

The Happiness Habit

The Power of Positive Doing by BJ Gallagher

“Most people are about as happy as they make up their minds to be,” Abraham Lincoln once wrote. I’ve long thought so, too. Happiness seems to be a habit as much as anything—a habit of attitude, a habit of responding to life, a habit of action.

I recall seeing a sign in a manager’s office a number of years ago. It read: “Happiness is available. Help yourself.”

I loved the double meaning—“help yourself” as if a big bowl of happiness was sitting on his desk, like a bowl of jelly beans, and all you had to do was dip your hand in and help yourself—and “help yourself” as in “take action on your own behalf.” It reminded me of one of my all-time favorite books, *Happiness is a Choice*, by Barry Neil Kaufman. Barry and his wife had a baby boy, their third child, who was diagnosed as autistic.

At first, the couple was devastated—they thought their lives were ruined and their child doomed to a hopeless future. But once they worked through their initial reaction to the diagnosis, they made a huge choice: They decided to be happy.

They said, “We can let this situation drag us into depression and self-pity, OR we can decide to love our child, make a nurturing family for him, and have a good life together. They chose the latter.

They rejected the advice of doctors who told them to put the child in an institution and move on with their lives. Instead, they completely redesigned their home and their lives to meet the needs of their autistic toddler. He couldn’t meet them in their world, so they met him in his. They sat on the floor and played with him, mimicking his shrieks, whoops and wild gestures. Bit by bit, they were able to build rapport with their son, teach him new behaviors, and coax him further and further into normalcy.

The boy grew and thrived under his parents’ unconditional love, patience, and teaching—it was a long, challenging process, but he graduated from high school, then college, with honors. And throughout those challenging years, Barry Neil Kaufman and his wife chose to be happy. They made it a habit.

How do you make happiness a habit? Simply choose it. Again and again. Habits are formed by repeating the same thing over and over again until it becomes the normal way you behave. Scientists tell us that if you repeat something consistently for 21 days, it will become a habit.

So if you want to really feel the *Power of Positive Doing*, start by making happiness your new habit.

LIFE'S LESSONS OF FAILURE

Lord, are you trying to tell me something?

For...

Failure does not mean I'm a failure;
It does mean I have not yet succeeded.

Failure does not mean I have accomplished nothing;
It does mean I have learned something.

Failure does not mean I have been a fool;
It does mean I had enough faith to experiment.

Failure does not mean I have disgraced;
It does mean I have dared to try.

Failure does not mean I don't have it;
It does mean I have something to do in a different way.

Failure does not mean I am inferior;
It does mean I am not perfect.

Failure does not mean I have wasted my life;
It does mean that I have an excuse to start over.

Failure does not mean that I should give up;
It does mean that I should try harder.

Failure does not mean that I will never make it;
It does mean that I need more practice.

Failure does not mean that you have abandoned me;
It does mean that you must have a better idea.

So failure is your faithful friend. Needless to say, we learn from our mistakes and the lessons that we learn become the building blocks for our success.

LIVE IN THE PRESENT

An old Cherokee Grandfather said to his grandson, who came to him angry at a friend who he felt had done him injustice, "let me tell you a story. I too, at times, have felt a great resentment for those who have taken so much, with no seeming sorrow or remorse for what they do. I have struggled with these feelings many times." He continued, "it is as if there are two wolves inside me engaged in a challenging conflict".

"One is evil-he is anger,, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority and ego. The littlest thing will set him into a fit of temper. He fights everyone all the time for no reason. He cannot think because his anger and hate are so great. It is helpless anger, for his anger will change nothing."

He continued, "The other is good-he is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith. He does no harm. He lives in harmony with all around him and does not take offence when no offence was intended. He will only fight when it is right to do so, and in the right way.

Sometimes, it is a challenge to live with these two wolves inside me, for both of them try to dominate my spirit. The same challenge is going on inside you- and inside every other person too."

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather, "Which wolf will win?" The old Cherokee simply replied, "The one you feed."

Do you ever stop to ponder which wolf inside of you, you feed more?

Intend to nourish the "good" wolf while being compassionate and accepting of "bad" wolf simply because the two do exist. Everything that happens in life provides you with an opportunity for growth.

Today is a brand new day; start fresh.

QUOTES TO PONDER ON...

"Peace begins with a smile.."

"Everytime you smile at someone, it is an action of love, a gift to that person, a beautiful thing."

"The person who gives with a smile is the best giver because God loves a cheerful giver."

"Let us make one point, that we meet each other with a smile, when it is difficult to smile. Smile at each other, make time for each other in your family."

"Let us always meet each other with smile, for the smile is the beginning of love."

"Smile at each other. Smile at your wife, smile at your husband, smile at your children, smile at each other- it doesn't matter who it is- and that will help to grow up in greater love for each other."

"Whether one believes in a religion or not, and whether one believes in rebirth or not, there isn't anyone who doesn't appreciate kindness and compassion."

~ Dalai Lama

"I believe that religious duties consist in doing justice, loving mercy, and endeavoring to make our fellow-creatures happy."

-Thomas Paine

"There are more quarrels smothered by just shutting your mouth, and holding it shut, than by all the wisdom in the world."

-Henry Ward Beecher

"The best remedy for those who are afraid, lonely or unhappy is to go outside, somewhere where they can be quiet, alone with the heavens, nature and God. Because only then does one feel that all is as it should be."

- Anne Frank

"When the power of love overcomes the love of power, the world will know peace."

- Jimi Hendrix

"They say a person needs just three things to be truly happy in this world: someone to love, something to do, and something to hope for."

- Tom Bodett

"Negative people need drama like oxygen. Stay positive, it'll take their breath away."

- Tony Gaskins

"There are more quarrels smothered by just shutting your mouth, and holding it shut, than by all the wisdom in the world."

- Henry Ward Beecher

"There are more quarrels smothered by just shutting your mouth, and holding it shut, than by all the wisdom in the world."

- Henry Ward Beecher

Laughter is God's sunshine.

Everyone has beauty but not everyone sees it.

It's important for parents to live the same things they teach.

Thank God for what you have, TRUST GOD for what you need.

If you fill your heart with regrets of yesterday and the worries of tomorrow, you have no today to be thankful for.

Take time to laugh, for it is the music of the soul.

If anyone speaks badly of you, live so none will believe it.

**Patience is the ability to idle your motor when you feel like stripping your gears.
Love is strengthened by working through conflicts together.**

The best thing parents can do for their children is to love each other.

Harsh words break no bones but they do break hearts.

To get out of a difficulty, one usually must go through it.

We take for granted the things that we should be giving thanks for.

Love is the only thing that can be divided without being diminished.

Happiness is enhanced by others but does not depend upon others.

For every minute you are angry with someone, you lose 60 seconds of happiness that you can never get back.

Do what you can, for who you can, with what you have, and where you are.

***Live simply; Love generously; Care deeply; Speak kindly;
Let God do the rest!***