

Happiness

We have all experienced periods of happiness from time to time when a desire has been satisfied – the perfect Christmas present, passing exams, falling in love, landing an interesting job, an amazing experience of *samadhi* etc. But looking back over all these periods of happiness, it's easy to verify that none of those objects brought us permanent, lasting happiness. They just put a temporary end to desire. This is Rupert's description of the driving forces behind the search of happiness:

In order to fulfil the desire for happiness, most people engage in a relentless search in the realm of objects, substances, activities, states of mind and relationships. This search also takes the form of resistance to whomever or whatever is perceived to jeopardize our happiness. Thus, seeking and resistance are the two main impulses that govern the thoughts and feelings, and the subsequent activities and relationships, of most people.

The activities of seeking and resisting are an inevitable expression of the sense of lack or suffering that underlies them. However, most of us never question the origin of our suffering, so busy are we escaping the discomfort of it through the acquisition of objects, substances, activities, states of mind and relationships. If we do question it, we usually attribute it to the absence of the object or experience that we seek or the presence of the situation we are attempting to avoid and, as a result, never fully trace it back to its original cause."

[Being Aware of Being Aware – Introduction]

Objects don't last – they are, by nature, impermanent. Even the subtlest object such as an ecstatic *samadhi* doesn't last forever. Therefore, it should be obvious that no object can deliver lasting happiness. If we want lasting happiness, the only place to look for it is in the *subject* of experience, myself, I – not in its objects. And in the end, we find it in the dissolution of subject and object. It's one thing to see that intellectually but quite another to really feel it, to know it in the depths of our being. Believing it doesn't help: we need to be absolutely certain based on experience.

The aim of the Direct Path is happiness. But for some, it is the negative feelings stored in the body-mind that are encountered first. The following is part of a dialogue Rupert had with someone who had experienced feelings of fear during a yoga meditation and wasn't entirely convinced that this teaching was right for him as it seemed to be taking him away from the peace and happiness he wanted. After an initial discussion about the sense of fear being due to the separate self fearing its own dissolution, the conversation continued as follows:

RS: Your desire for happiness will never leave you until you are happy – it outlives everything. So yes, you the separate self are afraid, but fortunately this profound desire for happiness that is wired into the separate self will always keep it seeking until it gets what it wants. Now what it wants is not an object, what it wants is to cease being a separate self. It's what the feeling of happiness is – the dissolution of the separate self.

Q: The thing is in my case, I still have plenty of objects I want to go after in the real world. Perhaps I should just leave now because I don't measure up to the standard that's required. ... I wonder whether I've come to the right party – maybe I should go to the massive duality party in the next village

RS: I would encourage you to. And by the way it's not a black and white thing – either one is interested in finding happiness in objects and states and relationships or you're interested in finding happiness in your true nature. For all of us here, we're all open to the possibility that

happiness doesn't lie in objects. It doesn't mean to say that none of us is seeking happiness in objects any more.

But I would encourage you, If you feel that what you deeply desire in life – however you formulate that to yourself, it's usually peace, happiness or love –if you believe that what you deeply want can be delivered to you via an object, a state, an activity or a relationship, then I would encourage you to go in search of it there. Not to believe me or anyone else. And just to question when you're doing this, whether you ever truly find what you want in any of those objects.

Q: I should say I've had this fear many times in the past, but I thought I'd mention it because that meditation was a trigger.

RS: Yes of course you've felt this fear many times in the past and in order to avoid the discomfort of this fear, you have been motivated towards objects, activities, substances, states of mind, and relationships. But none of them have, as yet, alleviated this fear. So if you think that they can alleviate this fear. If you think it's just a matter of a few more activities, substances, relationships etc., go there. See if these objects don't just put a temporary end to your fear – because what you desire is not a temporary end, you want lasting happiness. So if you think that these objects can put an end to your fear, in other words, to bring you peace and fulfilment and love, then go there, keep going there.

It's very natural for all of us to have realised to a certain extent that no 'thing' can make me happy. But there is still this impulse towards objects, towards states, towards substances, and it's very important that we don't too quickly gloss over that and say 'I know nothing can make me happy'. No, we need to really *feel* for ourselves that we have explored everything that's on offer in the world fully so that we know for ourselves – not because anybody has told us – these objects cannot bring me happiness. And that conviction will give us the impetus to see happiness where it truly resides.

[Buckland Hall 1st December 2014, [*Where to find happiness*](#) (only part on YouTube)]

The real test of our understanding comes when things seem to go wrong in our lives or for those who are close to us. In the following conversation, a questioner explained how he feels a kind of mistrust in life as a result of all the pain and suffering that he encounters, both through his own illness and through his work looking after children who are dying of cancer– a feeling that life has let him down. This was Rupert's response:

RS: If we feel let down by life in some way it's because we feel that life hasn't repaid our investment in it. It hasn't delivered what we feel it owes us. But perhaps the value of this kind of experience is precisely to see that life doesn't owe us anything. That there's no investment in the future. The death of a loved one, or contemplating the death of ourselves confronts us with this subtle feeling we have of wanting to be fulfilled in the future. That something will happen at some time in the future that will make everything OK, that we'll finally be happy. But what if there was just nothing? What if we had the courage to face the fact that nothing was ever going to appear in the future that could make us happy?

Think of the subtle motivation that initiates our activities. They're nearly always initiated by the desire to find happiness at the end of the process, through the activity, the object, the relationship. But what if one were to really have the courage to confront the fact that nothing, no 'thing' in the future, no object, no relationship could ever deliver the happiness we long for. In other words, if we were to withdraw our investment from the future – that requires a lot of

courage. Because to still engage with life, to still be open and sensitive and responsive to situations, to still participate in life, not to shrink and crumple up because life can't give you what you want, but to totally participate with no investment. That would be freedom.

And there may be many other messages that pain or suffering have to give us, but that would be the ultimate message – to expose our investment in the future. Because if we were to really see that clearly – the future can never bring us happiness – that understanding would plunge us into the now, into the current experience. There would be no motive to move away from the now into time, into the past or the future, unless circumstances required it temporarily.

But if we really put our experience under the microscope and ask ourselves the question 'how much of the day do I actually spend fully engaged with my present experience? Probably, for most if not all of us it's not the big dramatic thoughts that are taking us away, but just the subtle ones, like a little leak of thinking. These innocuous little daydreams that take us just out of the now. They always take us just into the future or just into the past. And they're so subtle, so innocuous, that they feel perfectly OK, but if we develop this sensitivity to the ego, which is the sensitivity to resistance and avoidance, ... we feel them, they're not just little subtle leaks – they're the bare face of the ego, in that moment. That, right there, the separate self is taking the form of this little innocuous thought. All it is doing is avoiding being fully engaged with the current experience, in other words seeking happiness in the future either 'I don't like what is present' or 'I want what is not present'.

And many of us have to have everything, or almost everything taken away before we get that message. We have to have everything taken away so that what cannot be taken away is finally revealed. ... A feeling that I've looked *everywhere* and I'm still not happy. There's nothing else on offer in the body-mind-world. Where do I go from here? ... When there are no other options left, there is a kind of surrender. And that surrender can be the beginning of this new directionless direction, that is no longer directed towards an object.

It's not something you do, because if it were something you do, that would be yet one more thing you would be trying to do to bring about happiness. You don't let go of anything, everything is taken away from you. And that is a great moment of opportunity, because that which cannot be separated from you, that alone remains. Your true security, your true identity, the true source of happiness.

You can't manufacture it, but you can cooperate with it. You don't have to be destitute to have that experience. There's an intelligent way. We don't have to wait for things to get that bad. We can understand the process and cooperate with it, which is what we are doing here.

[19th May 2014 [*The True Source of Happiness*](#)]

Sometimes people imagine that realisation of our true nature results in a permanent state of bliss or ecstasy in which we just float above everything that's going on around us. But as Rupert explains, this is a misunderstanding:

RS: As we abide knowingly as ourself, the qualities that are inherent in ourself begin to emerge, gradually in most case, from the background and the first quality to emerge in most cases is peace. This undisturbable quality that awareness has. That no matter what is going on in the foreground of experience – thoughts and feelings and activities and relationships, perceptions etc – in the background, or at least it seems to be in the background first, there is this imperturbable peace. ...

The agitated thoughts, the agitated feelings, can no longer stand as agitated thoughts and feelings ... so it's as if the peace comes from the background ... and begins to spill over into the foreground of our experience – that is thinking sensing and perceiving. It begins to infiltrate the way we think and feel, and then in time, the way we act, perceive and relate. And it is in this spilling over of the peace from the background of experience into the foreground of experience, that peace turns into happiness. ... It's not a gleeful state where you walk around the streets all day in some kind of ecstasy. It's not like that.

Sometimes it can bubble over into a great feeling of joy or gratitude. But it doesn't bubble at high frequency all the time. When it stops bubbling, it just goes back down to peace again. Yvan Amar expressed it so beautifully. He said: "Happiness is peace in motion, Peace is happiness at rest". It's the same substance, and for most people, it seems to be in the background first, and only gradually infiltrates the foreground.

[03/11/2013 [Awakening is Not the Same as Bliss](#)]

Struggling to make this happen doesn't work, but there's no need for struggle. It's a relaxation from struggle and effort. Here is Rupert's advice:

Q: Life has seemed to be a struggle in pretty much every area – work, health, financial. I have been following a spiritual path and had a deep recognition of the truth of the self. But I see people who are not at all interested in this work who seem happier. I want to give up this struggle.

RS: ... The only place to find peace and happiness is in yourself, as yourself, just simply abiding as the inherently peaceful and fulfilled presence of awareness that you inherently, effortlessly, naturally are. There's no struggle involved in that. There's no effort involved in that. ...

Instead of conceiving of what you want as 'happiness', conceive of it as peace. And just notice that any time during the day, whatever you're thinking, whatever you're feeling, whatever you're perceiving, notice that you are just this inherently peaceful presence of awareness that knows it. It doesn't take time. You could be aware of that running down the street late for your train, you could experience that in the middle of a busy advertising agency. It's just there for the looking. It's totally open. It's just right behind you all the time with its arms wide open. All you have to do is turn towards it.

[13th November 2013 [The desire for happiness is a cause of unhappiness](#)]

Contemplation

Everything we have ever longed for – peace, happiness and love – resides at the heart of all experience, always available, under all circumstances. [Rupert Spira]