

Authentic Happiness

Dorothy Ratusny | [all things healing](#)

When you create a life that is meaningful, happiness is effortless.

Authentic happiness is the natural state of our spirit. A central theme of Buddhist and Hindu teaching, happiness is a reflection of Dharma – living in accordance with our life's purpose. When our choices and behaviours reflect our truth, we easily experience authentic happiness.

With the potential to experience a natural state of happiness, how is it that happiness seems to elude us?

The fact is that we work hard at making ourselves unhappy. We look for complex solutions to simple problems, and we create complex problems by overlooking simple solutions. Entirely unaware of our constant stream of irrational and critical self-talk, we impose unrealistic expectations on ourselves based on inaccurate and unhealthy comparisons of our self to others. We expend a vast amount of emotional and physical energy experiencing a plethora of unpleasant emotions (e.g. anxiety, fear, anger, guilt, shame) as the result of unconscious adherence to established rules and beliefs. We react by searching outside of our self for the illusory "something" that we believe will make us happy.

When you look to material goods, physical pleasures, and other people to "make" you feel good, these external sources of pleasure and comfort only momentarily sustain you. You need to continue acquiring more material goods, more physical pleasures, and more external rewards to recreate these pleasant feelings. Without a clear sense of purpose, you continue to search outside of your self for what you believe will make you happy. Realize instead that what you need is to go within, to connect with your inner self, and to enjoy this

moment. Practice being as you contemplate what you would enjoy most, and what would contribute to your overall sense of well-being.

Essentially, we could learn a thing or two from the Tibetan monks who have consciously chosen to live a highly simplified but yet conscious existence.

Creating authentic happiness begins by focusing within. Carefully examine your life as it presently is. What aspects do you enjoy most? What do you feel gratitude for? What is the source of your happiness now? Do your answers highlight the simple aspects of life? Does your heightened awareness of the causes of your happiness force you to re-examine how you're currently living life?

Daily Practice: Observing My Current State of Happiness

To uncover the source of your authentic happiness, answer the following questions from a place of intuitive wisdom rather than using your analytic (thinking) brain. Do this by acknowledging the initial answer that resonates as what you know to be true, rather than the answer you think is right.

1. "How does happy feel when I experience it throughout my whole being?"
2. "Am I happy with the person I am?"
3. "What activities and experiences contribute to my authentic happiness?" (List everything that comes to mind.)
4. What aspects of who I am (my ideas, beliefs, and actions both alone and with others) allow me to be innately happy?
5. What aspects of my life might I improve in order for me to experience innate happiness more of the time?
6. "What would my life be like right now if I were able to make these changes?"

Given your answers, you might notice that authentic happiness is an intangible quality that comes from within. It exists out of the feelings of contentment and calm that come from connecting with your inner (Highest) Self. Your Highest Self is your spirit – your life force.

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