

Happiness

I have had many clients come into counseling because they said they were unhappy with their current life situations. I ask them, "Where do you think happiness comes from?" The overwhelming majority of them pause for a moment and then reply, "from within ourselves". This is true. Happiness does come from within ourselves. It comes from our minds ability to look at situations from a contented perspective. The better we are at focusing on 'what is good enough' in our life, rather than 'what is not good enough' in our life, the higher our chances will be of attaining happiness.

In 2005, PEW Research Center polled over 3 thousand American adults, regarding happiness. About 50% reported being 'pretty happy.' The study found that just as many women were happy, as men. It was of no surprise that people who felt rushed were less happy than people who did not feel rushed, and that only 24% of people with financial stress were happy, compared to 49% of people with higher incomes. It can take more effort to be happy when we are stressed out.

Interestingly enough, the two categories of people who reported highest (43%) on being 'very happy', were married people who attended weekly religious services. Only 24% of unmarried people who seldom, or never attended religious services reported being 'happy.' The people polled in this study implied that having a relationship with God and/or with a significant other had a positive effect on their happiness.

Happy people are presented with difficulties and tragedies, just as unhappy people are. How we stay happy during life's difficulties is determined by the thoughts we give our attention to. Since this is in our control, I suggest the following:

- * List 10 things you are grateful for everyday.
- * Seek and find good in yourself and other people, daily.
- * Participate in enjoyable activities on a weekly basis.
- * Pursue peace and harmony in your relationships.
- * Write down the future you want to have and read it weekly. Do one thing each week to work toward creating that future.
- * Do regular acts of kindness that make others smile.

Your happiness is up to you! You deserve to be happy, so give yourself the gift.

To learn more about happiness, contact Elisabeth Davies, MC or visit www.brightalternatives.com.