

What is Happiness After All? - Four Simple Principles

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We all want to know the future because it will affect our happiness and well-being.

Who will win the presidential election?
Is the stock market going to go up... or down?
Will I get the promotion at work that I deserve?

If we stake our happiness on future events, if we are just waiting for that better job or promotion to finally happen, then we are not going to be happy people. We must learn to find happiness in the midst of the uncertainties and disappointments of today.

Also, even if I do find happiness, is it right to be happy when there is so much suffering in the world?

Guilt-free vacations?

I enjoy going on vacations and seeing the natural beauty of the planet. However, while I am on vacation, I can't help but think about the people who are starving, wars that are going on, economies collapsing, children suffering, broken families. Rather than being on vacation, perhaps there is something more I should be doing to help. Should I abandon my job, my family, and friends and become a full-time missionary like Mother Teresa?

Of course, I want to enjoy my vacation. But, I also want to be a responsible person. How can I balance the need to enjoy my life with the desire to relieve the suffering of others?

Four simple principles

We must each find our own answers to these challenges. For me, as a lifelong Unificationist, there does seem to be a way to be both responsible and happy. Below are four simple principles that are fully aligned with my Unificationist spiritual values and that have helped me find a fulfilling, happy, and balanced life.

First, the essential element of any effort to improve the world is to start with God, our Creator and loving Heavenly Parent. It is easy to become distracted in today's world with the constant bombardment of media

as well as the demands of career and family. I pray every day, asking for guidance, inspiration, and clarity. This empowers me to succeed with the projects and purposes I have undertaken. I have found that God will place me in the right place at the right time if I am open to His presence and guidance.

Second, the world is much too big for one person to change. However, I can love and care for those in my immediate circle. My spouse, my children, my friends, and my local community are all places where I can immediately make a difference.

In order to bring love into my relationships, it is important for me to have sincere and authentic communications. This is the work of changing the center of attention from myself to others. The bottom-line motto of the Unification Movement is "live for the sake of others." In order to do that, it is critical to listen to the "others" in my life and learn what they need and how I can help. There are always more than enough needs -- which are opportunities to practice love -- in my family, my neighborhood, and my circle of friends.

Third, I look for ways to invest in some aspect of the world around me. This follows another Unification motto: "Peace Starts with Me!" I can't solve all the world's problems, but I can be a part of the solution. Every one of us has unique talents, skills, and abilities. Some can give money, some can do counseling, some can do public outreach, or serve through ministry. I find satisfaction giving financial support to a [non-profit](#) working on clean water supply for people in Africa. I found even greater rewards by doing service projects in places like Honduras, Ecuador, Thailand, and Trinidad.

Serving needy people can also be done right in your city. There are countless organizations working wherever you live to make life better for those less fortunate. Pick one to start and volunteer your time. You will experience the uplifting feeling of helping. Be careful, as this feeling is addictive and soon you may become an extremely valuable person for God.

Fourth, partake of the beauty and pleasures of life on the earth such as nature, good food, hobbies, and friends. Do things that you enjoy. This principle creates the balance in my life. There is something very regenerative about spending time in nature. It provides me with comfort and energy. There is no hate, resentment, or anger in the forest. Greed, envy, and lust are missing from the wind and waves of a beach.

If you can find time to do the activities you love and be with people who love you, the energy needed to be a force for goodness will come to you. If all else fails, pecan pie with whipped cream should get you going again.

Sharing love makes us feel 'happiest of all'

In a 1984 speech entitled Way of Life, Rev. Sun Myung Moon shared this advice about happiness:

What is happiness in the true sense? ... You are elevated, elated, and happy when you can give to other people. ... By giving and talking with other people, you feel happy....You are happy when you can give things to other people, when you can share the position, wealth, knowledge, and whatever you have that is virtuous with other people....If you can share love with each other that makes you feel happiest of all.

Since we cannot control the future, we must apply principles that enable us to find happiness in the present. For me, this includes not only having fun and enjoyment but also contributing to those around me. Living for a higher purpose every day and living with God imbue me with a feeling of being valuable to others. For me, this seems to be what happiness is all about. Wow! I can live a happy life and also help God each day to build a better world.