

## THE KEY TO HAPPINESS

The great poet Kahlil Gibran wrote these lines about happiness:

*“ Like all men, during these five and twenty years I have loved happiness;*

*I have learned to awake at every dawn and seek it, even as they.*

*But never have I found it in their ways,*

*Nor seen the trace of the footsteps of happiness on the sand near their mansions,*

*Nor have I heard the echo of its voice from the window of their temples.*

*I sought to find it.*

*I heard my soul whisper in my ear:*

*‘Happiness is a maiden born and reared in the fastness of the heart;*

*She comes never from beyond its walls.’ “*

There is nothing on this earth that we all seek more intensely than happiness. Happiness is a difficult word to understand because it means so many things to so many people. In fact, it oftentimes happens that one man’s sadness is another’s happiness and vice versa.

As Gibran says, happiness is a state of mind. It resides in the inner self. It is defined by an individual as that which answers his needs. And since his needs are constantly changing, forever evolving, it is impossible to say that this or that is what makes one happy. Because what makes me happy today may be unable to do so tomorrow. Because I am constantly changing, my needs are also changing. And since happiness is the fulfillment of these needs, it is obvious that what I believe will make me happy will change as I go through all kinds of changes myself.

It is amazing how 10 people, all in the same situation, will feel 10 different kinds of feelings about it. Some may experience joy in various degrees of intensity while others may sense sadness and boredom to a greater or lesser degree. It will all depend on where one is at within himself.

And the reason why so many of us cannot seem to find that happiness we seek is that we really do not know what we want. We realize that we are looking for something. What that something is, we are not sure. And so, we go on searching for that something, not sure of what it might be and where we might find it. And, because we do not yet have this something in our grasp, we are unhappy. For it is in the actual fulfillment of our needs that we experience that joy which is the trademark of happiness.

What many, if not most of us, fail to understand is that, before we can ever even begin to expect to find happiness, we must identify what it is we want. Otherwise, we are like the woman in the shopping

center who does not really know what she is looking for, only that she is looking. She wanders around aimlessly and most likely ends up going home empty-handed or with something she does not need.

Most of our search for happiness consists, I think, in sorting out what it is that we want. Because we have so many options, we move this way and then change direction and go that way. We are so fickle and in our desires that we hardly ever are consistent enough to stay with one thing long enough to experience the joy of having it.

If you feel that you are unhappy, I would guess it is because you have not yet decided (*really* decided) what it is that you truly want. What you need to do is first check this out and, I think, the rest will follow rather easily.