

How To Be Happy



Bob Brown

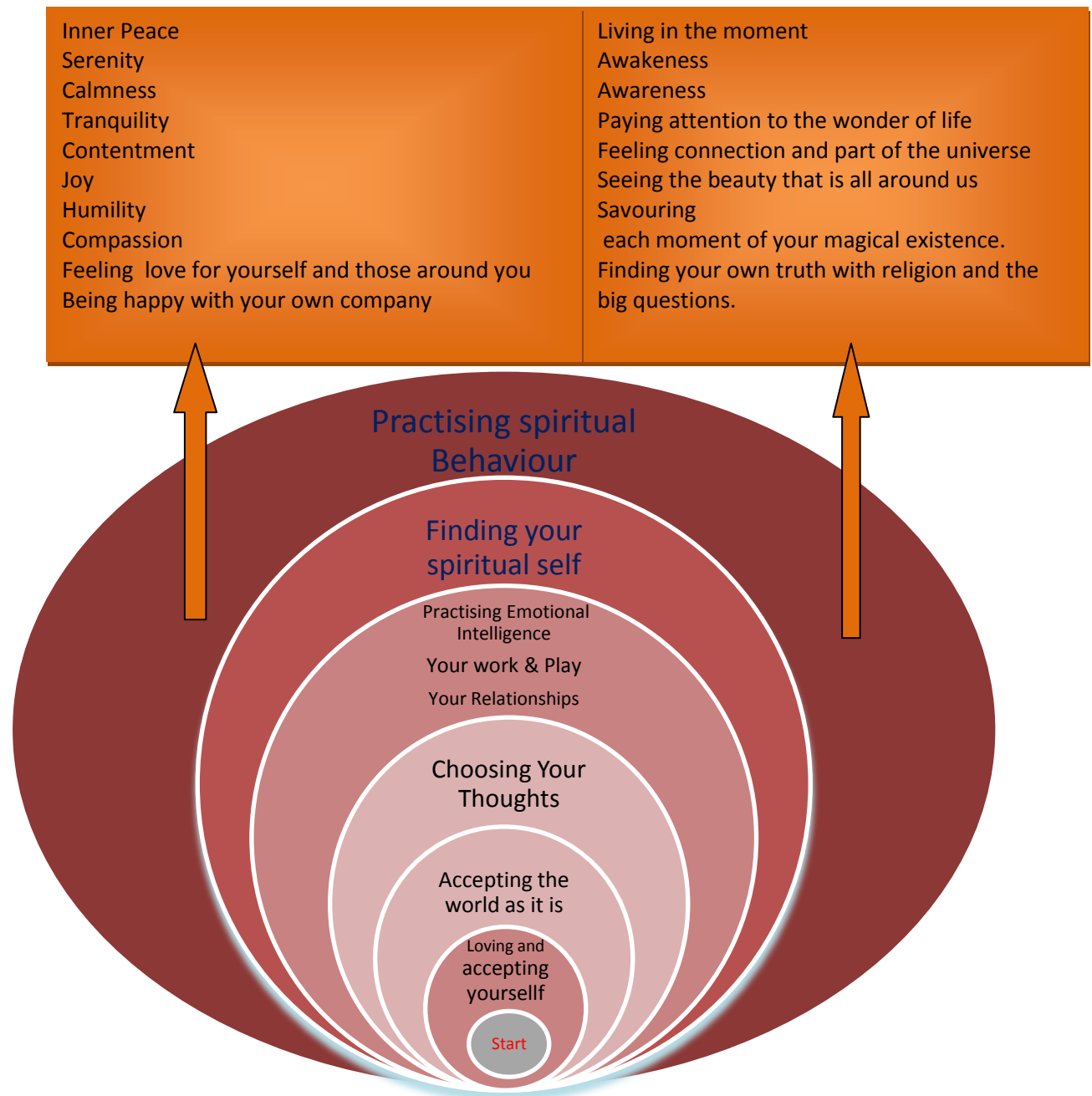
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Your personal journey for self development

Happiness- What will it be like ?



How to be Happy- *This book really can change your life and show you how to find happiness*

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1. My Offer to You

Your Journey to Happiness

Sometimes life can seem tough and happiness very elusive.

In this guide, I will share with you an understanding of just what happiness is and how YOU can achieve it and be happy with a moment by moment, deep and sustainable love of life that is truly wonderful.

I've been thinking, reading and seeking happiness myself for many years and what follows has worked for me and is working for a large number of followers around the world and I sincerely hope will be of help to you in your quest for lifelong happiness, joy and contentment.

My starting point is to think about our lives on two levels – the Emotional and the Spiritual.

Emotional Intelligence (EI)

Spiritual Intelligence (SI)

Improving the skill and wisdom – or 'Intelligence' - with which we live our lives at these two levels is the key to happiness. The essence of my philosophy is that EI and SI are about you controlling your mind rather than being controlled by it. Further, the causes of unhappiness arise in the mind and the solutions are also to be found in the mind.

Each of us needs to start work on our EI first, and in the guide I explain how to do this. EI is about how we handle basic, raw and instinctive emotions with skill, maturity and perspective to enable us to avoid some or most of the unhappiness that arises where we are at the mercy of uncontrolled emotion. We can never be happy while we are still under the control of our ego, and at the mercy of negative emotions and negative energy.

How much effort you need to put into working on your EI will depend on where you are starting from.

Only when we have learned how to behave with EI can we tackle the understanding and application of Spiritual Intelligence. The prize and rewards for reaching some level of SI are huge. That is where true lasting and deep happiness can be found.

- *'I feel inner peace, serenity, contentment and love for myself and those around me and fun and bubbling joy most of the time'*
- *'At last, I feel my life is fun and I enjoy the ride and each day feel positive and buoyant even when times are tough'*
- *'I can really connect with other people and the important relationships in my life have improved and are more fulfilling'*
- *'I've swapped anger, conflict and upset for inner peace, calmness and serenity'*

You can and should choose your thoughts with care because what you think controls how you feel, and how you feel controls how you see the world, both overall and moment by moment.

I will show you how you really do create your life with your thoughts. Happiness does not come from events and what happens but from within. Later when I get deep into SI I will cover the Law of Attraction and show you how and why you attract your life, and how you can attract the life you wish for.

I will show you how to begin to develop SI by practising critical behaviours such as listening to your intuition, meditation, living in the moment, and feeling love and compassion for yourself and others. For me, SI is the awakening of the missing piece of most people, which addresses the ache that we feel that there must be 'more to life than this'. It has nothing to do with any religion, guru or deity. Some describe SI as 'Insight', or 'Awareness', and Buddhists describe the SI goal as "Enlightenment". What's for sure is that, whatever you call it, Enlightenment is very rarely a sudden and total transformation-a finishing line that we cross and suddenly we are perfectly spiritual people. It's not a place that you arrive at but a new way of looking at things, and a new way of seeing things .

My thinking has been influenced by reading a large number of 'Self Help' books and I've found that actually there is a surprising amount of common ground and although the language and terms may differ they are essentially saying similar things.

You will also find that I have been influenced a lot by Buddhist thinking. I would however emphasise that Buddhism is not considered to be a traditional 'religion' , but rather as a philosophy and it is absolutely NOT necessary to be a Buddhist to adopt the principles I set out - or to be religious or believe in any deity .

I invite you to seriously consider embarking on a journey of practising Emotional and Spiritual Intelligence, knowing that doing so WILL lead you to personal Happiness. To be successful you will need to focus on where you are going and not dwell on where you have come from. I understand that you may currently be feeling unhappy, discontented and disappointed – but believe me you are not alone. Modern western culture is leading vast numbers into the unhappiness trap.

The rewards for following this journey will be well worth the effort. **Make no mistake, life can be so rewarding and joyful all the time.** Life is sweet. Life is a privilege. If you can free yourself from your ego and the delusions of your mind then you can skip and dance through life with the excitement and curiosity of a child, savouring every moment, full of love and compassion for yourself and those around you, really seeing the beauty that is all around us.



Thank you for letting me share this with you

Bob

2. Emotional Intelligence

2.1 Introduction

Emotional intelligence (EI) is the handling of raw, instinctive and basic emotions with skill, maturity and perspective and will enable you to avoid some or most of the unhappiness that arises where you are at the mercy of your raw emotion. One way of seeing EI is that it is about living life with skill and wisdom at the level where people appear to be separate islands and to be focussed on and looking after themselves. In this way you can learn to avoid the common traps and hazards that cause people unhappiness in the forms of eg anger, jealousy, and craving on potentially an almost continual basis. If a person does not ever understand and exercise EI then life to them will often seem very hard and painful.

Sadly many people do indeed not understand or exercise EI and are instead living in a brain washed trance. They are blindly obeying what society says they should do, how to speak, how to behave, and what to think. They are following a pied piper dancing to the repetitive beat of society's unrelenting conditioning through parental example, television, magazines, education, peer pressure, and cultural norms. They desperately want to be the same, be 'normal', and be 'cool'. The result is that they see a false 'reality' and believe it to be authentic. For example they actually start to believe that it really matters that their bodies conform to a society 'norm', or worse conform to a media promoted mythical standard of beauty and thinness that is anything but 'normal' or widely attainable. They actually start to believe that they must dress in a certain way, talk in a certain way, have enough friends on their social networking sites etc

Even more damaging society teaches them that they should be driven by the 'Self, Me, I' agenda, and be a slave to their ego, and thereby be unhappy most of the time believing what their Ego' perspective tells them. This is all a false reality, and there is no easy way to say this, but when we do not behave with EI, then we are deluded by our minds, and barred from being spiritual.

Of course we are not born with this false reality. Arguably children are born 'spiritual' e.g. they are born feeling unconditional love, have no ego, and live in the moment. As children grow we observe them being contaminated and brainwashed. Our challenge is to undo this conditioning in ourselves.

At its simplest level, we are beings that think and exist in (and only exist in) the moment. Like a PC if at any given moment we are running a virus i.e. suffering from a delusion, allowing in negative emotion, then we keep out spirituality. In order to develop and maintain a spiritual perspective, we have to begin by behaving with EI.

Your personal Journey of self development

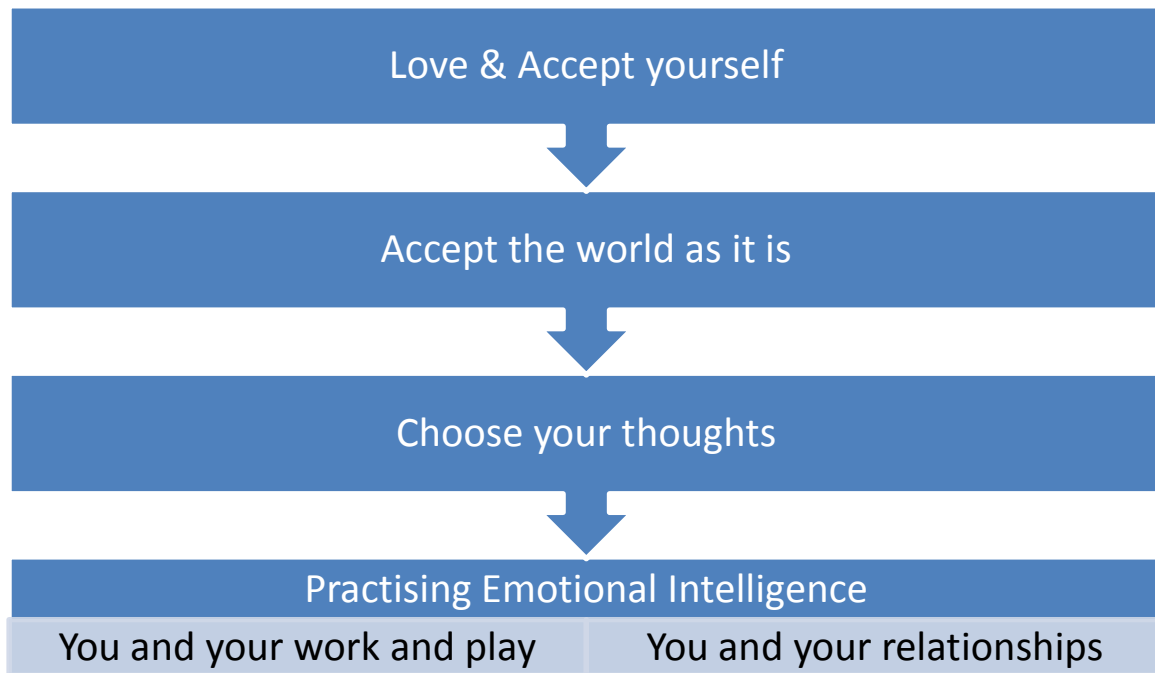
I invite you to seriously consider embarking on the journey of practising EI and SI that will lead you to happiness. As with any journey of self development to be successful you will need to concentrate on where you are going and not dwell on where you have come from. I really do understand how you may currently be feeling unhappy, discontented and disappointed and believe me you are not alone. Modern western culture is leading vast numbers of people into the unhappiness trap.

But you can be different and you can escape. To commence your escape I want you to put your past and how you are currently feeling to one side and get a blank sheet of paper and spend a few moments writing down how you would like to feel and what success would look like. If it helps refer to my description of happiness on Page 4. Then I want you to keep this visualisation of success to refer to at any time after you commence your journey, whenever your resolve or confidence is reduced by life's events.

I need to be honest with you and warn you that depending on where you are starting from this path may be very long and hard. There is no short cut or fast track. But the good news is that rather than jumping

ahead and trying to read and understand all about EI and SI all at once I do not want you to do that. In fact there is absolutely no point in that because it will not work because you will just feel overwhelmed. Also this is because there are some fundamental things you need to work on and really understand at the beginning of the path which are the essential foundation for moving forward in your transformation. For the time being I only want you to take the first three steps identified in 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 below one at a time without jumping ahead. Even when you have achieved just one or two of these first steps you will be amazed at the impact it will have on how you feel about your life and yourself. So the good news is that initially I only want you to read section 2.2 which is short in length but massive in its importance and I would rather you just read that three times than going any further at this stage.

Emotional Intelligence



2.2 Loving & Accepting Yourself

This first step may unsettle you in a big way but if it does you have taken the first step in your personal transformation towards happiness. I assert that there is no other path or route towards happiness than this first step

The foundation to developing EI is **to love and accept yourself**. You cannot make progress with EI if you have issues about your own self worth and lack self approval and self confidence.

Rather than skipping ahead I advise you to concentrate for now just on the advice in this first section 2.2. People look at others who they mistakenly believe are more fortunate and say, "Well I would be happy if I was them!" People say, "I could be happy if I was you. Try being me for a day and see how that feels!" Well that stops here and now.

I want you to make a new best friend **now** and that is YOU. You cannot make progress with EI until you understand and really believe that YOU are the best friend that you have. I know at first that is going to sound weird but trust me for now and try it. Take your new best friend out with you for the next day or so and feel immediately how much nicer life is.

Love Yourself

I do not mean loving ourselves in a narcissistic and vain way but in the sense of treating ourselves and having a relationship with ourselves that is just like the one we would have with another person who was 'the love of our life'.

Self care and self love are fundamental; not in an arrogant and egotistical sense but in the sense of self approval and acceptance. You ARE good enough.

Listen to how you talk to yourself-is it kind?-and ask yourself would you talk to a friend that way?

Value yourself rather than trying to find validation through others.

Get to know yourself. Enjoy your own company. Many people's lives are lived in such a whirlwind of social interaction and social networking, always searching for approval and endorsement from others, that they never spend any time alone or just being themselves. People become almost afraid of being on their own as if it indicates they are a social failure or reject. Time spent on your own just 'being' is more than just desirable, it is vital to maintaining who you are, and maintaining your confidence and knowing yourself. It also gives you the time and opportunity away from the constant bombardment of life to review your choices and friends and relationships to make sure they are all still good for you.

You should feel that it is fun being you, and that you are lucky to be you, and that there is no one else you would rather be. You are doing an important job being you that no one else can do.

We must love ourselves before we can unconditionally love everyone else. We have to love ourselves for others to love us. Others will treat you the way you treat yourself. You must enjoy your own company for other people to enjoy your company. You must enjoy spending time with yourself for other people to enjoy spending time with you.

Do not find identity in love from someone else. If we measure ourselves by how much someone else loves us we give away self worth.

Accept and be yourself

Accept and be yourself. Like yourself. You are good enough. Cut yourself some slack.

A strong sense of self worth and self esteem is the key to an anxiety free life. Self liking is the foundation for happiness. When you build up your self esteem you become less 'needy' of others.

Remain positive with your choices, and have faith in your ability to know what is right for you. One of the good things about growing older is that (hopefully) you build self esteem through experience, and the knowledge that you have successfully handled and will again successfully handle life's situations and problems.

Do not obsess about what other people think.

Humility

Embrace your inner disaster area and laugh at it. Don't take yourself too seriously. If you are the sort of person who is very hard on yourself, then be prepared to let yourself make mistakes and to encourage yourself when you do – extend the same care and love to yourself as you do to others. That does not mean excusing yourself, but remember we are all 'works in progress' and you can be open to yourself and others that this is the case.

Humility does not mean humbling ourselves but the ability to face ourselves honestly and examine our own behaviour and when we are wrong, to admit it to ourselves and others. In contrast, blaming the ones that we love in order to protect ourselves and our own ego is reprehensible. Similarly in our more arm's length relationships, being open and honest about our own failings where this is appropriate is not demeaning, it marks us out as someone who is confident, honest and free of their ego.

Be careful how strongly you hold your opinions and how sure you are that your view of the world and how things should be is the 'right' one especially as you get older. Develop the wisdom to know that issues are rarely 'black and white' and that 'things change' and that there are different ways of seeing things none of which are necessarily 'right' or 'wrong'. Have the wisdom to know that there are always two sides to everything. And really try to understand the other point of view and how that point of view might arise regardless of whether you agree with it.

2.3 Accepting the world as it is

The world is as it is – not how you think it should be or how you would like it to be. It is as it is. Accept it and be grateful you are here to see it at all. Do not look for or expect any natural justice in the universe. There isn't any - and neither is there a referee.

There that was short and sweet wasn't it? But this is also so fundamental that until you accept, understand and believe this basic truth you cannot make any further progress with EI. If you do not accept this basic truth rather than learning 'How life works', you will instead spend your life struggling with and fighting life's events and be at odds with the people in your life and will be constantly irritated and disappointed that your life is not as your mind wishes it to be, or thinks it should be. I want to help you understand how the world works so that you can work with it, *as it is*, rather than fighting it and being constantly disappointed and frustrated.

I appeal to you to realise and understand that this is what you are doing-fighting life and the world. Your emotional and intellectual energy and resources are being consumed and wasted by this fighting moment by moment. You cannot be happy and have inner peace if you are always fighting this battle. This second fundamental truth is perhaps just as unsettling as step 1.

If you spend your time and energy hoping for things to be other than they are, or wondering why or how something has happened then you are lost. I ask you to really understand that it is absolutely futile and irrational to fight something that *already is*. It means that you are opposing life itself. Start living and embracing your real life, not the fictional version that it is in your head and see how things start working for you rather than against you.

Do not struggle with life-accept life is as it is and not as you would wish it to be-Enjoy the ride and Go with the flow. Our relatively long lives in modern times living in rich nations surrounded by comforts, safety, technology, and abundance are extremely fortunate on a scale that few appreciate and absolutely not typical or representative of the lives experienced by our predecessors, nor probably by those who will succeed us.

Actually you *can* change the world-or at least the version of it that you see and experience and I will show you how in section 3.3 on Practising Spiritual behaviour. We will get onto practising spiritual behaviour after we have built the foundation of a smooth running and stable life applying EI. But for now I just ask that you accept the above statement - **The world is as it is**-and think about it and really understand it.

2.4 Choosing Your Thoughts

The third step on the path to happiness is to understand and really believe that it is possible and necessary to manage your thoughts rather than letting them control you.

You are now ready to start trying to do this and this section will show you how.

Choose Your thoughts with care

You can and should choose your thoughts with care because what you think controls how you feel, and how you feel controls how you see the world, both overall and moment by moment.

People look for and want peace and harmony in their world. But you have to understand that you need to look inside yourself to find it. If you are at peace and relaxed on the inside then you will find that the outside world that you see will be more at peace.

You may not fully understand this yet but you really do create your life with your thoughts. Further what you are thinking now is creating your future life. Happiness does not come from events and what happens but from within. You really can decide in advance whether you are going to have a good or bad day and through your own thoughts and actions attract the commensurate result. Later when I get deep into SI I will cover the Law of attraction and show you how and why you attract your life, and how you can attract the life you wish for.

Your thoughts and how you see the world.

Understand that thoughts emerge from pure consciousness and are then reabsorbed in it, just as waves emerge from the ocean and dissolve back into it. Once we have understood this we have taken a leap towards inner peace as the thoughts have lost their power to disturb us

Much of what we think and how we initially see a situation comes from negative motivations especially craving, aversion and ego. Try to understand that these are just thoughts and are transitional and have no substance in reality. For example, anger is born in the mind, lingers for a moment or two, and then can be allowed to dissolve there. In reality there is nothing substantial that can explain its tyrannical influence over our lives. Unless we see this we end up fixated on the object of anger overtaken by destructive emotion. If on the other hand we see that anger has no substance of its own it rapidly loses all power. Filter it out and replace it with a positive thought about the situation.

I would like you to think about the following everyday example which illustrates how what we initially and instinctively think about a situation is not necessarily the truth or the reality.

The phone rings at home. Immediately your mind will tell you who it wants it to be for its own selfish reasons and its belief that it can control reality. But when you answer it you find instead that it is an elderly person, perhaps even a close relative, who wants some information or help. Your mind goes into overdrive. It immediately casts a black cloud over your consciousness. You are too busy. You do not have the time. Why me? Why now of all times? The harder you try to dig deep and do the nice thing and give this person some quality time, the more your mind will be frantically tipping sack loads of negative thoughts over you about how you need to bring this to a rapid conclusion as it is a complete waste of your time.

But what is the Reality? In truth you probably can afford a few minutes-what were you doing before that was so precious? See that your mind does not really know how valuable this conversation will be or not be to you or the elderly person. Just because you have such a strong response from your mind it does not mean that it is true or Reality. You are in control - not your mind. Don't tolerate that old selfish and predictable reaction.

Here is the alternative way of thinking about this situation in an Emotionally Intelligent way.

"I am going to give this person some time and really LISTEN to them because I have learned that if I give people time and truly, actively listen, I will nearly always find out something that is interesting, stimulating and possibly pleasurable and of benefit." Say to yourself, "I now live in the moment. I know that I am lucky to be here at all to have this conversation and by the end of it even if it was not that valuable to me I can almost guarantee that it will have been useful to the caller and in all probability the highlight of their day. And the positive energy that was created during the call will enhance my own well being and self esteem for the remainder of my day."

So just because you have a thought – which is often a conditioned reaction anyway- IT DOES NOT MAKE IT TRUE.

I really urge you to start to NOT BELIEVE EVERYTHING THAT YOU THINK.

Banishing negative emotion, and developing EI can more or less be summarised by that single sentence.

Mental state and mood:

Feel the excitement of living and life and its richness of opportunity. In the brief time that we are here you cannot scratch the surface of what there is to do. Wake up to each new day with the excitement of a child in your heart and make a plan to fill it with worthwhile and affirming work and play. Live your life with total enthusiasm as if you were rushing along beside a beautiful river or canal where you cannot wait to see what is around the next bend.

You have the choice to be in a good mood or a bad mood. You CAN control how you feel and behave. Focus on all the good things in your life rather than dwelling disproportionately on the things you wish you could change.

Live in the moment and handle each new moment with skill and freshness. I have introduced the expression 'live in the moment' for the first time but it is a very well used term that most readers will have heard many times before. Living in the moment is fundamental to happiness and as such you will find a great emphasis and a lot more detail on what this really means when you get onto this section in behaving with SI. But for now I want you to recognise that increasingly people are unable to give the here and now their attention preferring to always be thinking about the past or the future or e.g. distracted by their smart phones and other electronic gadgets. It is becoming increasingly rare nowadays to see someone who is not staring at their phone regardless of whether e.g. they are walking along the road, or sitting on a train or even worse sitting with a friend or partner. Nowadays many people are never really 'present' and just take a momentary glance every so often at their actual surroundings and situation preferring to immediately re-immense themselves back into diversionary distractions.

If it works for you use your favourite music to lift spirits. Never underestimate the power of music to induce mood change. How does it work? How can some music e.g. Enya, if that is your taste, instantly lift your spirits into the Heavens such that you are full of love for life and everybody? It's actually very simple. Uplifting music suppresses negative thought and emotion and frees you to live in the moment and see Reality i.e. just how wonderful it is to be alive.

However always remember to make listening to music or the news or watching TV etc a conscious and positive choice with a beginning and an end. You will not be able to have a successful relationship with yourself and be aware of your thoughts if you fall into the trap that so many do nowadays of never turning the TV or radio off and so it is always in the background bombarding and distracting your senses. More and more people are unable to just 'be' and feel restless and uneasy when they are unoccupied or not being bombarded by media. This is a symptom of the underlying problem that when they are free to think they are swept away by negative emotions.

If you like reading newspapers and listening to or watching the news a particular issue to watch out for is media induced downward spirals of depressing perceptions of how 'bad everything has become', what a 'mess everything is' etc when such attacks on your peace of mind are designed to push your buttons for their own ends i.e. circulation or numbers of listeners / viewers. Little good comes from such sessions of depressed thoughts about political and social matters when you usually cannot do anything about it, and the story is being simplistically misrepresented to you anyway for maximum impact.

Strive to be:

- mentally and physically active.
- someone who feels –Joy, Excitement, Thrills, Sadness
- someone who feels that it is fun to be you.
- relaxed and calm
- upbeat, positive, witty and funny in your social contacts. Be fun. Spread positive energy. People like others who make them feel better. Do not always be a taker from other people.
- irrepressible.
- impervious.
- indomitable.

Be able to manage your emotional life and not be hijacked by it e.g. paralysed by depression or swept away by anger. The easiest way to distinguish between our emotions is to examine their motivation (mental attitude and objective) and their results. If an emotion strengthens our inner peace and seeks the good of others, it is positive, or constructive; if it shatters our serenity, disturbs our mind, and is intended to harm others, it is negative. As for the outcome the only criterion is the good or suffering that we create by our actions and/ or words for ourselves as well as others.

Learn to identify and not to trust conditioned responses that tell you that you should respond to events by feeling sadness that people or life are not as they should be. The inability to manage our thoughts is the principal cause of suffering. Learn to tone down the ceaseless racket of disturbing thoughts through the wisdom of knowing that although you can make efforts to manage and affect your future you cannot ultimately control the future.

Do not be seduced by short term highs of petty conversations and gossip. Rise above this behaviour.

Avoid being driven by uncontrolled negative emotions such as anger, irritation, worry, excessive pride, hatred and jealousy. We are the cumulative product of what we have thought and thus every incident of aggression, jealousy or loss of control (temper) is a setback in the quest for serenity and happiness. Envy and jealousy derive from the inability to rejoice in someone else's happiness or success. The truth is that envy and jealousy are absurd since someone else's happiness cannot deprive us of anything. Only the ego can be wounded-this is another ego issue. Blaming others and holding them responsible for things we do not like about our own life is a sure way to an unhappy life.

Do not be affected by minor irritations. Do not believe that when these occur you have been personally singled out! Have the wisdom to know that e.g. when you are in a traffic jam, you are not really *in* a jam, you *are* the jam just as much as everybody else who is in it. Most of the time, 99% of our situation and circumstances are wonderful. We are deluding ourselves when we concentrate only on what we perceive to be bad. When your mind is trying to tell you that something is a 'problem' and that we should be unhappy about it, e.g. unwelcome noise, boisterous children, rain, heat, etc, say to yourself, "What if

everything was OK? What if this were alright? What if nothing around you holds any power to make you unhappy?"

Develop enhanced awareness of the formation of thoughts, which allows for the immediate identification of an angry thought as it arises, and for its deconstruction the next instant. Work on your thoughts one by one analysing the way they emerge and evolve and gradually learning to free them as they arise thus defusing the chain reaction that allows thoughts to invade the mind. Watch closely for aversion thoughts which become more prevalent as you get older. A prime example is inbuilt prejudice towards those who are different especially from different races and cultures.

I invite you now to start to realise that the basis of inner peace and happiness is the absence of negative emotion, or if you like, the absence of irritation, annoyance and agitation. This will be a recurring theme and principle in this guide.

How you hold your opinions and views

When making a case or expressing a view do not become personally aligned with the view. A view or opinion is just that – a view. You are not that view or defined by it. There are two sides to everything and very little is black and white. Some say there is no right or wrong – just different ways of looking at things. Obviously you can conjure up an extreme example where the moral position appears cut and dried but in general it is true that most debates are complicated and not trivial.

So do not make winning a debate or argument a matter of pride and ego. Just calmly state your view without emotion and mentally shrug your shoulders and think that you hold your view, they are entitled to theirs, and there is no reason why someone else's view should cause anger to you. Under different circumstances you could just as easily be putting the case for the opposite view!

Do not be deflated by the mood or behaviour of others

Have no expectations of other people. Do not allow your inner happiness / mood to be hijacked by a knee jerk reaction to the negative moods of people close to you around you. Just because they are morose or picky or stressed that does not mean you have to rise to it or react to it.

In particular do not allow the knee jerk reaction of disappointment or deflation when you experience what you interpret as selfish and inconsiderate behaviour by others for example when driving. Try to cultivate being impervious to the selfish and aggressive actions of other drivers.

When family members or close friends around you are stressed rise above it and take it in your stride. Do not feel irritated or frustrated by it. People are who they are. If they cannot cope they cannot cope. Do not believe that you can change the people around you. The more stressed, depressed, tense and uptight someone else is the more they will believe that you are the problem and not them. Do not ever expect to rationalise with a tense and stressed person and absolutely do not attempt to convince them that they are the one who is stressed. You cannot expect others to not be stressed just because you are not. They may be stressed for any number of reasons but for females this is especially likely to be hormonal, and for everyone overload, pressure and tiredness. You may be frustrated and disappointed that they are stressed and thereby spoiling the day but what will be received and perceived is that 'you are getting at them', and that 'nothing is ever good enough'. This is a perception gap that cannot be bridged and no good ever comes of trying. Just refrain from judging, definitely refrain from passing comment, and divert your own thoughts and attention onto something independent. Just offer unconditional love.

Anger

No good can ever come from allowing anger to take over your mind. Remember that this unbalanced/distorted view of a situation has only arisen in the mind, and has no substance in reality. Anger and rage seriously affect your ability to deal with a situation. Anger is bad for your health.

When I see an angry person I know that is not a happy person. They may be angry because they are unhappy, or unhappy because they allow themselves to get angry!

When someone or a group of people are making you angry ask yourself why does it bother you so much? What is it that is really annoying you?

Try to see issues in perspective. Often when you have got angry you will remember that you got angry, or perhaps that you had an argument, but will not remember what it was that you were angry about. The negative energy and damage caused by anger lives on long after the issue ceases to matter. So ask yourself will the issue that is making you angry matter in a year's time or possibly even next week?

Think about Others' Needs.

It is not enough to just concentrate on maintaining your own mood when close ones around you are uptight, tired, and stressed. In fact to maintain your own mood you need to positively apply yourself to meeting their needs. This is a time to give them unconditional love, consideration, and support. In a relationship try to predict when these situations will arise. It is a golden rule that you do not look for any emotional energy and support from then during these times.

Above all just listen and ask open questions and do not be in a hurry to offer off the shelf solutions. Just because you may believe you have a better perspective, and more EI, this is not the time to thrust your beliefs on another.

Feel emotion. It's OK!

Emotion is not weakness or, as some males assume, limited to females. It is crucial to give emotions free expression and allow the energy to dissipate rather than to suppress emotion. Do not be ashamed to cry. It is a bodily function with a purpose.

In modern culture we have a tendency to bury grief, or turn our backs on emotion, and refuse to allow ourselves compassion. We confuse self pity with self care. We refuse to show sympathy for our own pain. This is repression. The trouble with this is that strong emotion demands to be acknowledged and processed and ignoring it does not make it go away. When we swallow our feelings they emerge in other ways e.g. depression, lack of confidence, or anger. Showing compassion to ourselves is emphatically not self indulgent. Positive thinking is good but do not turn positive thinking into a stick to beat yourself with like I must get over this and not feel or process the sadness or pain.

Feeling melancholy and contemplative or reflective / sad / nostalgic are natural emotions. Do not beat yourself up over them. But remember they are only thoughts and cannot harm you. The main thing is to feel at all –so embrace a range of emotions and enjoy the ride. Feeling melancholy is **not** depression. Emotional reminiscing and nostalgia is a natural consequence of having had good experiences in the past and is not depression. You cannot always be high. If you were it would not be a high!

Do not worry

Constantly worrying about what might go wrong has become a very common affliction. Many people feel anxious even when there is nothing specific or tangible to feel anxious about.

Worry really is a pointless emotion. Do your best to plan for your future, manage risk, but let go of the outcome. You must know and understand that usually in life the adverse things that happen are not the things that we worry about but instead tend to be unexpected and unforeseen events that occur at random. Worrying about what may happen is entirely pointless and arguably may cause illness and self fulfilling prophecies due to our own behaviour attracting the very things that we dread. Living is like climbing a ladder –don't look down as this can cause fear and freezing.

A healthy and confident acceptance of yourself and the outside world, really knowing that things are as they are, is the way to achieve a positive optimistic outlook.

After socialising with a friend or relative do not give any time to worrying whether you have said the wrong thing. If you have tried your best to be pleasant, loving, and friendly then leave it at that. Nobody is able to express themselves perfectly all the time and it is inevitable that after any bout of socialising there will be one or two things that you may wish you had put differently or perhaps not mentioned at all. It's life. The most likely situation is that the other person will not have noticed or remember.

Why does the mind left unchecked have such a strong predisposition to worry? Human beings have evolved to be worriers, and to look for the worst case scenarios and interpretations as this has conveyed survival advantage. The people who survived were the ones who attended the most to potential dangers of hostile invaders, predators or adverse weather and made the best provisions to protect against these risks.

Beware the EGO:

An exacerbated sense of self importance i.e. pride is guaranteed to cause you pain several times a day when your pride is hurt. The delusion of self or ego is one of the most powerful of human instincts and at the same time one of the most potent sources of wrong action. Selfishness or rather the feeling that we are the centre of the universe i.e. self centredness is the source of most of our undesirable and destructive thoughts. Guard against and be on the alert for knee jerk emotional responses fired out by your ego. An exacerbated sense of self importance causes and enables us to be hurt by past and current events, or words. Your ego leads you to feeling resentment to those who try to belittle you or are jealous of you due to their own lack of confidence. It is common for people to feel that they are being humiliated but without ego humiliation would not exist.

Living trapped in an isolated bubble of the ego also causes loneliness and depression even when surrounded by company.

Avoid negative mindreading-that perceives neutral comments as criticism or an attack. Check what is meant before becoming defensive.

Other nonsense promoted by the ego is feelings of:

Inferiority e.g. I am not good enough

Insecurity- e.g. I am not popular, lack of friends, social ineptness, lack of social skills,

Inadequacy- e.g. I am no good at a hobby. Ego also leads to obsessive and unhealthy ambition.

Feeling Low

Occasionally you may feel low without any apparent reason. I preface the following comments with the qualification that some unfortunate people suffer from regular acute depression which has a physiological cause e.g. chemical or hormonal imbalance and clearly the following does not apply to such people who need medical treatment. I am absolutely not making light of their plight. In the following I am referring to people in general who do not have a medical condition but who suffer occasional bouts of feeling low but with no rational or identifiable cause.

Do not believe your mind when you are feeling low. Usually it occurs for no apparent reason. It does have causes and can be overcome. It can be because you are tired and not slept enough. If not it is almost certainly a sign that you are not being sufficiently mentally and intellectually active. It is always the case that it is because you are concentrating on 'Self, Me, I' instead of looking outwards at your family and friends and everybody else. This is going to sound extremely harsh but the fact is that feeling low is essentially the result of selfishness and laziness. The way out of it is to give out unconditional loving kindness and thereby feel this reflected back. If you allow yourself to wallow in feeling sorry for yourself it will only get worse, and you will become a burden to those around you and no good will come of that. In

this situation you will give out no positive energy, and thereby not receive any back. It is ok to feel the pain but then put it to one side, say 'not you again', manage your mind and move on. Get involved in something mentally stimulating and interesting and fast. As soon as you are on the up again count your blessings and if necessary write them down. See the good in your life which is enormous.

We often focus on a few circumstances that are not going well instead of all those that are. For example, we leave our comfortable homes and family in the morning to enjoy a full and blessed day in our life, be it work or play. We set off full of optimism and good spirits and then our peace of mind can be spoiled by being caught in a rain shower or discovering a scratch on our car. Look at the broad picture and see we have so many positive things in our life, and many if not most other people on the planet especially in the third world have far worse problems. We are as happy about our lot in life as we choose to be. It is morally wrong to take all the good things in our life for granted.

Do not keep telling others about what is 'wrong' with your life. You are the sum total of what you have thought so you are the one who will keep hearing all this negative energy about your life!

At the EI level we should not expect our lives to be perfect. But try to understand that what we see as imperfections are usually small and insignificant and meaningless in the context of the totality of our lives, and in any case these imperfections e.g. the broken off car wing mirror, your wallet or purse being stolen, the snappy negative comment from our friend, the inconvenient rain shower- these were always how it was going to be, and your mind cannot control that- as much as it would like to. When you see your life in perspective you will start to see that overall it is in fact 'pretty much perfect'. And when you start to develop SI you will definitely start to feel that 'life is perfect.'

Intolerance of others

It is widely believed that the faults that we are most intolerant of in others-the faults and behaviours that cause us the most irritation are the same faults that we ourselves possess and are repressed in ourselves. Thus observing our reactions to faults in others is an opportunity to learn about ourselves and grow.

Whenever we feel particularly resentful and self-righteous about someone else's behaviour we should reflect on exactly what it is triggering this reaction in us. Acting as a mirror others can sometimes make us angry. These 'mirror' emotions can be positive, but more often are negative.

If someone rouses your anger, check whether what is angering you is actually a quality that you share (or alternatively do not share) with that person. For example, if we are irritated by how much socialising somebody does, or how popular they are, it is highly likely that we are dissatisfied with our own abilities and performance in these areas. If we resent that a male friend is popular with women then it is possible that deep down we wish we ourselves were more popular with women. Thus the things that we do not like in others are probably the same things that we do not want to acknowledge and confront in ourselves and we subconsciously resent that the other person is 'better' than us and more able than us in that particular characteristic.

Similarly if we have to fight hard to suppress or repress a weakness in ourselves for example a tendency to feel sorry for ourselves, then we may find that we particularly dislike or despise that same weakness in someone else when they display it. It is as though we are thinking, "Well we could all be feeling that way but some of us overcome it or rise above it". So if you find yourself disliking someone, my advice is to think more deeply and check whether the quality you are reacting negatively to is one you fear to find, or would dislike in yourself.

It is even possible consciously to hold a strong opinion which is opposite to our real sub conscious attitude; this is repression. For example, we may have an aversion to homosexuality but sub consciously would like to experience being the opposite sex or act out transsexual fantasies. If we despise people who are overweight it is almost certainly because we are frightened of being overweight ourselves and know that could happen and /or has happened in the past.

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