

Happiness Killers

We all want to be happy. For many, happiness is a way of life. These folks make it a point to be happy every day of their lives. They might not be laughing and having a bright sunny face 24/7, but their attitude is in the right place. For many others, there is too much pain and sadness that makes happiness for them just an illusive dream. Their outlook on life is dim.

Is there something one can do to keep happy? Yes, one can change his or her outlook on life. One may not be able to prevent the pain but there can be a different approach to life. One can decide that the glass is half full instead of being half empty. A spirit of optimism is the energy that can keep one going and going. Sadly, too many people have habits or beliefs and practices that destroy happiness in their lives.

Recently I came across an article entitled "The Top Ten Happiness Killers." It is written by a director of the Happiness Institute, Australia, Dr. Timothy Sharp. I will list below what he has discovered through his research and observations are the top ten killers of happiness. Read and see if you can relate to any the list.

TOP TEN HAPPINESS KILLERS:

- 1. Unrealistic expectations - don't, for example, expect to be happy all the time!**
- 2. Lack of direction - set yourself some meaningful goals and work towards those great happiness feelings of accomplishment, achievement and pride**
- 3. Exhaustion - it's hard to be happy if you're sick and tired all the time so make sure you get enough sleep and rest**
- 4. Poor health - following on from the previous point don't ever forget that happiness comes in part from taking care of our bodies and from exercising and keeping active**
- 5. Pessimism and excessively negative self talk - we're all a bit critical of ourselves at times but don't overplay this and remember, that for all your failings you've also achieved success**
- 6. Dwelling on the past - as the saying goes, the past is history, and it can't be changed, so look to the future and the best years of your life**
- 7. Selfishness - real happiness is NOT selfishness so focus on doing good for others (not just yourself) and foster compassion as well as altruism and generosity**
- 8. Focusing all your efforts on trying to fix weaknesses - instead, spend more of your time working with your strengths**
- 9. Focusing on what others have and on what you don't have - happiness comes much more to those who focus on what they have and to those who practice appreciation and gratitude**
- 10. Taking ourselves and our lives too seriously - life's way too important to take seriously; instead, laugh and play and have fun as often as you can!**

While reading this "killer" list I remembered another happiness list that was written more than 2000 years ago. I suppose I can call this list "The Top Ten Happiness Builders." This list is found in Matthew 5:3-12. Read and see how they relate to the list of happiness killers. Here is "The Top Ten Happiness Builders" or commonly called the "Beatitudes" (note that "blessed" also mean "happy"):

³ “Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.

⁵ Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.

⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.

⁷ Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.

⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.

⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.

¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Were you able to connect the “killers” with the “builders?” This is your homework assignment today. If you can do that I am certain you will find the tools to be happy more often.

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