

Enjoy and Be Happy

Things don't always have to go your way or be right before you can be happy. Contrary to what many people think, happiness is not determined by outside circumstances; rather it is determined by how we view our circumstances. We don't always have to control people and events, but we do have the power to be happy. The key is to know you have a choice on how to deal with adversity.

John Lennon once said, *"Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans."* What a profound statement. It's how we perceive and act upon what happens that gives us access towards the happiness we all desire.

Our natural state of being is one of inner peace. When you let outside circumstances determine your happiness, your natural state of peace deteriorates. When this happens inner peace is replaced with a sense of being cheated and that the world and everyone in it is out to get you. This is what I call the *"Why me?"* syndrome.

"Why is it that every time I get in line at the grocery store there is a price check?"

"Why do I have to be sick now?"

"Why can't I get a break?"

This type of thinking is very controlling and leads to a lack of trust in the process of life. As a result, your enjoyment and appreciation of all of the good and beauty that life has to offer gets distorted. This leaves you with a twisted and unhappy existence.

In order for you to choose happiness you must understand that you are the creator of your thoughts. Thoughts don't just happen to you. They're something you create. When something bad or upsetting happens, it's not the situation that makes you unhappy. It's your thoughts about the situation that cause you to feel a certain way.

Let me give you an example. My wife and I were in the process of purchasing a house that was built in 1918. We knew at first glance that this was the house of our dreams. It had everything we've always wanted in a house. We knew a lot of work needed to be done, but still we were both very excited and enthusiastic about our new venture. In fact, fixing it up was part of the fun.

One morning however, I woke up feeling very disturbed and unsure about all the work that needed to be done. All of these thoughts were going through my brain. *Did I choose the right contractor for the job? Should I knock out all of the plaster walls and replace them with sheetrock? Should I put the sheetrock over the plaster? If I don't gut out the walls, I'll never know what kind of wiring, plumbing or insulation it has. This could be a fire hazard! What if the whole house needs to be re-wired? What if they take longer than they said? What if they damage the foundation? What will I do if the contractor gets sick or dies halfway through the job? This is costing me more than I thought! How do I know I was quoted the right price? Sure, I can afford it, but maybe I should have put my money into a new house?*

Do you see what I was doing to myself? That particular morning I was very close to turning my dream house into a house of horrors. I allowed myself to create a thought pattern that was causing a negative emotional response. My emotional response was setting off an unhealthy physiological response. My heart was racing, my stomach was tight. I just didn't feel right. These physiological side effects were causing me to think more negatively, which in turn was causing me to feel more emotionally disturbed, and so on.

It's a vicious negative cycle that can create disastrous results. I was actually beginning to believe that this house was not worth the trouble. This web of negativity I was caught up in, kept me from seeing the beauty this house had to offer.

Lucky for me, I was aware of what I was doing to myself. I knew I was creating an unhealthy reality. If I kept reviewing these negative scenarios over and over, I could have convinced myself that the entire project was going to be more trouble than it's worth.

So remember, just one negative incident first thing in morning can cause a snowball effect. It can regulate everything you do throughout the day. It can control your energy, your enthusiasm and your spirit. Just one negative thought first thing in the morning can take a dream filled with hope and blow it to pieces.