, in experiment after experiment, happy people are more willing to help those in need. It's the "feel-good, do-good phenomenon." Those made to feel successful are more likely to volunteer as a tutor. Those who have just found money in a phone booth are more likely to help somebody pick up dropped papers. Those whose mood has just been boosted by listening to a comedy album are more willing to lend someone else money. Robert Browning had the idea: "Oh, make us happy and you make us good!"

Evidence also accumulates that, as the writer of Proverbs said, "a cheerful heart is a good medicine, but a downcast spirit dries up the bones." Emotions are biological events. Our body's immune system fights disease more effectively when we are happy rather than depressed. When we are depressed, the number of certain disease-fighting cells declines. Stressed animals and distressed or depressed people are therefore more vulnerable to various illnesses.

So, human happiness is both an end - better to live fulfilled, with joy - and a means to a more caring and healthy society. As Helen Keller wrote, "Joy is the holy fire that keeps our purpose warm and our intelligence aglow." That being so, it is time we ponder not only our physical and material well-being, but also our inner well-being.

To probe people's sense of well-being, researchers have asked them to report their feelings of happiness or unhappiness along with their thoughts about how satisfying their lives are. Like tangerines and oranges, happiness and life satisfaction are subtly different yet share much in common. People who *feel* happy also tend to *think* their lives are satisfying.

Sometimes researchers probe with a simple, single question. Imagine yourself one of the tens of thousands of Americans approached by survey research teams from the University of Michigan and the University of Chicago and asked: "Taking all things together, how would you say things are these days - would you say you are very happy, pretty happy, or not too happy?"

And "How satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days? Are you very satisfied? satisfied? not very satisfied? not at all satisfied?"

1. To the happiness researches, however, well-being is a state of mind. As we'll see in later chapters, our happiness depends less on our objective circumstances than on how we respond to them. "If you feel happy," writes research psychologist Jonathan Freedman, "you are happy - that's all we mean by the term." Moreover, if you can't tell someone whether you're happy or miserable, who can? Imagine that you felt, and told someone that you felt, very happy, deeply satisfied with how your life is going, and just plain grateful to be alive in this wonderful world. Would you not think it strange if someone said, "Sorry - you're deluding yourself; actually, you are miserable." Or imagine that you felt depressed, even distraught, but no one would believe you. Would

you not think people arrogant to presume to report your own emotions more intimately and accurately than you can? Surely the people who participated in these studies would similarly feel bewildered at researchers' refusing to believe their experiences.

Still, even if people are the best judges of their own experiences, can we trust them to be candid? People's self-reports are susceptible to two biases that limit, but do not eliminate, their authenticity.

2. The American dream of wealth and well-being from two angles, by comparing, at given points in time, rich and unrich countries and rich and unrich people. This leaves the clincher question: Over time, does our happiness grow with our paychecks? Rubik's experience suggests not, but is he the exception that proves the rule?

In the United States as a whole, the answer is clearly no. Since the 1950s, our buying power has doubled. In 1957, the year John Galbraith was going to press with his famous book describing us as *The Affluent Society*, our per person income, expressed in today's dollars, was seventy-five hundred dollars. By 1990, it was over fifteen thousand, making us The Doubly Affluent Society - with double the goods that money buys. Compared to 1957, we now have twice as many cars per capita. We have color TVs, VCRs, home computers, air-conditioners, microwave ovens, garage door openers, answering machines, and \$12 billion a year worth of brand-name athletic shoes. Indeed, most Americans now rate as "necessities" such things as frozen food, clothes dryers, car stereos, and aluminum foil. (Even as I write this our family's microwave oven is being repaired, and we are discovering that our one-time luxury has become a seeming necessity.)

With so much more of what money buys, are we happier?

In 1990, as in 1957, only one in three Americans told the University of Chicago's National Opinion Research Center they were "very happy." So: *We're twice as rich - not just 20 percent richer - yet we're no happier.*

If anything, to judge from a postwar rise in depression rates, we're more likely to be miserable. Among Americans born since World War II, depression has increased dramatically - *tenfold*, reports clinical researcher Martin Seligman. Twenty-five-year-olds today are much more likely to recall a time in their life when they were despondent and despairing than are their seventy-five-year-old grandparents, despite the grandparents having had many more years to suffer all kinds of disorder, from broken legs to the anguish of depression. Similar trends are evident in Canada, Sweden, Germany, and New Zealand, report psychiatric researchers Gerald Klerman and Myrna Weissman. Everywhere in the modern world, it seems, more younger adults than older adults report having ever been disabled by depression.

2. Do older adults simply forget long-ago depressive episodes? Apparently not, for the age difference persists when people report just their recent depressive symptoms. Well, then, do younger adults recall and report

more depression merely because it's now more acceptable to admit such feelings? Or is it because young adults are less likely to consider temporary despair as part of the normal ups and downs of life, something to grin and bear? If so, then defining depression by other criteria - being hospitalized for depression, the duration of episodes, and so forth - should eliminate the depression age gap. But no matter how we define depression, the finding persists: Today's younger adults have grown up with more affluence, more depression, and more marital and family misery. They also know more of depression's consequences - suicide, alcoholism, and other forms of substance abuse.

The same story holds for the social well-being of adolescents. Between 1960 and the late 1980s, America's teens enjoyed the benefits of declining family poverty, smaller families, increased parental education, double per-pupil school expenditures (in constant dollars), double the number of teachers with advanced degrees, and an 11 percent drop in class size. Simultaneously, their delinquency rate doubled, their suicide rate tripled, their homicide rate tripled, and the birthrate of the unmarried nearly quadrupled. While standing tall during the 1980s, believing a comfortable lie that all was well in a prosperous and militarily successful America, the uncomfortable truth was that social battles were being lost at home.

*We are never happy for a thousand days,
a flower never blooms for a hundred.*

Chinese Proverb

III. HAPPINESS IS RELATIVE TO OTHERS

A. Happiness is relative not only to our personal past experience, but also to our social experience. We are always comparing ourselves to others. And we feel good or bad depending on whom we compare ourselves to.

This simple fact explains why if you escape poverty your happiness increases, yet, paradoxically, societies do not become happier as they progress from relative poverty to affluence. Because what we perceive as a "need" is socially determined, those who live in richer places and times have a higher standard of comparison. Today's ghettos have more cars and TV sets than yesterday's suburbs, yet the continuing inequalities leave those with small pieces of the growing pie no more satisfied.

1. These "bawl players," as *Sports Illustrated* called them, illustrate a well-confirmed principle: How frustrated or contented we feel, personally, depends on who we compare ourselves to. How well a group as a whole is doing will influence its readiness to protest, to demonstrate, to strike. But our personal feelings of well-being hinge more on how we're doing compared to our peers - our fellow workers, our friends, our extended family. Such comparisons influence our expectations. And as University of Guelph researcher Alex Michalos has shown, happiness shrivels with the gap between what we have and what we want, what we have and what we expected to have by now, what we have and what our neighbors have.

2. Comparing downward can have its darker side, though, sometimes causing us to relish another's downfall. In experiments, people who have just experienced failure or been made to feel insecure will often alleviate their self-doubts by disparaging a rival group or person. It helps to have others to look down on, a fact that helps explain the persistence of prejudice. In *The Devil's Dictionary*, Ambrose Bierce defined happiness as "an agreeable sensation arising from contemplating the misery of another." For an ardent Chicago White Sox fan happiness is the White Sox winning *and* the Cubs losing. As Gore Vidal remarked, "It is not enough to succeed, others must fail."

But let's look on the brighter side. The processes of adaptation and social comparison reassure us that if forced to adjust our living standards downward, we could regain our sense of well-being. Imagine ecology's prophets are right - that the world's bulging population is stretching the earth's carrying capacity by depleting the remaining oil reserves, threatening the atmosphere, and requiring us to restrain our use of forests and fossil fuels. If the modern ideology of unending progress, of continuing improvement, of ever-more luxury were to crash against a wall of ecological limits, what then?

3. It's a given - to live is to grow older. And that means all of us will likely look backward with either satisfaction or sorrow, and look forward with hope or dread. But actually, which periods of life should we most dread? Marguerite, her family's matriarch and a former world traveler and French professor at my college, still exudes mental vitality at age ninety-six. She challenges her retirement home neighbors to consider: "Is old age a reward or a punishment?"

When asked which periods of life are least rewarding, people often say that adolescents and the elderly are the unhappiest. In adolescence, we are assailed by mood swings and insecurity, parental power and peer pressures, social anxieties and career worries. As one thirteen-year-old moaned, "Being this age isn't easy, you know. I feel like an adult trapped in a child's body." Being old doesn't look like much more fun. In later life, our income shrinks, our occupation is snatched away, our body deteriorates, our recall fades, our energy wanes, our family members and friends may die or move away, and the great enemy, the Grim Reaper, looms ever closer. Small wonder that we presume the teen and the over-sixty-five years are the worst of times.

But there goes another myth, for they are not. Actually, people of all ages report similar feelings of well-being. Arizona State University psychologists William Stock, Morris Okun, and their colleagues boiled down the results of more than a hundred studies and discovered that less than 1 percent of the variation in well-being was related to age. Ronald Inglehart found the same in his amassing of the 170,000 interviews in sixteen nations. As the figure on the next page illustrates, age differences in well-being were trivial.

Does happiness, then, align itself more with any particular age? Do young adults have more fun? Surprisingly, and definitely, not.

More than a hundred studies confirm that for adults of all ages, and certainly for older adults, one predictor of happiness is health and physical fitness. More exactly, ill health - chronic pain, depleted energy, or threat of death - can undermine our well-being. Listen to Frank, a terminal cancer patient: "It is hard to be twenty-two and wondering and questioning why you can't be happy and why you have to die. People teach us many things but not how to cope with dying. It's scary and so lonely."

B. Happiness - Male or Female

1. Another much-studied demographic predictor of well-being is gender. What do you know about the happiness of women and men? A little quiz can help you find out. True or false:

- a) Men report higher levels of well-being than do women.
- b) Women report more happiness and fulfillment if their lives feel rushed rather than free and easy.
- c) Full-time homemakers have happier husbands.
- d) Women are more likely than men both to become depressed and to express joy.
- e) Men are more likely than women to attempt suicide.
- f) Women tend to feel somewhat tense, irritable, or depressed during the two or three days before the onset of menstruation.

In Western societies, which sex enjoys greater well-being? Is it men, because of their greater social power and higher incomes? Is it women, because of their greater capacity for empathy and intimacy? The answers are reminiscent of research on age and well-being: Knowing that someone is a man or a woman gives us little clue to the person's self-reported well-being. One statistical digest of 146 studies found that gender accounted for less than 1 percent of people's differing well-being; another review of research reported that women expressed only slightly greater happiness. Data amassed from the 1980s sixteen-nation surveys illustrate: Men and women are equally likely to report being "very happy" and "satisfied or very satisfied" with life. The same finding appears in a new study of 18,032 university students surveyed by sixty-eight researchers in thirty-nine countries around the globe.

2. Actually, middle-class housewives who feel *less* free - whose lives feel full and rushed rather than free and easy - express greater feelings of happiness and fulfillment. For these women, reports sociologist Myra Ferree, too little to do can be more of a problem than too much. Carol, a vigorous forty-six-year-old, paused to reflect: "I don't buy our culture's materialistic idea that work is meaningful only if compensated. My life is filled with challenge - nurturing a family, yes, but also giving volunteer leadership to church and community organizations. It adds time pressure, but my life is richer - both more interesting and more meaningful - than if I were either playing bridge or working only for money."

Although women's employment and divorce rates have risen together, employed women are not less satisfied with their marriage and family life. National surveys reveal that the combined stresses of motherhood and employment do erode some women's well-being by overloading their circuits. This is especially true for thirtysomething working mothers, who often feel most keenly the pressures of competing demands. But compared with married women who do not work for pay, those who do are no more or less likely to say they understand and are understood by their husbands. Moreover, their husbands are no more or less happy with their marriages.

Obviously, some husbands aren't happy about their wives working. "It's okay for both husband and wife to work, but only until one or the other gets pregnant," lampooned Sam Levenson. Still, when both spouses have jobs, the average marriage doesn't suffer. Typically, if married women feel supported in their endeavors, both by colleagues at work and by their husbands' attitudes and participation in child care and housework, they thrive. They enjoy good health and self-esteem, and feel positive about their spouses and their lives.

CONCLUSION:

The Christian life is the only real answer to happiness. The Christian is the bulwark of our nation. The Church and family is the glue which holds us together. A knowledge that things are right with God and family- brings real contentment.

The goal is of Heaven where there will be no heartaches, tears, sickness, and suffering. Let us enjoy each day to its fullest, love each other, love the brotherhood. Let us point our face toward Heaven - run the race - finish the course and keep the faith, and win the crown. May our family circle not be broken at the Judgment.

Be Happy!

BE HAPPY

A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones” (Prov. 17:22).

“*A merry heart doeth good like a medicine*” – this bears witness to the mental factor in man’s health. A true philosophy of life is of great benefit to man’s physical and spiritual well-being. One of the decisive conditions of bodily health is a strong integrated personality, stemming from a glad and gay, hardy and handsome mind.

A cheerful heart is a good preventive and a good corrective treatment—better than medicine. A contented and pleasant disposition protects one against disease; for the mind has a powerful influence over the body. If there are non-physical factors which cause disease, then there must be non-physical factors to cure it.

The merry heart is the life of a man and the prolongation of his days. Inasmuch as the whole man is involved in the prevention and cure of illness, then the emotions are included, too – and more and more this is being appreciated.

The Bible, in commenting on joy, the emotion so essential to man’s good interest, further says:

A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.

–Prov. 15:13

He that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast.

–Prov. 15:15

Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God: for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

–Psa. 43:5

They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

–Isa. 35:10

But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing . . .

–Gal. 6:4

The Creator wants us to be happy. He starts us in life with a certain supply of health, energy, raw brain and raw materials, which He wants us to use to our joy. One of His most positive and repeated commands in the Bible is, “Rejoice.”

“Like a medicine” – this testifies to the medical approach in treating man’s ills. Although the Bible, a text book on right living, chiefly concerns itself with the mind and soul of man, it does recognize the value of medicine in spite of its primitive state in that day. Luke was a physician (Col. 4:14). In the story of *Who’s My Neighbor*, we learn that the Good Samaritan treated the robbed and injured man by pouring in oil and wine (Lk. 10:34). The wine was an antiseptic and the oil was a curative. The apostle Paul issued this command: “Use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine infirmities” (1 Tim. 5:23). This injunction, as we see, was based on a medicinal need.

Psychic influences have a decided power in producing illness. The tune in one’s heart helps to determine the tone of one’s health. Many of the bodily ills are emotionally caused.

Everyday observation has taught us that the body is affected by the mind. All of us have seen a fatigued physique caused by a broken spirit, physical nausea produced by worry, and the loss of appetite rooted in sorrow.

Outstanding physicians estimate that the ailments of three-fourths of the people in convalescence and one-half of them in acute illness originate in the mind rather than in the body.

Modern science has proved in the laboratory that mental moods have power to produce disease and poor health.

Experiments show that what goes on in the brain has a bearing on what goes on in the arteries. Scientific tests point to the complex role of the nervous system in accelerating *arteriosclerosis* and the triggering of heart attacks. In one experiment in which two groups of rabbits were fed exactly the same low-fat diets, the scientists stimulated with electrodes a certain part of the brain in one group. This gave off tiny electrical discharges which stimulated nerve impulses. The results were very revealing – in three months, the stimulated group’s cholesterol had risen three times as much as the other group, and the fat deposits in the arteries had accumulated four times as much.

The general conclusion is that the anxious, easily-excitable, over-competitive person is more prone to heart attack than the calm person.

Much of man’s *fatigue* is due to psychological reasons. Physicians report that the most common complaint they hear from their patients is, “I’m so tired.” A chronic fatigue afflicts millions of people where there is no evidence of either physical malfunction or insufficient rest. Many tired people are just tired of their way of life – they need a cheerful contented disposition, something better than medicine.

Halitosis may be produced by many physical factors: dehydration, sinuses, teeth, lungs, stomach and intestines. But when nothing physically wrong can be found, halitosis may be due to strong emotions. Bitter hate, fiery anger and undisciplined worry produce an unpleasant breath.

Personality disorders may be caused by a guilty conscience. The one who decides to cheat on society suffers the fear of being caught - it disrupts the serene life and destroys health. A clear conscience is of great medical benefit in guarding the mind against neuroticism.

The list of diseases related to the emotions is a long one to which we can add *asthma, hay fever, sinusitis, headache, peptic ulcer, ulcerative colitis, constipation, diarrhea, hiccoughs, rheumatoid arthritis, backache, angina pectoris, hypertension, hives, eczema, cerebral strokes of apoplexy, and depression*. In the presence of these emotions, we should not assume that the development of any of these

Nervousness is not so apt to come from the nerves as the thoughts in the mind which affect the nerves.

Sometime ago, I was the guest for lunch in the home of a friend, a doctor of medicine. As we were eating, he stated that he had seen thirty-two patients that morning and that only one of them was really sick. Of course, what he meant was that only one was organically sick. "A merry heart" would go a long way in curing the most of them, for presently they have no organic problems; but shortly, unless those patients are made anew in their minds, functional disorders will develop.

Being endowed by the Creator to live life realistically, we were also given the fatiguing emotions of fear, anger, anxiety and sorrow. The fact that we were supplied with these qualities is positive proof that there is a time for them to be used. The Bible says:

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose
under the heaven . . . a time to weep, and a time to laugh . . . a time
to love, and a time to hate; a time to war, and a time of peace.

—Ecl. 3:1-8

Inasmuch as anger and fear were designed for our good, then we should not pervert them to our destruction. They were intended to be only emergency powers to exert the whole body for its protection. Increased blood circulation and added glucose, produced by rage or fear, strengthen the muscles to be used in struggle or flight; and the peripheral ischemia and the decrease in the blood clotting time lessens the consequences of the wounds that may be produced in combat. It is obvious, therefore, that nature has supplied us with emotional reactions to fill a needed function.

But they are not always needed. In everyday living, these emotional responses of stress and strain to exaggerated danger signals are to no avail. There is the build up again and again of this temporary strength to no use, for there is no flight or struggle - just the dissipation of nervous energies to the gradual weakening of the ordinary strength one possesses. So what nature intended to be a blessing is misused and made a detriment.

High-strung emotions may appear when there is no external cause to justify them, when there is only an internal conflict in which man battles himself; in such cases, peace of mind would have great therapeutic power - more than medicine.

Though there are exceptional circumstances which call for exceptional emotions, God's gift to man for general living is joy, as stated by Solomon:

And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labor, it is the gift of God.

—Ecl. 3:13

We have read that a doctor many years ago frequently prescribed cheerfulness for his patients, saying that it was better than anything he could get at the drug store. "Mirth is God's medicine," says a wise writer, "and everybody ought to bathe in it." It was a favorite saying of Bancroft, the historian, who was a vigorous old man at ninety, that the secret of a long life is found in cheerfulness and in never losing your temper.

It would be a dark hour if we should decide that we cannot achieve a reasonable degree of happiness. Life would become a mere plodding toward the grave in which there is little more than the lifting of one foot in front of the other.

Music gives a kind of romance to an army on the march. It neither shortens the road nor throws out the rocks, but it saves the soldiers from tiring so quickly. The sound of music has a tendency to make them less mindful of the trying ordeals.

So it is with joy; it is music in the heart which makes man less heedful of the stress of the journey.

The cheerful disposition protects health, prolongs life, adds warmth and vibrance to personality, increases success, stimulates life and multiplies our pleasantries. It does too much for us not to achieve it, and especially when it is within the attainment of every person.

Thus we propose in the remaining chapters to help man find that which is better than medicine – a merry heart.

"Be good to yourself." In most instances, both the speaker and the listener are unaware that this philosophy is a basic principle of true psychology and true religion. But it definitely is; therefore if you would reach the hale and hearty, contented and cheerful life, be good to yourself.

Several years ago, a farmer passed from this world leaving his widow and five little children. One world had ended for them, but she opened up a new one with the view that they had God above them, the soil beneath them and each other at their side; and thus with this combination she concluded that they would make it. The years passed and they more than made it. Each child made such

a mark in the world that it attracted wide attention. As interest grew in this intriguing story of success, mothered and nurtured in the hills, a magazine sent a reporter to interview the gracious and God-fearing, humble and hard-working mother to learn the secret of her accomplishments, to ascertain how she with so little gave her children so much. She answered the question by saying, "Being I don't have much education, I just had to use my head." She had never had a course in psychology, but, in using her head, she taught them by word and deed the graceful and stalwart conditions of health and happiness, well-being and joy. She cultivated the following:

1) Love. She had love in her heart which she manifested toward them. In turn they loved her and each other. She had no hate toward anybody nor harbored any bitterness because of the blow that had befallen her; and they, too, grew up free of animosity and resentment.

2) Cheerfulness. She was cheerful and happy in her tireless toil. They could see it because she sang much as she worked. And there was play too. Life was held in balance with the right proportion of each. There was an old organ which was often the focal point as they gathered in the parlor to play and sing. But that house was filled with a sweeter melody than any organ music - the music of their hearts.

3) Work. She knew no rule for success would work unless they did. She put inspiration into her children and took perspiration out of them. They had to work to live. She had read in her Bible "that if any would not work, neither should he eat." She believed in work and so had her parents before her. Work came naturally just like breathing, and a willing mind lightened it. There was neither grumbling nor complaining nor self-pity. They did not feel that fate had slapped them with an unkind hand by demanding work. The day was a period of glad labor and the night a time of sweet rest. Rest is pleasant only to those who pay the price of work for it.

Each morning sees some task begun,
Each evening sees it close;
Something attempted, something done,
Has earned a night's repose.

-The Village Blacksmith, Longfellow

4) Optimism. The optimism of her heart unaffectedly and softly gleamed in her face like warm welcome rays of light breaking across yonder hills in the east. As this farm widow broke the soil and planted the seeds, she saw nutritious bread - not wasted toil; and as clouds appeared she saw silver linings that would water her crops - not destructive times percentage wise to more than justify the bright outlook storms. Sometimes she was wrong, but she was right enough on life. Every project was a work of hope. Each time she placed the eggs under a setting hen, she entertained the fond expectation of a good hatch of little chicks; and she and her children would discuss this expectancy with excited and vibrant anticipation. With hope standing as doorkeeper of their hearts, fear was not permitted to enter.

5) Religion. It might have been hard for this mother to eloquently define religion, but there is one thing sure - she knew how to eloquently demonstrate it. Her glory, however, consisted not in never stumbling, but in always rising every time she fell. Most of her time was not spent sitting in sackcloth and ashes, but in lighting fires in the hearts of her children. She instilled in them the idea that religion is not just a cloak to wear on Sundays, but an armor to wear every day; and it shielded them against the "slings and arrows" of opposing forces. The remarkable and victorious thing is - ironclad as they were - they hardly recognized the "slings and arrows" as such when they came. They were poor in money but rich in faith - faith-rich in God and man. It was their shield against the darts of doubt and dismay.

She could have become her worst enemy, life-shortening and happiness-shattering, by crawling into a self-made prison of despondency and helplessness, gulping tranquilizer after tranquilizer which would have doctored the symptoms but not the cause. Instead, she befriended herself, prevented the cause, by *helping, loving, accepting and adjusting* herself.

If you would attain the good life of robustness and vigor, peace and contentment - if you would be free - you too must begin with self and do the same things, as follows:

Help yourself. The Creator expects man to help himself. The lower creatures are largely finished by nature, but man is different - he must finish himself. This being true, then heredity counts the least in man of all the creatures, because conscious uplifting forces count the most. At birth, his brain is least finished, his growing state longest, his capacity for improvement greatest and his proneness to social impressions keenest. All of this means that man is a creature of responsibility put at the helm of his own ship, to guide it as he sees fit, in life's still or stormy sea.

Wordsworth said it this way:

So build we up the being that we are.

I think it is distinctly clear that human happiness is the stake in this moulding and building up endeavor we call living. This is why so many people in every stratum of society are finding life grossly unenchanting. They were entrusted with life but have only partially formed it.

Their difficulties stem from something deeper and closer home than mere externals. As long as they stand in their own way, every pathway will be obstructed.

As long as a man stands in his own way, everything seems to be in his way.

-Henry Thoreau

No matter what fate has dealt you, just step out of your way and it will be amazing how little the other obstacles will hold you back.

So nigh is grandeur to my dust
So near is God to man,
When duty whispers low, 'Thou must,'
I shall reply, 'I can.'

Love self. While we seek to obey the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matt. 22:39), let us bear in mind that it is based on the idea that man should love himself. The trouble with some people is they despise and disrespect themselves. Their frustration is a symptom caused by an allergy to themselves. They see too much in themselves they do not like.

A man can stand a lot as long as he can stand himself.
—Axel Munthe

The self-love presupposed in the above commandment is not indulgence in selfishness, conceit and glorification as one coddles and pampers himself. That is self-abasement, while self-appreciation is the right regard for one's character and ideals, emotions and powers.

Man will drive himself into neurosis if he perverts self-love into a futile pursuit in which, like a dog chasing his tail, he does little more than chase the tail of his own selfishness. The time will come in which it will be hard for him to distinguish whether he is doing the hunting or being hunted. While he is running after something, he will come to feel that something is pursuing and closing in on him. You are not going to find peace chasing yourself.

We must accept the fact that different people have different abilities and diverse characteristics. The Bible teaches this in the Parable of the Talents (Matt. 25:14-30) and we see it in everyday life. It is a reality and we should face it. If we cannot do what we would like, we can still find the good life by doing what we can. The little bird does not grumble because it cannot bark; for it can sing and it does so enrapturingly.

There is nothing to gain in fretting about what we do not have. If we would have peace, let us accept ourselves as we are, make peace with our limitations, and start from there a program of self-betterment. History shines with the names of those who did this.

Our problem is not to remake ourselves, but to do the best we can with what we have.

Fanny J. Crosby, one of the most famous song writers of all times, became blind when she was only six weeks old. She accepted herself and conquered the handicap. In later years she commented: "I am the happiest soul living. If I had not been deprived of my sight, I would never have received so good an education, nor have been able to do good to so many people." This was better than groping the streets of beggary and dismay.

Robert Louis Stevenson never saw a well day in his life; but he refused to bow to low spirits and left to the coming generations a rich legacy of literature.

Glenn Cunningham, the champion miler of his day, in early life was crippled in a schoolhouse fire. The professional opinion was that he would never walk again. But his dauntless courage proved them wrong. He went from following a plow, leaning on it as he walked, to tireless exercises and eventually to a place in athletic renown. He suffered a misfortune, recognized it, and then redeemed himself.

Sir Walter Scott was lame, but it did not deter him. He accepted it gracefully, and his biography reveals an enthusiastic, radiant, well-integrated being.

History's roster of the greats has paid little attention to personal handicaps.

Never - never - never accept the paralyzing doctrine of fatalism, reducing yourself to a robot!

Accept yourself! And be on your way!

The common problem, yours, mine, every one's,
Is - not to fancy what were fair in life,
Provided it could be - but finding first
What may be, then find how to make it fair
That is not a very different thing.
My business is not to remake myself
But to make the absolute best of what God made.

—Browning

Adjust yourself. The fortunes of life are so changing that we are constantly called upon to adjust ourselves. And blessed is the person who can do it.

There is a tendency on the part of humanity to long for things to be otherwise than they are. "If only I could be placed in another setting, how much happier I would be!" "Oh, that I had . . ." These are the disheartening words of the malcontents. But a change of settings will only change the place, not the person; and where one is is not as important as what he is. Climbing from the valley to the mountain peak is not the solution to maladjustment.

There is a lesson for us in the fable of the beetle and the weather-cock. "How fine," said the beetle, "to be up there; what splendid views; how clear the atmosphere!" "Yes," said the weather-cock, "and if you were up here, you would know how hard the wind blows."

Some people make themselves miserable and worry themselves sick about their situation. Sometimes a situation cannot be changed to the better, but you can better yourself by changing yourself to fit it. For instance, if you are caught in a storm-cloud, there is no need to fuss about it; accept it and try to see the rainbow.

A little boy with quivering lips and moist eyes took his broken arrow to his mother and begged her to mend it. "I'll try to fix it, darling," she said, "But I'm afraid I can't do it." He anxiously watched her for a few minutes and bravely said, "Never mind, mamma; if you can't fix it, I'll be just as happy without it."

That is one of the secrets of tranquility - adjustment. That boy showed much more maturity than his years.

A philosopher who was passing through a store filled with articles of luxury and taste made himself content with this simple remark: "Lord, how many things are in the world, that Diogenes hath no need."

Some of the greatest success stories have their settings in the most trying situations. Some of the renowned works of literature were penned by men in prison: some of O. Henry's best stories, *Pilgrim's Progress* and others. These men had adjusted themselves.

There is a plant in Palestine known as the Rose of Jericho, which flourishes under the most diverse and adverse circumstances - in the hot desert, in the rocky crevices, by the dusty wayside, in the rubbish heap. Even more amazing, the fierce sirocco will sometimes tear it from its place and fling it far out to sea, and there, driven by the storm and tossed by the salt waves, it still lives and grows. How does it manage to do it? Acceptance. It accepts the circumstances under which it must live.

Happy people are like that.

Life is still what you make it.

So be good to yourself.

Years ago a man of deep insight, a country philosopher in our little village, said of a disgruntled miserable man in the community: "Sam is rather tightly fenced in from every direction by Sam. If Sam ever finds peace and satisfaction, he is going to have to tear down the fences and break out of Sam."

Sam's ailment was "I" trouble. About all he could see was Sam. This is why he fenced himself in by Sam, but the plot was too small for him to be happy - just a prison for his own soul.

Oh, doom beyond the saddest guess,
As the long years of God unroll,
To make thy dreary selfishness
The prison of a soul.

--John Greenleaf Whittier

The unhappiest person and the most self-centered person I know are one and the same person. An exaggerated consciousness of self habitually focuses the attention inwardly until outside interests have little appeal - the result is boredom.

Getting out of self will take the emptiness out of your life and fill it with rapture that enhances health. It will fill your forenoon with sublimity, your afternoon with a psalm and your night with a prayer.

Forenoon and afternoon and night, — Forenoon
And afternoon and night, --
Forenoon, and — what!
The empty song repeats itself. No more?
Yea, that is life: make this forenoon sublime,
This afternoon a psalm, this night a prayer,
And Time is conquered, and thy crown is won.

--E. R. Sill

The Master Teacher stated a long time ago that man lives his real self where his treasures are. He put it this way: "For where your treasure is, there

will your heart be also.” (Matt. 7:21). No poised felicitous person lives merely where his body occupies space.

Years ago Robert Southwell said, “Not where I breathe, but where I love, I live.” Of course, if you love where you live, then he would have lived where you live. He breathes where you breathe. He walks where you walk. He talks and talks with them, laughs with them and cries with them. What happens to them, happens to him. Your real self is extended to where your devotions or treasures are.

Nothing in this world but a person can live outside itself. We can become so absorbed in an outside interest that we live in it rather than ourselves. Our love for another or a cause can become so great that we live within that person or that espousal rather than self. A mother said, “The happiest days of my life were when my children were little. They needed me to do thing for them they could not do for themselves. I lived for my children.”

Happiness comes from losing yourself. Jesus nineteen hundred years ago laid down this principle for the abundant and enjoyable life: “He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it” (Matt. 10:39). Jesus ran his own lost and found column; and there is more to it than watches and diamonds, dogs and cats - man’s happiness is there. Some have lost it. Others have found it. He that finds his life within himself shall lose it; but he that loses his life outside of himself shall find it.

The world’s greatest book on psychology is the Bible. The greatest cause in which you can lose yourself is God’s religion, for it includes all the principles which can take you out of your selfish self and extend you to God and others.

You can find a new life of delightful satisfaction in losing yourself. You must lose yourself in a game to be thrilled by it. You must forget yourself in music to enjoy its rapture. You have to put yourself into your employment to find it pleasant and satisfying. You have to go out to your friends to enjoy their friendship.

As the little flower seed never becomes beautiful and fragrant until it breaks out of itself and grows up and blossoms, so it is with man.

If you would be well and happy, break out of that shell of self-centeredness, grow up and lend a helping hand to humanity.

Look up! and not down;
Out! and not in,
Forward! and not back;
And lend a hand.

--Edward Everett Hale

Helps in getting outside of self.

A lady came to me with these words: "I'm not awfully miserable, but I'm not as happy as I should be. Can you help me?"

I handed her a piece of paper and a pencil and said, "I want you to think of the unhappiest, most maladjusted person you know. Now, I want you to make a list of the traits that describe that person."

This is the list she made: "1. Thinks the world revolves around her. 2. What she does for others is for her sake and not theirs. 3. Self-conscious. 4. Touchy. 5. Spiteful. 6. Unforgiving. 7. Unfair. 8. Envious. 9. Shirks duties. 10. Gossipy. 11. Divisive. 12. Hateful. 13. Critical of others. 14. Wishes to be appreciated without doing that which commends appreciation and to be loved without loving."

"Not a very pretty picture. No wonder she is miserable. Of course, this is an extreme case, the unhappiest person you know, but it does give us a lot of diagnostic facts. She is unhappy because of the person she is. So in order to achieve the prettiest life into which the most sunshine pours, develop and cultivate the opposite traits of that poor woman. Now let us make a list of the opposites, supporting each with a scripture you can memorize and quote to give you strength in making that trait a part of yourself."

1. Think of others. (Phil. 2:4).
2. Help others for their good rather than for the praise of men. (Matt. 6:1).
3. Esteem others so much that you have a consciousness of them. (Phil. 2:3).
4. Be longsuffering and forbearing. (Eph. 4:2).
5. Bless them who mistreat you. (Matt. 5:44).
6. Be forgiving. (Matt. 6:15).
7. Be fair. (Matt. 7:12).
8. Keep self free of envy. (1 Cor. 13:4).
9. Shoulder your duties. (Eccl. 9:10).
10. Refuse to spread gossip. (Lev. 19:16).
11. Be a peacemaker. (Matt. 5:9).
12. Love. (1 Cor. 13:3).
13. Be tolerant of others. (Matt. 7:1).

14. Expect love and appreciation from others only in keeping with what you sow or deserve. (Gal. 6:7).

THE BEST WILL COME BACK TO YOU

Give love, and love to your heart will flow,
A strength in your utmost need;
Have faith, and a score of hearts will show
Their faith in your word and deed.

For life is the mirror of king and slave,
'Tis just what you are and do;
Then give to the world the best you have,
And the best will come back to you.
--Madeline Bridge

Some little practical suggestions.

As her eyes sparkled with appreciation she commented: "This is wonderful and I'm sure it will give me a new lease on life and a new experience of happiness - and I've had it all the time at home in my Bible. Do you have any other suggestions to offer?"

"Yes, here are a few simple ones; and as you do them, it will start your mind to working in the right direction and you can see and increase such activities.

1. Think of others. Begin by putting up this little memo in your home: 'Others live here, too.' It can help the whole family.

2. Do good unto others. Clean up the house for the sick lady down the street. Give your seat on the bus to some elderly lady. Get joy out of cooking what your husband and children especially like. Attend weddings, funerals and showers, and so express yourself as a blessing to others. Send greeting cards to your friends.

3. Praise others. See good in them and let them know you feel that way.

It is in a certain degree to be a sharer in noble deeds to praise them with all our heart.

--La Rochefoucauld

4. Pray for others. Dear God, I know that Mary is having a hard time. Her burdens are heavy. Her husband is sick. It takes a strong woman to stand up under her load. Give her strength proportionate to her needs. Help me to help her. Make me thoughtful to encourage her . . .

5. Be hospitable. Invite others into your home. Have a party for them. Be different from the egocentric woman who had the tea party for herself.

A TEA PARTY

I had a little tea party
This afternoon at three.
'Twas very small --
Three guests in all --
Just I, Myself and Me.

Myself ate all the sandwiches,
While I drank up the tea;
'Twas also I who ate the pie
And passed the cake to me.

6. Laugh at self. This shows that you have grown out of the narrow confines of childhood and can see yourself from where others see you. It makes life more pleasant; for egocentrics cannot be laughed at - it is agony. Children enjoy laughter, but not if it is directed toward them. Deficient humor is an exhibition of immaturity.

You can find health-invigorating happiness just outside the door of yourself. The self-centered person tries to leap on happiness; but when he lands, it is not there. The reason is every leap is within himself. Spring outside yourself, and there just outside the door you will find happiness.

Who seeks within for happiness
Will find it not.
It stands a guest unheeded at thy very door today,
Open thine eyes to see,
Thine ears to hear,
Thy heart to feel,
The call for touch of human sympathy;
In answering this there is
And close outside thee sits
The guest thou soughtest in vain within.
Adapted — Caroline S. Woodruff

On two sides of an office, the walls are made of antique bricks. Those bricks were a scattered, haphazard, useless mass which had been taken from the chimney of an old house and dumped at random on the ground. A useless accumulation of weakness and ugliness became a useful structure of strength and beauty. The bricks in the wall are the same as those on the ground. The difference is in singleness and unification. The possibilities were there all the time. All that was needed was to bring the loose pieces together and mortar them into a single structure. Ugliness was transformed into beauty and weakness grew into strength; and the thing that did it was the putting together the scattered fragments. In their fragmentariness, those bricks were nothing; but in their harmonious togetherness they are a strong wall.

You cannot achieve internal unity without reconditioning yourself on the inside. If you would prevent yourself from being pulled apart, you must renew the inward man. The Bible says, "But though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day" (2 Cor. 4:16).

The development and maintenance of a whole being is inward and spiritual, not outward and physical. The true, psychological principle involved is expressed in this Scripture: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Matt. 4:4). A sustenance which nourishes the inward man is essential to peace and happiness.

Strength and riches are to be found within us.

There is nothing that makes men rich and strong but that which they carry inside them. Wealth is of the heart.

--John Milton

In achieving wholeness of personality, it is necessary that you live your life around a great center. This will focus and consolidate thoughts and deeds which otherwise would be scattered, and in so doing prevent personality from breaking apart. Some achieve a small degree of integration out of such centers as a job, business, golf, fishing, hunting, and many other material aspects of life. To lose yourself in a person, occupation, cause, sport or game is wonderfully satisfying, because it is then that you forget yourself and all the fractional parts that are pulling you in opposite directions.

But a stronger center than anything that is human or material is needed to unite and integrate life's scattered and discordant urges into a strong, solidified personality. Man's aims and determinations can never be grander or higher than the center that inspires them. This is why the greatest integration can be achieved by having only God as the center in the innermost part of man's being. It is there that man's basic views of life and his spiritual resources for living are formed; and there is no center to form them like God, his unifying principles for living today and his solidifying hope for tomorrow.

Many distraught people have asked, "Don't you think a change of environment would pull me together?" It can be helpful, but no environmental change alone can integrate the loose ends of personality. A change of circumstances may encourage the unification of some distracting thoughts; but the happy, coordinated self can never be achieved apart from a great center around which whole purposes and worthy resolutions can be formed.

The Psalmist said, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help" (Psa. 121:1). God can help. "I will lift up mine eyes" from the low, earthly, personality-destroying distractions of hate, envy, jealousy, resentment, greed, covetousness, vengeance, inferiority, selfishness, unfairness and defeat to Him who can help me overcome them. By looking up, I can see my way out.

Isaiah said, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee" (Isa. 26:3). Stop your negative thinking. Keep your thoughts off your troubles and discordant notes of life. Do positive thinking. Keep your thoughts on God and the strengthening and consolidating things which emanate from him, like love, forgiveness, unselfishness, helpfulness, kindness, industry, meekness, honesty, purity, victory and things of good report. Do everything you can for yourself and trust God for the rest without fretting, and the discordant notes of life will blend into a symphony - and that is music.

To live content with what you have;
To seek elegance rather than luxury, and refinement
rather than fashion;
To be worthy, not reputable, and wealthy, not rich;
To listen to stars and birds, babes and sages with open heart;
To study hard;
To think quietly, act frankly, talk gently, await occasions,
hurry never;
In a word to let the spiritual, unbidden and unconscious,
Grow up through the common -
This is my symphony.

-William Henry Channing

Associate with the people who calm and unite you. Solomon said, "Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go; lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul" (Prov. 22:24, 25). A little leaven leavens the whole lump.

Mary, in speaking of Jane, said: "I must break off my associations with her. She tears me up."

Jane's faultfinding, envy, gossip, gloom, defeat and hate (though draped in pretended love), were making a nervous wreck of Mary.

You can be in the presence of some people and it seems they are a soothing balm for your troubled heart. But others seem to turn loose a cyclone within you.

Spend some time everyday reading great therapeutic thoughts from the Bible and secular books. This will help to renew the mind by making you the sum and substance of your thoughts. Solomon said, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7). You will be united or divided, happy or miserable, victorious or defeated, depending upon what you think.

Here are a few of the many Scriptures with great strengthening and consolidating power:

Phil. 4:19
Psa. 23:6
Psa. 55:22
Prov. 16:32

Get yourself going in one direction, if you would find peace and health.

One Sunday afternoon years ago, a greatly distraught woman visited. She had reached the place in life where she was an unhappy bundle of raw nerves. She said, "I am pulled to pieces. It is killing me. I haven't had a peaceful day in three years."

Then she told of a life of sin: She felt the urge to go back to her old life; but there was also the desire to go free, to find a higher and nobler life. She had a longing to travel opposite directions, to go both north and south at the same time. The conflict was tearing her to bits, to such an extent that she had reached the point of desperation.

She went with us to church that night and the preacher spoke on Directional Living. Toward the end of the sermon, she wrote this note and handed it to my wife who was sitting beside her: "I've decided not to kill myself. On the way home, I'm going to throw away this pistol in my purse." Well . . . that was the first we had heard of the pistol.

While not many reach the verge of self-destruction, all of us have the problem of moving in one direction.

Our peace of mind is dependent upon one-directional living. The reason we cannot have peace of mind is because we have too many minds. We have one mind for one thing and another mind for something else. Those opposing minds have to be unified, as discussed in the previous chapter, *Pull Yourself Together*. Happiness and health, are achieved in traveling whole-heartedly in one direction without regrets.

A farmer, Henry Johnson, said, "I was once a dissatisfied discontent man whose health was breaking fast. I never found any peace until I got off that merry-go-round and started out in one direction.

All of us know at least a little from first hand about Henry's experience, because Henry's problem is society's problem - going in circles and getting nowhere. It is frustrating to meet yourself coming back.

All great men and women have had to wrestle with themselves to travel one way.

Ruth, one of the loveliest women in the Bible, had to make a decision for directional living; so it was a question of which way. This is never easy - the thing that harasses us is we want to go both ways.

After Ruth's husband had passed this life, her mother-in-law who was a widow and a believer in God decided to return to her native land of Judah. Ruth decided to go with her rather than return to her people and her gods - she was heathen. Naomi, the mother-in-law, tried to dissuade her but to no avail. In her

insistence on going - one-directional living - she spoke and left for posterity some of the sweetest and most beautiful words to be found in any literature:

Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God:

Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me.

-Ruth 1:16, 17

We know that Ruth surely had clashing desires to travel opposite directions. One the one hand, there was the longing to return home; for what she loved most was gone, her husband. On the other hand, there was the desire to go with her husband's widowed mother; for there was a feeling of devotion and duty to her and by living up to it, she could find peace, happiness and satisfaction. We never find happiness by shirking what we conceive to be our duties. Ruth settled the problem by coming up with a fixed purpose; and by carrying it out, she found a new life of happiness and health, peace and usefulness. She became one of the most loved women of all ages, and a woman of such greatness that one of the books in the Bible was named after her. Centuries later, her fame is known the world over. Wherever the Bible goes, the story of Ruth and her fixed course of life go.

The apostle Paul, as great as he was, also had to personally deal with the opposing pulls of life. He said:

I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

-Rom. 7:21

He, as all successful and happy persons are, got himself organized into a sufficient pattern of life to travel one direction. He could say, "This one thing I do" (Phil. 3:13). It did not bar him from troubles and perplexities, but it did give him the strength of a directional drive to meet his problems and that made for peace and satisfaction. He could say:

We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.

-2 Cor. 4:8,9

Whatever it was that kept this man from distress, despair and destruction, is what all of us want, for every life has its own troubles.

To attain resolute living with a minimum of distractions, some trait, desire or purpose must become dominant over the others. This resolves the problem of dissenting pulls or inviting crossroads. What we mean by this is

there are various wares competing for our time, talent, loyalty and money. It may be the competitive struggles between morality and immorality, respect and disrespect, thrift and extravagance, industry and idleness, goodness and retaliation, self-approval and self-condemnation, assuring faith and wrecking doubt. Though many things are moral and legitimate, they cannot be had together. In that case, pick the thing you want the most and forget the others.

In harmonizing our conflicts, a scale of values is involved. Man must decide the kind of person he wants to be and what he wants in life and then get going on the road that leads there - that is how simple it is. This is why the Bible says, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness" (Matt. 6:33). Something needs to be first. Seeking first God and His kingdom and His righteousness and all that this involves provides a predominant pattern for life which saves one from all frustrations and tensions of crisscross, haphazard and reverse travels. Happiness comes from making something so outstanding and dominant in your life that you sacrificially and conscientiously give yourself to it without regrets.

Many persons have a wrong idea about what constitutes true happiness. It is not attained through self-gratifications, but through fidelity to a worthy purpose.

—Helen Keller

But this necessitates the ability and courage to say *no* as well as *yes*. The happy life is the result of positive thinking; but we cannot think and act positively without saying *no* to that which interferes with it. Much of man's unhappiness today revolves around his inability to pronounce the little word *no*. Strong emotions based on selfishness, greed, lust, irreverence and vengeance gain the mastery over the nobler self and create a case of frustrations and nerves. If you would attain the beautiful and tranquil life of health and happiness, learn when to say *yes* and *no*.

One-directional living does not mean there are never any cross-purposes or retreats. Going one way is not an iron process that never bends or breaks. Some have thought this and because they experienced a deviation or deflection in life, they became discouraged and gave themselves to more contradictory living which in turn produced more defeat and unhappiness. It can become a vicious circle in which one agitates and chases the other. We can better handle the problem, if we understand that the best and strongest characters have experienced turns and back-sets in the journey of life. "To err is human;" or to be human is to err.

Take the great apostle Peter as an example. He thought he was on such a straight course that he would never deny his Lord. He was wrong. But he did not permit the turn to doom him to a life of retreat and defeat. He later died for his Lord.

We have seen men in business throw up their hands in despair and later succeed. We have witnessed youths quitting school and returning to finish with honors. We have seen men and women lose their direction and go around and

around in a maze of unpurposeful and unsatisfying living, but later get themselves straightened out and pursue a purposeful and happy course.

A river runs through a city. It has its zigzags, bends, horseshoes and whirlpools, but its direction is mainly one way - southeasterly. That river occasionally contradicts itself by flowing backwards; but, all in all, it knows which way it is going and flows in that direction.

One-directional living is like that. You may suffer a temporary back-set, but with a predominant purpose in mind you get hold of yourself and get back on course. This brings tranquility like the gentle flow of the waters.

Purposeful and one-directional living brings peace, because it puts meaning into each day of life. It is then that everyday has its meaning, and everyday helps to fulfill that purpose. A man is satisfied, relieved and made gay when each day he puts his heart into worthy work and does his best; but what he says or does otherwise gives him no peace.

Look to this day, for it is life. In its brief course lie all the verities and realities of your existence; the bliss of growth, the glory of action, the splendor of beauty. For yesterday is but a dream, and tomorrow is only a vision; but today, well lived, makes every yesterday a dream of happiness and every tomorrow a vision of hope. Look well, therefore, to this day, such is the salvation of the dawn.

—From the *Sanscrit*

The measure of a man is in his thoughts. “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he” (Prov. 23:7). This was Solomon’s total of a man, his strength or weakness, his courage or cowardice, his peace or confusion and his happiness or gloom. He is what he thinks.

A man’s life is what his thoughts make it.

—Marcus Aurelius

Your thinking affects your health. Your emotional and physical health are very closely related to your thoughts. So good thoughts are better than good medicine. The preventive is always better than the curative; however, healthful thoughts are both. Our thinking can prevent troubles; or if they have developed, our thinking can go far to correct them.

Most persons, however, are negative thinkers and consequently produce in their lives the crippling and defeating fruits of negation, such as weakness, dread, depreciation, depression, failure, disease or decrepitude. On the other hand, there are others who through the energy and explosiveness of positive thinking made their lives engrossing and invigorating, happy and healthy.

Williams James, one of the world’s most recognized psychologists, said there is dynamic power in thinking: