

# **You Can Be Happy No Matter What**

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by Richard Carlson, Ph.D.

## **The Principle of Thought**

1. Your thoughts, not your circumstances, determine how you feel. Blaming our unhappiness on our circumstances makes us feel powerless over our lives.
2. We need not constantly be in conflict with those around us. You may have no control over what another person does, but you can be immune to the negative effects of your thinking about that person.
3. It isn't the circumstances, but our interpretation of them that determines our level of well being.
4. Because our thought systems are filled with our memories of the past (information we have accumulated throughout our lifetimes), they encourage us to continue to see things in the same way.
5. If you understand the nature of thought systems, you can begin to see beyond them and sense the value in other points of view. What we did interpret as criticism we can see merely as an opinion from another person with his/her own thought system.
6. We can virtually eliminate unprofitable arguments in our lives and eliminate feeling resentful, confused, or angry at others who don't see things our way. When we understand the nature of thought systems, we will not expect others to see things our way.

## **The Principle of Moods**

1. You will always see life and the events in it differently in different moods.
  - When you are in a high mood, life looks good.
  - In low moods, life looks unbearably serious and hard.
2. For some people mood shifts are slight. For others the shifts are extreme.
3. In our lowest moods we will never see things in perspective.
4. When you are in a low mood, learn to pass it off as simply that: an unavoidable human condition that will pass with time if you leave it alone and avoid giving it too much attention.
5. If you learn to recognize other people's moods, you will quit judging them when they are in a low mood. Most serious relationship problems turn out to be nothing more than two partners who have made a habit of taking each other's low moods too seriously. Most partners don't give each other the space they need in a low mood. When we see the truth in this principle, we won't be searching for alternative partners to replace the ones we already have. Instead, we will realize that anyone we meet, anywhere in the world, is going to have a fair share of low moods.
6. In our low moods we will want to solve our problems and confront other people. However, if you want to have a discussion about something that is bothering you, the time to do it is in a high mood.

### **The Principle of Separate Realities**

1. It is impossible for two human beings to see things exactly alike. Yet, many people spend their lifetimes proving to themselves and to others that their version of life is valid, realistic, and correct.
2. When we realize that everyone sees things differently, we can continue to maintain any belief or opinion we have. Other people's objections to them will not be such a source of hostility or pain.
3. When you approach someone, not in an attempt to change their beliefs but with a genuine interest and respect for their view of life, defenses drop and hearts open.
4. Listen without judgment, and the person you are with will sense your respect for his/her position and your willingness to listen. The result is increased understanding and softening on both sides, the essence of compromise or collaboration, bringing out the best in ourselves and in others.

### **The Principle of Feelings**

1. Negative feelings will disappear quickly enough if we simply leave them alone.
2. Wisdom and common sense come from a more positive feeling state, from a quiet and rested mind. When we feel good, we are more equipped to solve any problem that may come up.
3. If our internal experience of life isn't pleasant, we are creating our own misery through our own thought system. We can recognize and value our alternatives, make the mental shift, stop habitual thinking, and return to a natural state of well-being.

### **The Principle of the Present Moment**

1. Keeping your attention on the past (or the future) can become a habit that is difficult to break.
2. The only way to experience genuine and lasting contentment, satisfaction, and happiness is to learn to live your life in the present moment.
3. Your thoughts can take you from a state of calm into a state of turmoil without any actual changes taking place. The solution to this mental sabotage is to become aware and conscious of your mind spinning forward toward problems, deadlines, and issues, or backward toward reliving old wounds or frustrations. Remind yourself to guide your thoughts back to the present when they are too caught up in problems.
4. As you become more proficient at living in the moment, you will be able to decide moment to moment what your experience of life will be.

### **Relationships**

1. Any relationship begins with us. When our own lives are full of contentment, we have some left over for other people.
2. When we feel good about ourselves, there is no need to be overly critical or defensive because we no longer feel threatened by others.
3. Everyone you come into contact with is doing the best that he/she can do in life. Beneath our negative behavior, we all want to be warm, friendly, compassionate people.
4. In poor relationships, people make the mistake of taking negative behavior personally.
5. People respect and admire others who are understanding of their mental state (especially when they are down), and they appreciate those who can maintain a sense of well-being when others have “lost their heads.”
6. It is important to know when we are in a low mood and when others are in a low mood.
7. Our spouses, co-workers, children, employees, friends, and others will say and do things in their low moods that they wouldn’t dream of saying or doing in their high moods.
8. Don’t try to give people advice when they are in a low mood. No one is receptive to information in a low state of mind. Don’t ignore them either. Just understand and have compassion. The rest will take care of itself.

### **Stress**

1. Stress is not something that “happens to us,” but rather something that develops from within our own thinking. From the inside out, we decide what is and is not going to be stressful.
2. Dwelling on stressful thoughts makes you less effective at communicating your needs to others as well.
3. The key to eliminating stress from our lives is to understand that we manufacture stress. Whenever we blow up anything in our minds, we create the potential for stress.
4. The purpose of stress is to warn us when we are headed toward psychological danger. The more stress we feel, the more important it is to drop the thoughts that are on our mind.
5. When we feel stressed, we:
  - Lose our psychological bearings, wisdom, and common sense.
  - Tend to take things too seriously.
  - Lose sight of the big picture and often get lost in the details of our problems.
6. When we learn to feel our stress as early as possible, we can nip it in the bud earlier and return more quickly to a more positive feeling state. The longer we disregard stressful thoughts, the more difficult it becomes to bring ourselves back to our natural state of mind.

### **Solving Problems**

1. Problems are generated more by the way we feel than by our circumstances. The moment we stop trying to change circumstances and focus instead on raising our feeling level, our problems will begin to fade away.
2. When our mood and feeling level is higher, we will have answers to our problems that we couldn't see when our mood was lower.
3. As ironic as it seems, we need to stop thinking about a problem in order to see the new solution. As our minds clear of our concerns, answers will occur to us in ways we never thought possible.

### **Happiness**

1. Happiness is a state of mind, not a set of circumstances. You can never find happiness by searching because happiness is not found outside yourself. When you attach conditions to your happiness, you won't experience it.
2. Excessive thinking about your past and your problems will convince you that you have good reasons to be upset and unhappy. You can learn from your past, but it is a mistake to continually go into your past or overanalyze life in a search for happiness.
3. Your life will look drastically different depending on your level of well-being. Things that torment us in an upset state of mind don't bother us at all in a higher, more pleasant state of mind.
4. Happiness requires no effort at all. It is more of a letting go of unhappiness than it is a striving for happiness.

### **Habits and Addictions**

1. When you don't understand the dynamics of your own mind, you attempt to get your positive feeling back through outside sources, which can be the beginning of bad habits.
2. Some substitutes for a contented state of mind are: alcohol, drugs, cigarettes, food, exercise, gambling, sex, work, arguing, fighting, proving yourself, and approval seeking.
3. If you have serenity, eliminating bad habits is both possible and enjoyable. Without serenity, change is difficult or impossible.
4. The ingredients needed to break any habit are:
  - Happiness: The breeding ground that points to your goal.
  - Resolve: The inner commitment that points to your goal.
  - Understanding: The vehicle to take you there.