

# THINK HAPPY THOUGHTS

“What being is there who does not desire happiness?”

Socrates

## Basic Truths

Think happy thoughts, the wisdom of Peter Pan. In its simplicity, it's an insightful pronouncement, and a darn good idea. Think happy thoughts is a great statement for living. Yet, no matter how simple and true, we'll need to continually re-expose ourselves to the myriad implications this statement so succinctly summarizes before its value will take hold.

Happiness begins with gratitude. Why is that? Because we must appreciate the good around us, or no matter how good our good fortune really is, we simply cannot be happy. If we can't see it, sense it, touch or taste it, we will not feel the peace, the positive expectancy, and the expanding joy, which is available to us. In my worldview, we exist to live in a place of love and blessedness. Surely, we all want to experience a state of abundance, harmony, and fun? This place really does exist. It is within each one of us.

These three truths seem self-evident.

- 1 How we respond, to what we perceive to be as the outside world, is actually a choice we make within.
- 2 We are the ones who decide the experience we will be having. It is a direct consequence of the thoughts we think.
- 3 Happiness is not about how much stuff we accumulate, or what we've accomplished, it is primarily about gratitude, love, forgiveness and self-acceptance.

Gratitude, love, forgiveness, and self-acceptance, is where we must live at our core, if we want to be in that time and space of joy and happiness. These are the measures of our inner self that describe who we really are. When we've got this right, heaven shines from within. When they're out of whack, we live in a hell of our own making.

## Heaven or Hell

When gratitude, love, forgiveness and self-acceptance are not anchored in some sense of meaning, happiness can only be a temporary respite from unease, disease, discontent, and eventually depression. Of course if one is really good at distraction, the results of postponing your inner investigation may not impact you right away. Nevertheless, we ought to recognize that whether we live in heaven

or hell or find ourselves caught somewhere in between, is literally our internal emotional response to who we are within.

### **A Holographic Universe?**

Much of our focus on the outside world is a subconscious attempt to distract us from deeper issues. Most of us are reluctant to focus within, essentially believing as we do, that everything is outside and we are just victims of the way things are. This keeps us believing we are virtually helpless in regard to the implications of the greater events to which we are exposed. However, on-going experiments in the quantum field, along with the results of exploratory mind-body research, suggests that not only are we each responsible for the world we experience, but there may be even much more to it.

One theory gaining ground suggests that the energies that comprise our existence are actually three-dimensional projections. A number of recent books and scientific papers put forward the notion that our universe is actually holographic. What does that mean? In the original movie *Star Wars*, the adventure begins when a light is projected from the robot R2 D2 creating a three-dimensional likeness of Princess Leia, asking Obi-wan Kenobi to come to her assistance. That's a hologram.

Technologically, we now know how to create and project three-dimensional pictures with the aid of a laser and sophisticated software, and were it not so incredibly expensive, it would be all the rage in a new going-to-the-movies fad. Talk about getting lost in the picture, can you even imagine? It's easy enough to lose yourself in a normal theatre experience. In some ways, a movie is like a waking dream, but what would it be like to actually be in the middle of the show with the characters, objects, and sound all around you?

It's a pretty certain bet that if one can lose track of a couple of hours of daily reality by sitting in a dark movie theatre enjoying a well-made movie, then our sense of reality would be even more overwhelmed, if the sets were three-dimensional. Disney has always been good at bringing in other senses in a theatrical setting such as smell, physical movements and other sensations which put you in an alternative reality for a brief time. As it is, all of our physical senses are simply quantum impulses experienced within our brain. We have the experience of things being out there, but everything we actually experience is processed within our heads. That is not conjecture. It is literally the way it is.

Understanding the implications of how we create brain wave stimulation and considering new ground-breaking insights on the ways by which we experience all that we do, provides at least a partial validation that we are all living our own illusion. A number of scientists have already weighed in on the astounding

conclusion that everything in our world of experience is indeed projection and that the entire universe itself may be a kind of giant hologram, a splendidly detailed illusion. To quote Michael Talbot, the author of *The Holographic Universe*:

“Put another way, there is evidence to suggest that our world and everything in it - from snowflakes to maple trees to falling stars and spinning electrons - are only images, projections from a level of reality so beyond our own it is literally beyond both space and time.”

This information is interesting, and it may be true, but whether it is or it is not, is not so important as that we grasp that we are the ones who decide the experience we are having. We interpret everything we experience through the mental lens of our prior thoughts, feelings and reactions. We decide to see life as threatening or scary, peaceful and comforting, or somewhere in between.

The really tough thing for all of us is to take personal responsibility for our feelings. When a situation arises that down-regulates our emotional state, it is hard to recognize that a negative feeling is a subconscious response to promptings of similar feelings from the past. Once we are able to step back and look at negative emotions as a thing that can be recontextualized, we can reach for a higher vibrational feeling. In other words, we talk to ourselves, recognize what is happening at an emotional level, and take steps to reconfigure our mental response into something more positive and uplifting. Easy to say. Not so easy to do, and yet the benefits are remarkable when we reset our emotional center.

Everything in life has both uplifting and down-regulating aspects to it. Light and shadow is the fluctuating middle ground of the world we live within. Without shadow, there is no definition in the light. We are unable to see what we like and what we do not in total brilliance, just as we cannot see in total darkness. We have been blessed with the power to choose, but in order to make choices both Light and Shadow must exist within our space. This is our greatest gift in life. The power to choose how we feel about anything and everything. These choices will determine just how much meaning and happiness we have in life.

We are the ones in control, whether we acknowledge it or not. This is truly the way things are. If you are miserable right now, that's probably the last thing you want to hear. On the other hand, it is the most important thing you can learn. Do not avoid it, internalize it. Your life will change for the better once you get this understood and integrated into your thinking process. If you put it off, your life cannot dramatically improve. Yes, there may be temporary respites from struggle, but overall nothing will change substantially. And that's simply because

everything we experience is actually experienced within us. No exceptions. It is the way it is.

Perhaps it is helpful to recall that in the New Testament of the Bible, the Apostle Luke records Jesus as instructing the Pharisees with this insightful statement:

“...behold, the Kingdom of God is within you.”  
Luke 17:21 KJV

What a profound statement! The Kingdom of God IS WITHIN US! What does it really mean? As a religious declaration it sounds more like Sufi wisdom, or perhaps a Hindu Vedic, Upanishadic, or Yoga Sutra, philosophical position. When viewed from another perspective it sounds like a scientific treatise coming from the architects of the holographic universe theory. Two of the world's pre-eminent thinkers: physicist David Bohm, protégé of Einstein's, and Karl Pribram, a neurophysiologist at Stanford University confirm scientifically that we carry within us both heaven and hell. Which we decide to immerse ourselves within is our choice.

Those familiar with Buddhism will recognize a similar teaching to that found in the New Testament. In the Kalachakra Tantra, the Kingdom of Heaven is the internal Shambhala, mistranslated in Western literature as the mythical paradise on earth, known as Shangri-La. To Buddhists it exists in two places...first within, secondly in another reality, not yet observable by man.

The Kingdom of God, Heaven, Paradise, or whatever name we wish to identify that perfect place, that virtually all religious disciplines speak to, first and foremost must be discovered within. Only then can we rise in frequency sufficient to mirror heaven into the external world of our experience. Does it surprise you that most of the world's historical religions have taught a similar foundational principal? Our spiritual expectations are much more alike than what we have been taught to believe. From the ancient Hindu scriptures known as the Upanishads, comes this insight:

“You are what your deep driving desire is.  
As your desire is, so is your will.  
As your will is, so is your deed.  
As your deed is, so is your destiny.”

Upanishad IV. 4.5

### **We're in Charge**

Our deepest desires, in fact all of our desires, reside within us. Where else would they be? Our will, the driving force behind all our actions, is also a function of the

inner self. Neither desire nor will, come from without; both radiate from within. With only a little reflection it should be obvious that no one tells us what we will think. They may influence, it is true, but only you decide what to focus upon. Only I decide for me. No one else is able to decide what you or I shall think. Perhaps others can control your exterior for a time, sometimes rather dramatically as has happened to me, but only you - and I alone, make the internal decisions as to what we decide to think, and what emotions shall color those thoughts. The catch is that most of us don't really understand this critical principle. We are in charge of our lives. We have the power to change.

It cannot be overstated that each one of us ultimately decides the emphasis, or the lack thereof, that we assign to every situation, to every occurrence. We are in command of our feelings, albeit few there are that will accept the responsibility. The vast majority of people are simply reacting to their feelings in concert with their childhood programs and their experience driven paradigms. Few of us take responsibility for running our emotional control centers.

The greater our feelings of unhappiness, the greater the likelihood we will deny that it is our very selves that decide how we shall react to external stimuli. Our ego will always demand that we find something, or someone to blame for our misery. But avoidance does not change the fact that we determine the value we assign to each thought. We determine the emotional content attached to each thought we think. Full stop.

Admittedly, the process of taking control over our own thoughts and feelings is not easy. In the east those that have learned to do so are referred to as "Masters." Masters of what? Masters of themselves.

### **Self Mastery**

Anyone can move towards self-mastery, although throughout world history only a handful have been specifically honored by society as having complete mastery of themselves. But here's the important point to grasp: We do *not* have to be Masters to live in a happy state most of the time.

What must we do to live in this place? Develop a meaningful sense of who you are. Focus on gratitude, love, and forgiveness. Be aware. Quit judging. Cease the negative chatter about others and get out of your past and live in the present. Again: Develop a meaningful sense of who you are; Focus on gratitude, love, and forgiveness; Be Aware; Quit Judging; Cease the negative chatter; and Get out of your past and live in the present.

Recall that each of us ultimately determines the meaning of the things in our present, as the result of viewing everything through the lenses of our past reality.

This situation guarantees we will have the same reoccurring “issues,” whether they actually exist or not. When we overlay our mental lens on the images we predict for our future, we project the past forward. Is that what you want? If not then you must find a better way. The recipe for happiness requires we learn to live in the present. We must unhook our obsession with predetermining our present by our feelings of inadequacies from the past. It is only when we get out of the past, and stop trying to live in the future, that we can deeply experience the NOW. It’s only in the NOW that we are able to enjoy happiness. In the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson,

“What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.”

Let’s remember that the biblical Proverbs has summarized this basic understanding in just a few words:

“For as he thinketh in his heart so is he.”  
Proverbs 23:7

### **Living in the Now**

Change your thinking and change your world? We simply decide? Is our state of mind *really* the ultimate source of happiness? The answer to each of these questions is an emphatic YES! When we recognize the potency of learning, and actually choosing to be happy in the NOW, as well as how to feel good in the NOW, we begin to grasp the power by which we can attain to any state of being.

If you’ve read this far you surely have both the capacity and the means, with which to garner peace, harmony, wisdom, health, wealth, and happiness. You can be certain this is true. Vibrationally you have been attracted to this information. Vibrationally you have been pulled towards a deeper grasp and more clear understanding. What we are exploring is a core teaching of all the avatars. It is the gospel (a term which simply means “good news”), of living. We are born to be happy, its pursuit is our highest spiritual path, but to refine bliss within, we must wake up to the truth. The truth is in every one of us: look within. We can suspend our tendency to judge, we can forgive others, and we too can be forgiven. We can look up towards higher realms of living and be grateful for the good that is all about us. We can smile and laugh and enjoy the very now. It is the natural state of our natural self. **We were born to be happy. It is the natural state of our natural self.**

When we are happy, life is joyful, and there is beauty and purpose in everything to which we turn our attention. Just as misery clouds our vision and poisons the fun of even our most cherished activities, heartfelt joy adds brightness, color, and

delight to even the mundane. It bears repeating - because we need to be crystal clear in our understanding - that happiness is not about the tangible stuff we have accumulated, or what we wish to accumulate, and it's not about what we have or have not accomplished, it is about gratitude, love, forgiveness and self-acceptance.

The Sikh's are a monotheistic religion of India. They have combined both Hinduism and Islam in a unique way. The Sikh Bible, the *Granth*, says,

“God is in thy heart, yet thou searchest for him in the wilderness.”

Isn't that the truth? Aren't most of us searching outside of us for truth? We look hither and yon, but rarely inside. The *Tao te Ching*, (the Bible of Taoism), the ancient philosophy and religion of China, teaches this same principle. The *Bhagavid Gita*, the *Dhamapada*, the *Qur'an*, the old and new testaments of the Christian Bible, the *Book of Mormon*, and all the great spiritual philosophies of mankind, have arrived at the same conceptual understandings, which might well be summarized as: Our relationship with God, and ultimately our individual happiness, can only be discovered within us. The space-time for that discovery can only take place in our NOW.

### **Being Thankful**

It is important to keep reminding ourselves that without a sense of gratitude, it is impossible to be happy. Our habitual focus on worry, and what is wrong with our environment, relationships, health, and so forth, attracts things to our attention that need improvement. There is no end to discovering flaws in our surroundings. After all, this is an imperfect world. But it is a world that is perfect for each of us to experience sufficient struggles to aid us in our evolution.

Our cultural emphasis endorses the need for critical analysis. Thus, in an effort to make things better, we tend to fixate on what's wrong around us, operating under the theory that we need to discover things to improve. This internal program seems to always be turned on. When it's not focused on the outside world, it's examining us. Ouch!

Our thoughts frequently run away with us. Unfortunately, it's rare that they're running in a truly positive direction. As a society, we bathe in negative news, and are plagued with excessive self-judgment and constant criticism.

Behind our pain and illness, our fears and unhappiness, is relentless self-judgment. Our internal chatter, that monkey-mind of self-criticism, rarely stops. It's like a hamster incessantly running in its exercise wheel, never getting

anywhere, but driven to continue until exhaustion. We literally wear ourselves out when we judge, censure, berate, and criticize others, which is really just another form of self-criticism.

Joy arrives when someone smiles, laughs (without guile), and whenever one begins to focus attention on the good around them. All of us have moments of joy and happiness. However, for most, these moments are too few, and the experiences too short, and too shallow. This is because the lack of joy and happiness in our lives flows from the lack of balance in our thinking.

### **Wrong Focus**

We spend far too much of our time considering what is wrong. This imbalance in our mental process is supported by immense multi-sensory impact. What appears to be wrong around us is constantly broadcast on television, radio, the internet, in our newspapers and magazines. As a result, worrisome talk swamps our general conversation. We eat, breathe, and sleep a continual flow of negativity. Is it any wonder that our typical first response to a new situation is to note what we think is wrong with it?

So, you ask, “What are we supposed to do, become a recluse and ignore the world around us?” Hmm. That’s an interesting thought. Seems there is an old adage about that: *Ignorance is bliss*. Perhaps that’s the reason history records so many great sages getting away to a place removed from the helter-skelter of life. In truth, everyone needs sanctuary. But simply sticking your head in the sand, or running off to a mountain-top, or my favorite: disappearing to a jungle-island somewhere, is as impractical a proposal (for most of us anyway), as it may be irresponsible.

We live in a world of dramatically increasing complexity. And our essential biological programming is fine-tuned to scan our surroundings for potential danger. To disable this function is to put us at risk, so the answer is not to turnoff and tune-out, but rather to develop equilibrium. How is this possible when the vast majority of the raw data streaming into our senses seems to be focused on what’s wrong with a given situation? To illustrate the enormity of the problem, remember that all advertising is designed to show you what you do not have, and thus what you are in need of, in order to measure-up or be “happy.” The basic premise of advertising is to develop a sense of “lack” in those who are exposed to it. Its intent is to generate unease and a sense of inadequacy that may only be resolved by our purchasing a given product.

Can we honestly appreciate that everything in life is based upon one’s viewpoint? Can we see that there are usually different ways to consider virtually every new piece of information arriving to our brain through our senses? We really need to

grasp that the way our minds address new input is a function of our individual habits of thinking. Yes, that's it. Habits of thought are better known as attitudes. And it is our attitudes, which form the mind's programs through which all experiences are processed. This is, in effect, the brain's operating system.

The software running in our brains is connected to our emotional reactions. Our emotions both reveal us and are literally the essence of our lives. Emotions are not bad, emotions are life! We experience all of life through emotion. But remember, emotions are always hooked to thoughts. Thoughts precede our emotional response. Therefore we can change the feelings we feel by changing the thoughts we think.

"What about facts," some will ask? "Facts are facts," is usually the follow-up line, as if that is all there is to say about it. So, what about facts? Do facts stand alone as bastions of independent truth, or are most supposed "facts" generally presented as irrefutable truths by someone intent upon demonstrating a point they themselves are endorsing? In other words, are not most supposed facts organized by presenters to support a point of view? No matter who you are, where you came from, what your educational background, in the end, everything experienced in life is plainly based upon one's viewpoint. When we think about this for a bit, we will likely recognize that what we believe to be facts, may not really be facts at all. For example, as any historian can verify that the "facts" of history, those things the vast majority of people believed and in many cases were ready to die for, were not what they thought they were. It is often said that throughout history probably 90 percent of the things people were so sure of, turned out to not be true. Now that's a sobering thought!

### **We are Creators**

Each of us is the creator of our own reality. Everything begins with the thoughts we think. Our thoughts determine our actions. Our actions determine our habits. Our habits determine our levels of happiness, which in turn evolves our character. Our character determines our eternal destiny. Everything we perceive in our world is processed through the filter of our consciousness, and every decision we make is based on some construct of what is real for us. As the Buddha is recorded to have said,

"All that we are is the result of what we have thought. If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, pain follows him. If a man speaks or acts with a pure thought, happiness follows him, like a shadow that never leaves him."

It is really not possible for anyone else to create our reality. We do it. Of course, it is true that we can pretend that our lives are the result of other's choices, and perhaps most people do just that. But this is merely a mental mind game we play with ourselves to deny our personal responsibility for the way we feel. What is true and bears constant repeating is: we create our own reality, even if we do not understand that we do it.

When we are consciously aware of our thoughts, we are then able to marshal them to support our innermost desires. After all, our belief system and our desires are simply thoughts themselves. And it is our desire and our most firmly rooted beliefs that will be attracting the experiences we will be having in the future. Remember that whatever we give attention to in our NOW, infusing it with the energy of emotion will unfold in some form in our future. And that's true whether we want it to be or not. We are *always* choosing, even when we are not aware of it.

Every time we think, we are using our creative source. How careful we should be to think constructively. Mental laws are as real as physical laws. The use of our creative power is as natural as the use of electricity, as consistent as the law of gravity. Imagination, and its corresponding creative principal, is entirely reactive to thought. The universe seems to receive the slightest vibration of thought-energy and acts upon it. The process appears to work something like a mirror. As we call up images of thought, they are reflected in the mirror of our memory. As emotions become affixed to thought, they accelerate thought-form which eventually matures into our life experiences.

The focus on any form of thought image, or what most think of as visualization, begins the process of bringing that image into our physical realm. On the other hand, as we conjure new ideas into place, the old reflections are swept aside, and these new thoughts begin to evolve into our living reality. If we withdraw older impressions only partially, and mingle them with new thinking, we begin to generate composites. In other words, our experience will share the nature of both kinds of thought. We may conclude then that our happiness resides within us, and that each of us will experience happiness only to the level our thinking permits.

It is valuable to remember that all of us come with some form of internal thermostat that regulates the amount of joy and love we allow ourselves. It takes conscious participation to reset this internal control. So once again it is important that we recognize that our happiness is all about the choices we are making. It is continually an effect of how we habitually think and how we react to all external and internal stimuli. The longer we dwell on specific thoughts, the stronger they become. Our intention and attention invites manifestation.

So, what does this all mean? It means that in the most fundamental way, our thoughts invite to ourselves the reality we subconsciously expect. In due course, we may come to realize that everything we truly desire will appear on our life's stage. The underlying essential truth is that we attract unto ourselves that which we think about.

Happiness or misery, joy or discontent, love or loneliness, they are all simply choices. They are our choices. These states of mind and their resultant emotions are contained within us. Happiness does not arrive from the outside world, instead it comes as we understand who we are, why we're here, what our purpose is, and perhaps most importantly, as we learn to suspend self-judgment. We must unlearn our misconceptions, our false beliefs of negativity, and be willing to improve our internal paradigms. Happiness exists. It exists for each one of us. It exists in our hearts and minds, and nowhere else. The outside world does not hold our happiness; we have it. It's here for us to discover. Let's find it now.

The time to be happy is now,  
The place to be happy is here,  
The way to be happy is to make  
others so.

Robert Ingersoll (1842-1910)