

Finding Happiness

Essays on Awakening to the
Joy of Everyday Life

DICK RAUSCHER

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ISBN-13: 978-1470046446

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Introduction

I have written articles on various topics for the past 10 years. Readers have asked me to put these essays together by topic into a book so they could access my writing more easily. Those requests led to the book on Happiness that you are now holding in your hands. Some of the topics are personal stories; some are related to issues presented by both counseling clients and life coaching clients. All of the articles included in this book are about topics that not only concern me personally, they are topics that represent common issues that get in the way of our achieving happiness. I have spent many years helping people understand what make them tick; how their behavior and beliefs influence their relationship to themselves, people close to them, their community and the world.

The articles contained in this book are spiritual practices that offer practical everyday skills and insights needed to achieve the psychological and spiritual transformation in consciousness that leads to wholeness, happiness, healthier relationships, and a more authentic spiritual growth. I hope that these essays will help you to awaken to the happiness that is already in you and guide you toward the happiness that all of us yearn to achieve in life.

If you would like to receive my free Stonyhill-Nugget articles in your email box each week, please go to <http://www.stonyhill-nuggets.com> and subscribe to get them sent to you automatically.

Changing the world requires a community. Stonyhill is a community of people dedicated to the concept that when we are committed to working together and growing together, we “can” make a difference... we can change our selves and we can change the world. All we have to do is learn to think and behave differently. Happiness, success, and learning to love more openly are goals that we can achieve if we have the right tools and skills.

Thank you for buying this book, and your commitment to grow in self-awareness, consciousness, and happiness.

*Dick Rauscher
January, 2012
Redmond, OR*

Awareness

Wake Up. It's Morning. It's Time to Be Happy

We live our lives asleep.

Most of us are not grounded or living in the real world. We are caught up in illusions and ways of seeing the world that are so commonly accepted, we never even think to question the illusion. For example, had you lived in 1492 and told your friends and family that the world was round; everyone would have looked at you like you were crazy.

I call this kind of thinking a “flat world” belief... they “*knew*” the world was flat.

This is a difficult concept to internalize in the modern world because it “feels” like we are awake and conscious of what’s going on around us. After all...we have science and a modern consciousness. But until we are willing to challenge the illusions and awaken our sleeping consciousness, *achieving happiness and success will be extremely difficult.*

Let me give you a common, every day example of what I’m talking about. Many of us are stressed and overwhelmed with life. Exhausted trying to accomplish everything we have to do. We complain that “we simply don’t have time to do everything we need to do”. “There just aren’t enough hours in the day.” We emotionally believe what we are feeling and saying is true. But it’s an illusion. We have “*all the time there is!*”

Unfortunately, our primitive ego needs to look perfect so it can avoid criticism and failure. It believes that it's "not OK" so it has to work very hard to show the world that it really is OK. It can't prioritize because it fears that whatever it leaves off the "to do" list is exactly the thing that others will point to and criticize.

It's hard to rest or relax when everything has to look perfect.

We spend so much time and effort trying to make ourselves look good, we never have time to just sit and quietly explore our feelings... to become self-aware. We spend so much time chasing perfection, obsessing over the shame and guilt we carry from the past, and our never-ending concerns about what "might happen" in the future... *we never awaken to the present moment.*

Self-awareness is grounded in the "now"... living and exploring the thoughts and emotions happening in "*this*" moment.

Discovering our life purpose, the key to true happiness, requires self-awareness... a deep understanding of who we are, what attracts us, what we came here to accomplish, and how we can best use our unique gifts, skills, and experiences to offer the world what we, and *only* we, can offer.

Achieving the authentic spirituality that comes from growth in self-awareness requires the ability to embrace silence and allow deep awareness to emerge. Self-awareness comes when we have developed the ability to sit with pure awareness and full attention to what is happening in "*this*" moment... when there is no time between the observer and what is being observed.

Judgmental conflict with others, and self-judgment, are always the result of too much time between the observer and what is being observed. In other words, when we are not fully in the moment, we allow too much time for the toxic thoughts and beliefs of our primitive ego to enter our consciousness.

When we stay in the "now" with who we are, our ego's toxic self-beliefs have no opportunity to enter our thinking. As a result, we automatically begin to experience happiness. The exhausting need to be perfect, and the inner conflict and self-judgment between who we are and who we "think" we are disappears.

The flat-world belief that we have to somehow earn happiness is a common reality distorting illusion. We already have all the time and happiness there is. Self-awareness allows us to awaken and experience those amazing realities.

Self-Awareness and Four Important Insights to Achieve Happiness

If you find yourself falling asleep and losing "self"-consciousness from time to time, then re-awakening to reality is a spiritual practice that needs to part of your day-to-day life. The more you intentionally re-awaken to the reality of "what is", the more able you will be to create the life you actually want to live

It's easy for all of us to get caught up in the distractions of a busy life and lose self-awareness; that sense of living fully awake and conscious of the reality of the present moment. It's a rare person that doesn't find themselves caught up in the never ending details and responsibilities of life from time to time; sleep-walking from distraction to distraction; unaware of the world around them. But living life unconsciously makes it very difficult to keep our lives balanced and happy.

Sitting on the shore of the Oregon coast one morning this last spring, I realized that it had happened to me. I was feeling powerless, overwhelmed, and more than a little stressed. Lulled into a reflective trance by the rhythm of storm driven waves breaking on the shore that morning woke me to the realization that I had allowed my life to become too busy. I was seriously out of balance. The little routines and activities that help me slow down; to stay centered and maintain a sense of peace and meaning were missing from my day-to-day life.

For example, I was no longer taking the time, to play my mandolin, or go on those long walks that I *know* are a great way to renew my creativity. It wasn't the fact that I had lost self-awareness that got my attention. I *know* that letting life get too busy is a sure way to lose self-awareness. I *know* that losing self-awareness is normal.

What shocked me the most that day on the beach was not that I had "fallen asleep", but rather how easily I had stopped paying attention to what is truly important to me. How easily my self-awareness had slipped outside of my consciousness. I had not only lost my sense of balance, *I had spent several months totally unaware that it had happened.*

Pulling out of a county campground in our motorhome a few days later I cut the turn too sharp and caused the back tire of the motorhome to suddenly drop off the curb onto the street. The rig rocked violently back and forth totally disorganizing the contents of every cupboard.

When I shared this story with good friends over breakfast a few days later, they casually suggested, in the off-handed way that good friends often do, that the experience of driving the rig over the curb might be a very good metaphor for what had happened to me over the last year; that I had accidentally hit a speed bump in life that had totally disorganized my psychological cupboards. We all got a good chuckle out of it.

It was not only a funny way of describing my experience; it was right on target emotionally. I knew that it was definitely time to rearrange and reorganize my psychological cupboards; to slow down, re-center myself and re-affirm some of the basic insights I know are an important part of living an awakened and balanced life. For example;

That despite what many will tell us, *life is not hard*. It does not have to be a painful struggle. It does not have to be an unhappy, flat, or lifeless experience. Life is *only* hard on our rigid beliefs, our rigid black-and-white opinions, our expectations, our prejudices, and our assumptions; *especially those that in any way attempt to distort reality*.

That *true happiness is not something to be achieved by hard work*; we already possess it! We are already whole and balanced. All we have to do is reclaim our authentic true self and remove the false beliefs that fragment our sense of who we are and keep us from experiencing the happiness we have always possessed. That happiness comes when we recognize *that we only have the power to change ourselves; not others...* that we can only change what we see and accept about our *own* lives. Happiness is grounded in self-awareness and the courage to change *ourselves and the way we think*.

That *intentional self-awareness* is the key to happiness and living a successful life. Without self-awareness and living in the present moment, life quickly gets out of balance and stressful. Self-awareness requires silence, slowing life down, and getting back to what is truly important in your life.

What was most important for me to re-affirm sitting on the beach that morning, was the knowledge that no one, myself included, is a helpless or powerless victim of life. The Law of Attraction reminds us that we are all in total control of the lives we are *choosing* to live; that what we think about is what we will end up attracting into our lives. The universe simply reflects back to us the kind of energy we are sending it. In other words, what we choose to consciously or unconsciously think about *today* will ultimately create the life we live *tomorrow*. Our thoughts are important because we *do* become what we think about. Unless our lives are balanced between work and those things that are truly important to us, it's virtually impossible to be happy.

I realized that day on the beach that it was time for me to once again awaken and to take back conscious control of my life. I created the life I was currently living; one day at a time, and through self-awareness, I had the power to change it; one day at a time. In the days that followed, I was more than a little humbled to realize

how easily life could cause me to lose consciousness and "self"-awareness, but it certainly felt good to be awake again.