

Keys to Happiness - No 2: Self-Acceptance

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Happiness is often elusive. Here is the second key that will allow you to discover the joys within yourself.

Content:

Do you Love yourself?

This has to be the goal. This has to be that which is the most important thing in your life. If you achieve nothing in this life apart from learning to Love yourself, you will have achieved everything.

That's all well and good and sounds wonderfully inspiring but that word 'Love' causes us a bit of a problem because it means different things to different people. It even means different things to the same people on different occasions.

Is the Love you feel for a romantic partner the same as the Love you feel for your children? Is the Love you feel for your children the same as the Love you feel for your siblings or parents? Is that the same as the Love you feel for close friends? Is any of that anything like how you feel when your heart goes out to a stranger whose circumstances touch you in some deep way?

An easier way to uncover what this mystery of Love is is to ask yourself this question. "How do I know when I'm loved?" Is it in someone's words, or their touch, their gentleness with your body or your mind? Is it in their encouragement or support? Is it in their total and unconditional acceptance of you no matter what you do?

Loving yourself isn't going out and spending money on you â€” though this may be a consequence of Loving yourself.

Loving yourself isn't about telling the world how wonderful you are â€” though a consequence of Loving yourself may well be that the world discovers how wonderful you are.

Loving yourself doesn't mean always putting your needs first â€” though you may discover that satisfying your own needs first frees your mind to assist others in achieving what they would like to achieve.

Loving yourself is nothing more and nothing less than a total acceptance of you doing whatever you are doing, achieving whatever you have achieved, and not judging yourself for anything you have done.

There is no place in Love for criticism or judgement.

There is no place in Love for guilt.

Move rather to a place where you can acknowledge what works and what doesn't. What works is what produces the desired outcome without harm â€” mentally or physically, to anyone else. If something doesn't work then do something else - no beating up, no negative self-talk about being stupid, thick, careless, idiot, hopeless, failure, unsuccessfulâ€”

Just notice that you tried something, it didn't achieve the results you anticipated, so try something else. And bear in mind that old saying 'If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always got'. If nothing seems to work, if you never seem to achieve what you desire then all it means is that you've been taught thinking patterns that aren't beneficial to you and you need to learn new thinking patterns. There are plenty of books, people, and courses that will assist you in that.

Consider that whatever your life circumstances, it's your thinking that got you there. If you like them â€” great, if you don't, you need to think differently.

Judgement has no value here. All self-judgement does is make you feel bad. That never helps. At least it never helps if you want to feel good. Happy people tend to feel good, so doing anything that makes you feel bad is inconsistent with a desire to uncover the secrets of happiness.

Did you know that in some countries it's not only dangerous but also illegal to drive on the left hand side of the road?

Did you know that in some countries it's not only dangerous but also illegal to drive on the right hand side of the road?

Now tell me whether it's right or wrong to drive on the left.

Now tell me whether it's bad or good to drive on the right.

It's ok to want life to be different, but you won't get it by hating how life is right now. That just creates more of what life is like right now because all of your mind energy is focused on what you hate. Focus your mind energy on acknowledging that you've always done the best you knew how - even when it didn't produce the results you desired. Especially when it didn't produce the results other people desired for you.

You won't change your body shape permanently by hating the way it is. You will change it permanently by loving it and seeking to nourish it and care for it and wanting it to be healthy and fit.

Do you feel loved when people make time for you?

Do you feel loved by people who have no time for you?

In order to learn to love yourself there has to be time for you.

You are a wonderful person and you have skills, talents, insights, and abilities that are special to you. These gifts may not be judged by others to be the best, but they probably drive on the other side of the road, and so can be ignored. Yes it matters what other people think. But it doesn't matter anywhere near as much as what you think.

In the early days of developing my photographic skills and talent someone close to me was a little disparaging about work that I was pleased with. I could have given up. But I didn't and I achieved my dream of getting my work on the cover of a magazine that was on sale all over the country.

If no one else believes in you, then you have no right to walk away from you too. Just imagine how lonely a 6 year old can be when no one wants to be their friend. Doesn't your heart go out if you see a child all alone and obviously lonely in the playground? That's what you do to yourself every time you give up on you. That's what you do to yourself every time you criticise or judge yourself.

Total acceptance is your intention. It doesn't matter how many times you act in a way that's at odds with your intention. The only thing that matters is that each time you remind yourself "What I'm doing here is inconsistent with my intention to accept and love myself". That's all you need to do. Achievement isn't the goal. Keeping your intention foremost is.

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