

Mental Health – Happiness

What is the definition of happiness?

Happiness is something that is much discussed and some of the more scientific people have mentioned that it is the release of endorphins that creates the sense of “happiness” felt by people. Many of us use the phrase “I feel happy” rather loosely, to indicate feelings such as contentment and satisfaction.

True happiness means different things to different people. Some of them get the sense of elation when they finally overcome a challenge like climbing to the mountaintop; some are jubilant when they see their child take that first step or graduate from university. These are linked to achieving something or attaining a goal. This is something that a number of self-help books advocate to attain that one aim in life.

There are also those who believe that true happiness is not something which is felt in that one moment in life but is consistently felt despite the day-to-day stresses. A person should not wait for that one moment that you feel euphoric, because what then would you do with the rest of your life? True happiness should be something that you are able to experience every day.

Are people nowadays generally happy?

The opinions are rather divided. As society progresses, there are more things to keep people happy. In addition, there is more focus and demand on emotional happiness too. Given that many people are financially stable, many of them would believe that material goods can make one happy. Inability to purchase the material goods one desire may make one upset. It is common to think this way because we all aim to lead a comfortable life. However, when one try and compare themselves to others who may have things they do not, it may jeopardise one’s happiness. Jealousy and frustration would make one feel unhappy.

Why do you think there are lack of happiness in our society nowadays?

Happiness is a choice we make. As aforementioned in the question above, many of us expect certain things in our lives. When these expectations are not met, we feel a sense of disappointment and rejection. If we allow that to perpetuate, we will continue to feel unhappy.

However, if we make the decision to not let the negative emotions get to us and focus on other areas that make us happy, the feeling of happiness will prevail.

It is easier said than done of course. Our society is superficial. The society focuses on job status and the amount of asset and wealth. Many of us will try to look elsewhere to feel happy. Some take to food to release the tension, some go to spas, and others even go online to have this fantasy world that you cannot have in reality.

Is there any advice on how to attain happiness?

The most important question we have to ask ourselves is what our expectations in life are and if they are realistic or not. If they are realistic, and we are stuck in a situation that makes us unhappy, we can extract ourselves from it.

We can also constantly remind ourselves what we have rather than what we don't have. Many times, as humans, we tend to look at what we don't have and feel unhappy about it. If the things that we do not have are parts of our goals, we can ask ourselves what we can do about it. For instance, if a wife thinks "I am unhappy that my husband don't come home early enough", the wife can instead think of solutions. She can ask herself a few questions such as "how can I get him home more often? Would a nice dinner do? Would less nagging make it more conducive? Is he getting enough time to himself?"

What are some practical tips and solutions to help women in their 30s and 40s achieve happiness?

During this part of the life cycle, it is where most Singaporean women are expecting to have attained some sort of direction in their careers, have a partner or even have settled down with one or two children. If these were met, they would feel that they have fulfilled their goal and most would feel happy.

However, not all of these are essential to all women. It is alright not to follow the norm. There are increasing number of women in their 30's who are unattached and unmarried. They are not unhappy. Many of them enjoy their situation. However, because they are being pressured by their peers, family and even society, many are affected.

For any woman, it is encouraged for them to determine their own personal goals and what they want to focus on. It is important for them to also focus on what makes them really comfortable day to day and not depend on things set by other people. They are encouraged to learn to manage each situation and their own expectations instead of focusing on trying to fulfill the expectations of other people.

When a person or their loved one is down, what can they do?

Happiness is not an on and off switch. We may feel down when we see a loved one being down as it affects our moods. However, asking a person to snap out of the sadness and be happy would add more pressure to them. Instead, we can offer to be

their listening ears and being present to them will also be helpful. During the period that they are down, they are not immobilized. Being in that negative state may prompt them to think more and relook at their status and look into the changes they would like to do.

If you believe you or your loved one needs to seek professional help, The Therapy Room is here to help. The Therapy Room consists of a team of psychologists – led by Geraldine Tan, the principal psychologist – who has ample amount of experiences working with people across the lifespan using therapeutic interventions. Should you have any concerns or inquiries, please feel free to click [here](#) and contact us and find out more.

Is happiness really a choice or is it more often than not, determined by circumstances?

Whatever the circumstance may be, if you dwell on the unhappy you would be unhappy. Happiness is a state of positive thinking. It is not asking you to rest on your laurels but to ensure that you do not fall into the dark end. Making the effort to do so is the choice that you have to make. Therefore, making the effort to think positively is the choice you have to make. Being happy or unhappy is the consequence of the choice made by you.

If you had just one quote to give to someone who wanted to be happy, what would it be?

“Look at life through a child’s eyes. He looks at everything with wonderment and excitement, seeing life as a positive challenge and not a trying time.”