

The Habits of Happy People

We tend to make the attainment of happiness more complicated than it actually is, by believing that we need things such as success, praise, status, looks, possessions and so forth to achieve it. The reality is that none of these things can give us lasting happiness and chasing them actually makes us prone to anxiety, frustration and disappointment.

Buddha explains simple attitudes that we can all learn to cultivate that will make us really happy. On this course we will explore through teachings and guided meditations how we can cultivate the happy minds of contentment, gratitude, acceptance and joy.

Of course one of the best habits we can develop is a daily meditation practice that will help us each day to be happy no matter what life throws at us.

- [1st Class - Introduction](#)
- [2nd class the habit of not fighting the inevitable](#)
- [3rd Habit - in preparation of true love - letting go of the self](#)
- [Love the best habit](#)
- [Finally - Meditation practice - brining it all together](#)

1st Class - Introduction

Introduction

Before we speak about the habits of happy people we need to think about happiness

For someone like me and maybe for many of you who are here - this term 'happiness' is regularly used. For someone who is for the first time here the idea of happiness might seem illusive, straightforward, impossible, whatever...

But for the conversation to be of real value and relevance we need to establish what is meant by the word happiness - this is in order to make sure we speak about the same thing so that you are not disappointed by what you hear here. Then you as a listener can decide if what I say suits you.

Happiness - Two Approaches

Generally if you search for what is happiness you will come up with two main ideas:

1. The feeling we get when we experience excitement
 - this word excitement is interesting - but it fits to be used both towards the imagination and the senses
2. The feeling we have when our life has meaning purpose or growth - and this does not necessarily mean pleasure or excitement in the manner expressed by the first description of happiness (the above point)

The above two approaches should be acceptable for most people. These two approaches are sensible and reasonable for anyone caring to think about this situation.

Happiness - The Buddhist Interpretation

The way Buddhists approach the idea of happiness is somewhat different.

Buddhism states that any living being has a basic aspiration having two sides - to be happy and to avoid pain. This aspiration is our basic aspiration and everything we do consciously or not is aimed at fulfilling this wish.

The fulfilment of this wish is the real meaning of human life.

It is important to remember that in Buddhism fulfilling one's basic aspiration is the meaning of life and also the most important achievement. (particularly when contemplating the concept of precious human life and how fragile and short the precious human life we have actually is)

The idea of Hedonic Happiness - where pleasure and excitement are the real meaning of happiness, and these are achieved by the constant stimulation of the senses - this, on the Buddhist view is actually a source of pain. For Buddhists this can actually send the individual on a journey of torment. (we'll explain more about why this is the case later or maybe immediately?)

The idea of Happiness through meaning - is more acceptable for the Buddhist view. However, where or what you believe the purpose or meaning of your life is really important. Without identifying this correctly, if you find the sense of purpose and meaning only through things such as family, career, fame or reputation, the Buddhist view is that finally you will be disappointed.

The meaning of Happiness in Buddhism

In Buddhism happiness means peace of mind. That's it. These few simple words which might not sound like much have in reality most profound meaning in our life.

When spoken by someone who experiences inner peace, these words are truly meaningful and the listener should learn to cherish them.

How Buddhism Understands The Normal Manner of Seeking Happiness

In Buddhism any attempt to find happiness that is outside the aspiring for a peaceful mind is regarded as part of ignorance. Here ignorance refers to simply not knowing. Not knowing what true happiness is leads to not knowing how to go about bringing our own happiness => ignorance is actually suffering.

Beings Who Are Happy

This simple equivocation of happiness with inner peace then opens the door to differentiating between different kinds of beings

- those with permanent and complete inner peace - known as Buddhas
- those who are experiencing permanent but not complete inner peace - known as Bodhisattvas and Foedestroyers
- those who experience inner peace that is changing according to the conditions of their life but believe that by using this life in a specific way humans can improve themselves and become closer and closer to the experience of inner peace - which are ordinary people like myself
- and those who do not believe that permanent inner peace is possible

Now the Practical Stuff

[]

2nd class the habit of not fighting the inevitable

Recap

We looked into what is happiness

- seeking happiness by pleasing the senses
- seeking happiness by finding meaning to life

the first type is totally deceptive - we are acquiring happiness with the pleasant feeling that we get when we get pleasant sensory experience or sensory gratification. Because the experience of pleasure via the senses - sensory gratification might be intense but they will fade out and they require great effort in repetition and escalation.

the second type is a little more difficult to understand because people may find meaning of life in power in fame in reputation or in good family life or good friendships or being good at something but these things are also deceptive because they too do not last. At such time you might be acquiring happiness with a strong sense of accomplishment and pride.

Of course since not everyone manages to become good at what they do or always satisfy their sensory desires - finally making these things the meaning of life is deceptive.

The Buddhist take on all these things is that they are not the meaning of life. This is because the meaning of life is to fulfil our basic aspiration to be happy. Here the meaning used for the word happiness is inner peace. And the seeking of inner peace and striving for inner peace is on the Buddhist view the wisest thing of all. The topic of inner peace runs deep. It can be understood on many levels. the ultimate inner peace is nirvana and enlightenment. For those who do not have the experience of inner peace it is hard to believe that inner peace is the meaning of life. This is so because a person experiencing inner peace has an altered understanding of the whole context of life. Because we have very little inner peace we cannot appreciate how the achievement of inner peace is the meaning of life. This is why at the beginning we have to work in a more logical way to show that experiences coming from sensory gratification or from acquiring power reputation or the enjoyments we get from gardening or painting etc - these are shallow, fleeting and ultimately non-rewarding.

With inner peace the more you have of it the more stable it becomes, unlike the other types of 'happinesses' it never turns into pain or disappointment.

And so a person who has deep stable experience of inner peace is a genuinely happy person whose habits are worth while imitating

Cloud edited the above

Here are the misspelled words I found and fixed:

1. **acquiting** → **equating** (appears twice)
 2. **experie~~nc~~** → **experience**
 3. **satisfi~~y~~** → **satisfy**
 4. **achie~~vm~~ent** → **achievement**
 5. **garden~~ning~~** → **gardening**
 6. **genuin~~ly~~** → **genuinely**
 7. **worth while** → **worthwhile** (spacing)
-

Recap

We looked into what is happiness:

- seeking happiness by pleasing the senses
- seeking happiness by finding meaning in life

The first type is totally deceptive — we are equating happiness with the pleasant feeling we get from pleasant sensory experience or sensory gratification. This is because the experience of pleasure via the senses — sensory gratification — might be intense, but it will fade out, and it requires great effort in repetition and escalation.

The second type is a little more difficult to understand, because people may find meaning in life through power, fame, reputation, a good family life, good friendships, or being good at something. But these things are also deceptive, because they too do not last. At such times, you might be equating happiness with a strong sense of accomplishment and pride. Of course, since not everyone manages to become good at what they do, or to always satisfy their sensory desires, ultimately making these things the meaning of life is deceptive.

The Buddhist take on all these things is that they are not the meaning of life. This is because the meaning of life is to fulfil our basic aspiration to be happy. Here, the meaning behind the word happiness is inner peace. Seeking inner peace and striving for inner peace is, in the Buddhist view, the wisest thing of all.

The topic of inner peace runs deep. It can be understood on many levels. The ultimate inner peace is nirvana and enlightenment.

For those who do not have the experience of inner peace, it is hard to believe that inner peace is the meaning of life. This is because a person experiencing inner peace has an altered understanding of the whole context of life. Because we have very little inner peace, we cannot appreciate how the achievement of inner peace is the meaning of life. This is why, at the beginning, we have to work in a more logical way to show that experiences coming from sensory gratification, from acquiring power and reputation, or from enjoyments like gardening or painting, are shallow, fleeting, and ultimately non-rewarding.

With inner peace, the more you have of it, the more stable it becomes. Unlike other types of "happineses," it never turns into pain or disappointment. And so a person who has a deep, stable experience of inner peace is a genuinely happy person, whose habits are worthwhile imitating.

What are the habits of happy people

Happy people are people with peaceful mind Their habits are not verbal or physical but mental. So we are looking at mental habits.

However it is worthwhile saying that out of their peaceful mind their verbal and physical actions are naturally pleasant and controlled. a point worthwhile mentioning is that when we see someone behaving badly verbally or physically we can be sure they are not very happy

To clarify and conclude - we understand that verbal and physical habits finally come from the mind. So while we can and do try to change verabl and physical habits to help us become happier the main and finally the real way of becoming happy is to develop good mental habits

There are many mental habits we need to let go off and many others we should and can develop in the next three weeks we shall be looking at:

1. Not fighting the inevitable
2. Letting go of our self-centred view p.1 - emptiness
3. Letting go ouf our self-centred view p.2 - abandoning s-ch and developing affectionate and cherishing love

The habit of not fighting the inevitable

One thing that we as humans find very hard to deal with is uncertainty. We rather certainty than uncertainty. But the reality is that our life is totally uncertain. As someone said we cannot be certain that we will see the sun rising tomorrow, we cannot be certain that we will live to see the next moment.

In here lies a clash at the very bottom of our being, existing, and it brings with it a greate mental termoil which if you are 'lucky' person you will be able to surpress. But sooner or later you will have to face the uncertainty of things.

3rd Habit - in preparation of true love - letting go of the self

Recapping previous classes - especially about the different kind of happinesses

- sensory gratification
- meaning
- inner peace - the buddhist view

The difference between them.

Last week we into two things

- Real cause of Happiness vs deceptive cause
 - the more you do the more the true nature of the cause becomes evident. => true suffering causes suffering true happiness causes happiness

Few simple habits to always consider

The following should really be as basic as breathing. They are so self evident that they do not need much explanation but what you do need is to implement them, practice them, again and again and again until they become part of the fabric of how you understand everything

These are:

1. Rejoice in Your Own Good Fortune
2. Discouragement is useless
3. Continuous repetitions with the above two.

Last week we also looked in something very important:

Uncertainty

Being the nature or defining characteristic of everything - who we are who other people are what things are and what situations are.

We learn to reflect on and live with uncertainty

Quite often **uncertainty** is uncomfortable for us - for various reasons.

- it may feel threatening
- it invites imagination
- it creates a desire for control
- and it can even be at times exciting - which even this can be a problem...

But by learning to accept think about and work with uncertainty in our life we become better prepared for when uncertainty becomes certainty...

Karma

Karma is the subject that says whatever you dish out will sooner or later come back to you.

It actually helps to reduce anxiety from uncertainty.

More on Karma - Thursday class

For tonight: Grasping

There are few kind of graspings:

In Buddhism we mainly talk about

- grasping at permanence - countered by impermanence
- grasping at things and mind being separate entities
- grasping at true existence - countered by realizing everything is illusory

Of these the first one is a bit easier to understand than the second and the second bit easier to understand from the third

We study this topic because we want to learn and become a loving person.

But to become a loving person we really need to understand who we are first.

To understand who we are we need to understand who we are not...

Love the best habit

We redefined the meaning of happiness: Away from the normal pursuit after sensory pleasure, excitement, fame, power and even away from normal ordinary relationships.

We established happiness to be a peaceful mind because the increase of peaceful mind never turns into disturbed mind while the increase of all the happinesses we experience from sensory pleasure or from power or from reputation or even from ordinary relationships eventually will turn into pain.

So happy people are people whose mind is peaceful.

There are different levels of peace of mind which is why there are different kinds of people who have happiness.

We are looking at the habits of these kinds of happy people.

What differentiates people who know how to develop and keep a peaceful mind at all time from people whose peace of mind is dependent on external things such as drink drugs etc is the ability to have a different understanding of what they see.

They have the ability to interpret what they see in a way that will pacify their mind.

When we introduce ideas like happiness is a state of mind, uncertainty or what we started looking at last week - grasping, we are introducing you to ideas that are to be introduced into your daily way of thinking.

Initially it is only theoretical but in time you begin to realize how it manifests in your life, you begin to see uncertainty in action you begin to see disturbed mind in action and if you begin to have a meditation practice you begin to see the meaning of peaceful mind in action.

The more you engage the theory the more you try to first remember it during your day to day life and then begin to re-interpret the events of life through it (remembering that you want to be happy - meaning peaceful- all the time and that this is the most important thing) the more you will change and the more happy you will become.

The core of all our disturbed states of mind is a grasping at who we are who other people are and what situations are as if we see an objective truly existent reality - a reality beyond the mere perception of the reality that we see.

The Buddhist teachings we teach argues for non-objectively existent reality.

This is very technical and difficult to accept but it is most important for the peace of our mind and even more important still when we move to learn to love.

For if we hold that we exist objectively we will naturally hold other people as existing objectively as they appear - and since they often appear to exist as bad people we believe they are bad people.

And even if we accept that love(I haven't explained it yet) is worthwhile - we will finally come to a person who not only does not deserve our love but deserves our hatred or deserves to be harmed.

This for Buddhist is unacceptable (although it is the highest level of practice to love so called evil people) those who can do that have the most peaceful and noble mind of all.

This is based on the understanding that what something is depends totally on the mind that understand that thing.

Why do Buddhist believe it is possible to love everyone?

Since people do not exist as objectively as we believe they do it is possible to come to understand them in a manner that is conducive to us loving them.

We can become convinced in this by taking simple examples - once we agree with simple examples we can take it to more complex examples.

We need to remember why we do this - why we choose to re understand people - because we want to be happy by keeping a peaceful mind.

Finally - Meditation practice - bringing it all together

What did we cover

- What is happiness
- Dealing with uncertainty - patience acceptance, karma
- Grasping - the mental activity that hold onto things and identity as fixed
- Love - the three types of love and the problem of grasping at a self and the development of self preference

Tontight Meditation practice - to bring it all together

This is where most people get stuck.

The parctice of meditation.

What is meditation

In order to make sure we talk about the same thing we need to define meditation.

This is for the sake of all of us being on the same page.

Without clear definitions at the outset it is easy to get our wires crossed and start arguing unnecessarily with the other person about meditation. It is just a question of which definition do you work with.

Meditation is familiarizing our mind constantly and thoroughly with a virtuous object. Out of the many functions it has we can think about

1. pacifies our mind
2. helps us change our instinctive view of the world - especially when we discover our view harms us

Why do we need to meditate

The reason we need to meditate is because we want to be happy and for as long as we have views about our self others the world and life in general which are incompatible with peaceful mind we shall never be happy

Difficulties we face when learning to meditate

Like with anything, something catches our curiosity, we become interested in it and we begin to engage with it. This can be anything food, diet, hobby, sport, and yes - meditation as well.

Why do people get curios and why do they begin to buy all the merch and go to clubs etc - not for me to say, every person will have their reason(s).

The question is why do they stop going is the interesting one.