

Being Content? What's the Deal?



What most of us are seeking in our lives is more happiness and to find that, we must first become content. It appears hardly possible to be happy and discontent at the same time. My conclusion is that happiness is intricately entwined with being content with the life we lead, so finding contentment is job one to finding more happiness.

"There is no way to happiness.

Happiness is the way."

~An old Buddhist quote. (Approximately)

As suggested in the quote above, there is no way or path to become happy. The idea of a way or path speaks rather clearly of an outer journey to some destination and happiness is not an outer journey, happiness is the journey or the way and it's an inside job.

The problem with the outer journey is that it can never satisfy the yearning of the heart, which I believe is what we mean when we say we want to find happiness. We want to find a satisfaction that allows us to feel whole, confident and loved with such intensity that we trust that it's just always there. (I'm sure there are many ways to express the

yearning of the heart, but I believe the philosophy works no matter how it is expressed.)

The thing about those qualities is that none of them can be realized outside of our selves. How can a particular car make me feel whole? How can a big bank account make me feel loved?

Sure, cars, bank accounts and other things of that ilk are thrilling and fun and are best experienced with the wonder of a child, savoring every second of bliss, but will they leave a person feeling satisfied, whole and loved as a permanent condition? How many people do you know who got the material things they said they wanted only to pursue more a week later? How many people have you ever heard say they are content with the money they have?

It's a cycle of discontent that makes these experiences short lived moments of joy. It is the habit of human beings to believe that if they could just get more outer wealth (or whatever) then they would finally have enough. But where does that cycle end? When is enough enough?

On the other hand, if we each cultivate an inner attitude of being content, then those same outer experiences become wondrous moments that increase the over all feeling of contentment and therefore happiness. It's not wrong to pursue outer goals, what else do we have to do here anyway, as long as we keep in mind that it is what we feel inside that



makes or breaks our happiness meter, not what we have in the garage. In fact, it is quite possible that we would have more of those outer experiences that are so much fun, if we are already happy with our lives.

Care to practice with me? List 50 things about yourself and your life that you feel content with, even if it takes the whole week. Then read it every day and see if you don't actually feel happier about your life. :)

In Gratitude
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