

The power of positive thinking



Discovering happiness is like discovering yourself. You do not find happiness, you create it. Happiness is a conscious choice. Self actualization is the method used to discover who you are, who you want to be, and what happiness is to you. Ultimately, attaining genuine happiness is the method of doing what brings you the most pleasure and contentment for the duration of your life. The texts *The Power of Positive Thinking* by Norman Vincent Peale and *Siddhartha* written by Hermann Hesse, elucidate the actuality that happiness is a pathless journey. It is a journey of self creation and varies depending on the individual. Happiness is obtained through internal possessions opposed to external possessions. Within both novels happiness is said to be attained through positive personal thoughts and perceptions, and through the trials and errors of self actualization and enlightenment. However, happiness is not pursuable through money and materialistic objects. This discovery is structured around the realization that true happiness lays within ones self. Searching for contentment and pleasure in the outside world will inevitably only lead to disappointment due to the detail that these forms of happiness do not have a lasting effect; their result is short term.

Within the text *The Power of Positive Thinking* happiness is believed to be attained through positive personal thoughts and perceptions. Although it is not easy to find true happiness in one's self, it is not feasible to find it elsewhere. With the realization that happiness is something that lies within one's self, the search for it in the outside world can be disregarded. Within the text *The Power of Positive Thinking*, Peale discusses the concept that through thinking the kind of thoughts that lead you to a fuller and satisfying

success, opposed to thoughts that will only bring an acquisitive success.

Norman gives explanation of this by saying,

“ You can think your way to failure and unhappiness, but you can also think your way to success and happiness. The world in which you live is not primarily determined by outward conditions and circumstances but by thoughts that habitually occupy your mind” (Peale, pg 166).

This quote illustrates how thoughts can influence ones disposition and life.

Thoughts are far more than a process the mind uses to consider something, they are dictators of happiness. Thoughts are things, which essentially posses forceful power. The mind generates infinite amounts of thoughts each day. Thoughts are what consume, influence, and ultimately give morality and principals to people; they are essential guidelines to life. So the belief that if one thinks positively positivity will be generated around, and inevitably create happiness, is basically correct. Peale illustrates this concept by saying,

“ It has been said that thoughts are things, that they actually posses dynamic power. Judged by the power they exercise one can readily accept such an appraisal. You can actually think yourself into or out of situations. You can make yourself ill with your thoughts and by the same token you can make yourself well by the use of a different and healing type of thought. Think one way and you attract the conditions which that type of thinking indicates. Think another way and you can create an entirely different set of conditions. Conditions are created by thoughts far more powerfully then conditions create thoughts” (Peale, pg 166).

This quote exemplifies how thoughts can generate negative or positive facets. Ultimately generating positive thoughts brings happiness, and affirming results. Thinking positively will create an atmosphere crucial to producing inner happiness.

Within the text *Siddhartha*, the suggestion that happiness is attained through positive and optimistic thoughts is epitomized. Within the text, the protagonist Siddhartha embarks on an expedition of self enlightenment. This consists of listening to ones inner self to generate happiness opposed to the disarray of the outside world. Siddhartha was raised by his father in a small town located in India. He was educated on the subject of the ancient Hindu religions. However, Siddhartha becomes pessimistic about the teachings, and decides to set out into the world to observe and learn alternative answers to his questions regarding life and happiness. Siddhartha's Hindu teachings did not fulfill sufficient explanations about the world.

Unsurprisingly, Siddhartha ventures beyond his small village with his childhood friend Govinda, who wishes to reside within Siddhartha's shadow, in hopes that he will become profitable with knowledge and wealth. After three years of regularly practiced meditation and fasting Siddhartha desires to achieve the enlightenment that the Buddha has achieved through listening to his inner thoughts and perceptions opposed to the madness of the outside world. In relevance to the text, *The Power of Positive Thinking*, the concept of obtaining a meaningful life is exemplified through listening to ones conscious; rather than following other individual's teachings.

Ultimately, happiness is a self established thing. Hesse illustrates this concept by saying,

” I, also, would like to look and smile, sit and walk like that, so free, so worthy, so restrained, so candid, so childlike and mysterious. A man only looks and walks like that when he has conquered his Self. I also will conquer my Self...No other teachings will attract me, since this man’s teachings have not done so” (Hesse, pg 29).

This specific quote exhibits Siddhartha’s desire to amalgamate with his sense of self. He is certain in his belief that if he unites with his inner self, he will ultimately find happiness and be enlightened. He begins to concentrate his thoughts, and focus on being positive. He comes to the realization that happiness is derived from spiritual wealth opposed to material wealth. So ultimately he believes that generating positive thoughts and perceptions will lead him on his pursuit of happiness. He believes that there is a profound and powerful influence of one’s thought. Hesse demonstrates this by exclaiming,

” Siddhartha spoke with ecstasy; deeply, this enlightenment had enlightened him. Oh, was not all suffering time, as soon as time would have been put out of existence by ones thoughts? In ecstatic delight, he had spoken, but Vasudeva smiled at him brightly and nodded in confirmation; silently he nodded, brushed his hands over Siddhartha’s shoulder, turned back to his work” (Hesse, pg 50).

This quotation from the text Siddhartha illustrates the idea that one’s thoughts whether they are negative or positive have a significant impact on achieving happiness. Siddhartha refers to this by saying,

“ All that we are is the result of what we have thought. If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, pain follows him. If a man speaks or acts with a pure thought, happiness follows him, like a shadow that never leaves him” (pg 67).

This quotation is basically elucidating the notion that if you think negatively, negative effects will occur in your life. However, if you have a positive frame of mind, positive effects will occur within your life, and follow you throughout your existence. Ultimately, Siddhartha is on a journey to attain his self created inner peace. Both texts, The Power of Positive Thinking and Siddhartha illustrates the profound impact of thinking positively and how it can help obtain happiness.

Throughout the text The Power of Positive Thinking happiness is considered to be attainable through the trials and errors of self actualization and enlightenment. Within the text, Peale exclaims that the only individual who decides ones happiness is that specific individual. On this journey of self actualization that Peale discussions throughout his text, there are key elements that facilitate the discovery of one’s self. An individual’s self is made up of numerous amounts of experiences. Some of these being positive, some negative. These experiences, all have one similar fixation; they all have a particular emotion attached to them. Some of these experiences are guilt, anger, sadness, excitement, love, hate, resentment, and of course happiness. These experiences are the trials and errors to achieving one’s self. Unfortunately, people require the negative, to achieve the positive. If there were only positive experiences and emotions in the world, people would not be able to identify true happiness. This concept demonstrates how

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societies need trials and errors to finding one's self, in order to achieve true happiness. Peale expands on this idea by saying,

“ As you read these words you may say, there is nothing new. Indeed, there is something new in every experience, good or bad, especially if you have never tried it. When you start to take practice in the method of finding positive within the negative, you will find the newest, freshest, most astonishing method of happy and successful living principals of all your life if you have never made use of them. Such inefficiency in living is tragic. For a man to have lived in poverty when all the time right on his doorstep is gold indicates an unintelligence approach to life. This simple philosophy is the way to life” (Peale, pg 64).

This particular quote exemplifies the notion that one cannot achieve happiness without knowing despair. However, to live a life of misery, completely oblivious to the reality that happiness is right in front of you is ultimately living an unfortunate life. However, some people choose to become ignorant to attainable happiness because they have found comfort in their unconstructive life. Ultimately, this is the life of an individual who has become trapped in the trial and error process of finding their own sense of self. Peale comments on this concept by saying,

“ In saying this I certainly do not ignore or minimize the hardships and tragedies of the world, but neither do I allow them to dominate. You can permit obstacles to control your mind to the point where they are uttermost and thus become the dominating factors in your thought pattern. By learning how to cast them from the mind, and refusing to become mentally

subservient to them, and by challenging spiritual power through your thoughts you can rise above obstacles which ordinarily might defeat you. You need be defeated only if you are willing to be. You can embark on the inner journey of self discovery, through trials and errors, but ultimately if you are persistent in your efforts you will be able to rise above, and obtain an inner happiness” (Peale, pg 5).

This exemplifies the notion that eventually, if persistent in ones efforts to discover their inner self, unwilling to allow the trials and errors of such a task to defeat them, happiness is bound to emerge into the individual’s life. The inevitable enlightenment of such an experience will alter the thought pattern of the individual ensuring a true and lasting inner happiness.

Within the text Siddhartha, is the journey into the inner psyche to ultimately achieve a sense of self actualization and enlightenment. Siddhartha is open to undergo any experience for the chance to have insight into his self. He believes that through achieving self actualization he will inevitable become enlightened causing continuous happiness. Siddhartha compares this strength of mind to a stone being dropped into the water. He says,

” It is the same when Siddhartha has an aim, a goal. Siddhartha does nothing; he waits, he thinks, he fasts, but he goes through the affairs of the world like the stone through the water, without doing anything, without bestirring himself; he is drawn and let’s himself fall. He is drawn by his goal, for he does not allow anything to enter his mind which opposes his goal” (Hesse, pg 24).

Siddhartha is determined to attain his self actualization and he is certain it will lead him to inner happiness. He does not let anything distract him from this pursuit of self; ultimately becoming consumed by his journey. This directly relates to the text *The Power of Positive Thinking*, when Norman Peale discusses the concern of an individual becoming overly devoted to this pursuit of self, and becoming disillusioned; ultimately becoming trapped within the trial and error process of self actualization. Furthermore, within the texts, *The Power of Positive Thinking*, and *Siddhartha*, happiness is believed to be attainable through the trials and errors of self actualization.

Within the text *The Power of Positive Thinking*, Norman Vincent Peale eludes the actuality that happiness is not pursuable through money and materialistic objects. There is an evolving obsession in society with money and materialistic happiness. It seems that the recognizable quote “ money cannot buy happiness” is irrelevant to today’s society. However, repeatedly comprehending this quote has not had a significant effect on society’s analysis of what true happiness is. To Norman Vincent Peale, happiness does not lie within the riches of society. True happiness is defined by ones acceptance and contentment with their inner self. Peale elucidates this concept by saying,

“ By working on the practical suggestion of not focusing on the false versions of happiness; outwardly concepts, you will have the experience that produces a true quality of happiness. I know this is so, because many of those to whom I have referred and shall refer in later chapters got their vital new life in the same way. Then, having been changed inwardly, you will begin to create out of yourself not unhappiness, but a happiness of such a

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quality and character that you will wonder if you are living the same world. As a matter of fact it won't be the same world because you are not the same, and what you are determines the world in which you live, so as you change, your world changes also" (Peale, pg 67).

Ultimately Peale is stating that if individuals seeking true happiness focus solely on the outwardly world to supply them with fulfillment, they will never achieve a definite form of happiness. Peale believes in a genuine happiness that does not exist in money, cars, houses, and materialistic objects, but inside each individual. He is convinced that happiness is something that is obtained inwardly opposed to outwardly. Peale describes how happiness is truly achieved by stating,

" The way to happiness is not through the riches of the outward world, but by keeping your heart free from hate, your mind from worry. Live simply, expect little, and give much. Fill your life with love. Scatter sunshine. Forget self, think of others. Do as you would be done by. Our happiness depends on the habit of mind we cultivate; the inward you. So practice happy thinking every day. Cultivate the merry heart, develop the happiness habit, and life will become a continual feast" (Peale, pg 73).

This quotation exemplifies the idea that lasting happiness is not attainable through money and materialistic objects; rather by a simpler approach. True and everlasting happiness is attained inwardly by each individual.

Within the novel Siddhartha, happiness is not obtained through the outward world, or by means of teachings. Happiness is a self established thing. True happiness to Siddhartha is only attainable through the inward path to

enlightenment. Such enlightenment can be achieved through meditation, which takes one's soul on a spiritual journey to assist in the self-actualization process. Siddhartha illustrates this by saying,

“ He who ponderingly, of a purified spirit, loses himself in the meditation of Atman, inexpressible by words is his blissfulness of his heart” (Hesse, pg 17).

This quote can be scrutinized and translated into saying that anyone has the possibility of achieving peace and happiness within their soul if they are uncontaminated in their meditations. Although this particular quote directly relates to Buddhism in Siddhartha's time era, we can compare it to today's journey for happiness. If individuals in pursuit of happiness attempt to empty their minds of negativities and frustrations through meditation, it is possible to attain satisfaction in a world with no materialistic objects and things that hold people back from achieving true happiness. To Siddhartha, the goal here is to “ let go”. Also, within the text Siddhartha, the achievement of happiness can only occur when one replaces all of the negative and false ideas of happiness; these being money and materialistic possessions, with positive and genuine ideas. This concept is elucidated by Siddhartha when he states,

“ To enjoy good health, to bring true happiness to one's family, to bring peace to all, one must first discipline and control one's own mind. If a man can control his mind he can find the way to enlightenment, and all wisdom and virtue will naturally come to him.” (Hesse, pg 62).

Essentially this quote illuminates the idea that true happiness is not created upon the foundation of money and materialistic possessions, but is rather

achieved through the redirection of one's mind into a positive and simpler mindset.

True happiness is not something that can be discovered; essentially it can only be created. Throughout the texts *The Power of Positive Thinking* by Norman Vincent Peale and *Siddhartha* written by Herman Hesse, is the expression that happiness is a pathless journey; it is a journey of self creation and varies depending on the individual. Within *Siddhartha*, happiness is in essence, the path to nirvana. Additionally, happiness is a self established thing, which is derived directly from experience. If you undergo this experience within life, when you return, you will be much more fulfilled and find it effortless to achieve true happiness. Appearing within the text *The Power of Positive Thinking*, is the concept that happiness can be attained through a simple formula of redirecting the mindset in a positive direction. Within both novels happiness is said to be attained through positive personal thoughts and perceptions, and through the trials and errors of self actualization and enlightenment. However, happiness is not pursuable through money and materialistic objects. This detection is prearranged around the comprehension that true happiness lays within you. Additionally individuals who are convinced that happiness is defined by riches and outer wealths will never achieve a definite happiness. Furthermore to believe that one can find happiness in money and materialistic objects is having the belief in an illusion, and ultimately a façade.