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## **SEARCHING FOR HAPPINESS**

By Otto Engelberth

In the year 1776, the writers of America's Declaration of Independence wrote about happiness. The second paragraph reads, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

Given that we, in America, have the right to "the pursuit of happiness", how is this pursuit going for you? Would you be interested in knowing how to experience more happiness?

A friend of mind suggested that I write about happiness. After all, my daughter is a Rostered Psychotherapist, my wife worked a couple years in a hospital outpatient psych clinic, and I served several years on the board of directors of an outpatient clinical psychology clinic. He thought that my perspective would be interesting.

If you have read my articles on my website, [www.IsThereaCreator.com](http://www.IsThereaCreator.com), you will notice that I have a curiosity about how things work. I've written about truth, decision making, self-image, economics, currencies, healthcare reform, and the Creator and sustainer of the universe.

The way I like to describe my approach to life is that the first word out of my mouth after I was born was "why", and I've not stopped asking that question over the last 79 years.

Before answering the "why" question, I thought it would be helpful for you to know what I mean by happiness. I Googled the definition of happiness and they defined it as a state of being happy. That definition didn't help much. So, I Googled the word happy and got the definition, "feeling or showing pleasure or contentment."

I found it interesting that Amazon indicated that they added over one thousand books about happiness that had been published in just the last three months. It seems that happiness is a subject that is high on the list of people's priorities.

You may have noticed that many people think that happiness and joy are the same. They are not. I like the definitions that Meadowlark Lemon, the great Harlem Globetrotter basketball player, gave to happiness and joy. He said, and I'm paraphrasing, "Happiness is a wuss because it goes away at the first sign of trouble and true joy is indestructible because it is the result of a person's outlook on life." (Note that we will discuss the joy that comes from our outlook on life in option #3 below.)

Before going further, you should know that I am approaching the subject of happiness from a world view that starts from the perspective that there is a Creator and he has designed us to experience joy as well as happiness.

You may find this hard to believe, given your own personal experience. After all, we didn't get to pick our parents, our gender, our race, our location on earth, our time in history, and our genetic makeup. And further, we had little control of our treatment in early childhood, which may have included being scarred by physical and verbal abuse.

Add to this, all the self-imposed mental junk that we carry around because of the thoughts we've thought, the words we've said, and the actions we've taken that are destructive for us personally, our relationship with others, and fellow members of society.

In addition, we carry around the toxic words and actions that society and individuals have inflicted on us. Wow, no wonder happiness is hard for us to experience. Fortunately, we have pleasant experiences and memories that balance out some of these toxic thoughts.

Next, let's look at how the Creator designed us to experience optimal happiness.

### **Happiness by Design**

In the Bible's first Book named Genesis, it gives an account of the Creator's thinking when he created mankind. God, who is spirit, said, "Let us create man in our image." Just in case you were wondering who the "us" is that God is referring to,

we'll discuss that later. The Bible also says that God created us to want love and relationships because it is his image. If you have observed young children, you probably have observed that they are wired that way. Later, we will discuss how love and relationships are one of the primary keys to our happiness.

About now you may be thinking, what's this have to-do with happiness? Could we agree that we experience happiness because we have a mind. If you do agree, then it makes sense for us to spend some time finding out how our mind works and how it impacts our happiness.

Before we do that, let's define the English language words that we commonly use when discussing our mind. Words like brain, mind, heart, soul, and spirit.

For the purposes of our discussion, we will define these words as follows:

*Brain.* Is an organ contained in our skull that functions as the central physical place where our mind does its work and stores our information.

*Mind.* That part of us that enables us to think, develop thoughts, make decisions, feel emotions, and be aware of and remember things.

*Heart.* That part of our mind where our core values reside.

*Soul.* This is the essence of a person's life, their inner self, and their identity.

*Spirit.* This is the invisible force that gives life to an individual. It is the part of us that communicates with the unseen spiritual world.

You may be familiar with these terms, but probably have not given a lot of thought about the mind that you have lived with every day of your life. The truth is, our mind is extremely complex.

It monitors and regulates all our body's functions and actions. It monitors and evaluates all the inputs that it gets from our five senses, sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. It organizes and stores all the information and experiences that it considers to be important. It creates the emotions that are the byproducts of our thoughts. Yes, you guessed it, happiness is one of these emotions.

Our mind does something else that most of us probably are not aware of. It emits and senses electromagnetic waves. We experience this when we are with a large crowd of people who agree. Events like a well-attended sporting event or a

gathering of people in a church service. We hear people say that they could sense the electricity in the air.

As a side note, I found it interesting that sharks can sense the minute electric field of their prey. Just something else for you to think about when swimming in the ocean.

And finally, we emit and receive subatomic particles when we are in spiritual communication like meditating and praying. You may find this hard to believe, however, experiments have proven this to be true. Examples of these subatomic particles that you may know about are the type of particles of light, called photons, that travel from as far away as the distant stars and communication received from our probes on distant planets. These particles can travel anywhere in the universe. We may view them as spiritual communication because they are not constrained by time and space.

This may explain how we receive unseen influences on our thinking process that give us the urge to do things that are good or evil. Also, where do the thoughts that makeup our dreams come from? I don't know about your experiences, but I often dream dreams that have no connection to anything that I've been exposed to in my past.

The human mind is one of the real wonders of the universe. Just think about all the information and conveniences we take for granted that would not be here if there were no human minds. In a way, we can conclude that they have been created by the more than ten billion collective minds that have lived on earth since the time of Noah.

We think that software and computer chips are complex, but not when compared with our mind. Did you know that recent research has shown that each of our 15 trillion cells in our body contain an instruction code, called DNA, that is made up of 3.1 billion different letter combinations? What you may find fascinating is that our thoughts and decisions modify that code. In addition, these modifications impact our children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren's DNA code when they are conceived.

### **Happiness by Function**

Now that we have discussed our brain's design, let's move on to how it functions.

When you were in school, your teacher probably told you to put your “thinking cap” on. Why was this important? It’s important because thinking is the first step in the creative process. The second step is that thinking creates thoughts. And finally, thoughts present choices.

You’ve probably heard the phrase that someone who is bugging you is occupying space in your mind, rent free. Well, that’s the way it is with our thinking, thoughts, and choices. They end up occupying space in one of the specialized storage areas in your brain.

Two of these areas have a high impact on our happiness. The first area stores information about how we view our self, and the second area stores the information about how we view and interact with other people.

Later we will discuss how we can modify the toxic thoughts related to our self-image and our image of and relationship with others. However, before we do that, I want to touch on other mental storage areas that support these two areas.

First, there is the area that stores the mind’s logic and mathematical analysis capabilities. The key support that this area gives is the logical support for the concept of right and wrong. Why is this important? It’s important because logic considers the consequence of our decisions. (It just occurred to me that this area must be slow in developing in teenagers.)

Second, there is the area of our mind that can visualize and adjust our thoughts three dimensionally. This capability equips us to visualize a possible future event that can be constructive or destructive, and that visualization gets recorded as part of the information that our mind draws on in the future.

Third, there is the area of our mind that gives us the capability to communicate thoughts as well as take in thoughts. Included in this capability are speaking and listening, writing and reading, making music and listening to music. A more recent high impact way of communicating is by using video. It is high impact because our mind records the intake of video in much the same way it would if it was a real event.

Fourth, our minds are continually searching for truth (reality). Unfortunately, our actions are often based on untrue beliefs that don’t represent reality. This can happen when our mind misinterprets the information that it gets from our senses,

sight, hearing, touch, smell and touch. This can also happen when we believe information from other sources that is not true.

This is important to know because our beliefs are powerful things. For example, in medicine, up to one third of the healings from drugs and treatments are driven by our mind. It's called the placebo effect.

Fifth, we have an area of our mind that gives us the capability to move our body in a coordinated way. Those of us, who play golf, can attest to the fact that these movements can be a source of happiness and at times frustration.

### *Conscious vs. Subconscious thinking*

Did you have a good sleep last night? Did you dream? Did you know that your brain uses more energy per hour while you are sleeping than when you are awake? Why is that? The reason is, your mind is thinking continuously. When we are sleeping, it reorganizes all those bits of information that it has stored in our brain. An example of process is when the grieving process adjusts our mind to the new reality of our loss.

Of course, while we are sleeping, we are not conscious of our mind's thinking process. You might be surprised to learn that, even when we are awake, we are not conscious of more than 90% of our thinking that is taking place.

The reason that subconscious thinking is important for us is that we would not survive without it. We survive because, when in a crisis, we can utilize its extreme multitasking capability.

In contrast to our subconscious mind, our conscious mind is slow and does not multitask well. That's why we limit its use to introducing new information to our mind and vetting the thoughts that are made conscious from our subconscious mind. In case you were wondering, that's the reason some of us are slow to say things because our conscious mind is vetting out all the words that our subconscious mind wants us to say. You could say that this vetting process keeps our foot out of our mouth.

## **Mental Housekeeping**

If you are like me, at some point in your life you have been told to change your attitude. Have you ever thought about how your attitude is developed? By now you may have realized that changing your attitude is not easy. Why is that?

Well, it's not easy because our attitude is the product of the thoughts, decisions, and mental junk that we've stored in our subconscious mind over the course of our lifetime.

By now you probably have realized that the mental junk that we have stored in our subconscious mind is a major hinderance to our experiencing the feeling of happiness. This is because our feelings result from what we think about.

So, the big question is, how do we reduce our mental junk's influence on our life?

The ways that we deal with our junk's influence on our happiness fall into one of three categories. The first is, we can try to not think about our junk. The second is, we can try to modify our mental junk. And the third way is to get rid of our mental junk.

### *Option #1 Ignoring our mental junk*

Most of us go through life pursuing the first option, trying not to think about our mental junk. We do this by occupying our mind by choosing to think about other things. Some of these choices are long term, such as a goal that we adapt as our life's purpose or following a sports team. In my case, following the Cleveland Indians over the past 70 years has at times added to my mental junk.

Other choices we use to occupy our mind are more short-term. Activities such as a vacation trip, attending a concert, going to a movie, watching television, reading a book, spending time on the internet, and consuming drugs and booze. These are examples of short term distractions that we use to keep us from thinking about the junk we carry around in our subconscious mind.

And finally, we try to use interpersonal relationships in our pursuit of happiness. We discussed earlier how our mental junk impacts our self-image as well as how we view other people.

If we have a poor view of ourselves and other people, we will have two options. The first is to project our real self-image that may cause people to shy away from us. I suppose the people that we believe are jerks would fall into this category.

The second option is to project a fake self-image that we believe will make us more likable. The challenge with faking it is that it is difficult to be consistent in projecting that image so that people don't see through our act.

And finally, the lazy person's method for ignoring their mental junk is to have someone else take on the responsibility of making them happy. This often happens in marriage relationships. In most cases it does not end well.

### Option #2 Modifying our mental junk

Modifying our mental junk is a slow process. We may modify it by apologizing to someone we have hurt or have someone who has hurt us apologize for what they have done.

Another process some people use to try to modify their mental junk is through meditation. This is a process that seeks to replace our junk with alternative thoughts.

Then there is the process where we go to a counselor to help us analyze our mental junk and put it in a different context so that it has less impact on our thought process.

And finally, many people attempt to modify their mental junk through adapting a religion.

Most religions assume that there is a higher power that judges their followers based on a set of rules. Usually these rules are established by a person often referred to as a prophet and in some cases, the prophet is also their judge.

In most religions, the followers don't directly communicate with their higher power, but do so through intermediaries such as a priest, saint or a pure woman.

Followers of these religions modify their mental junk by working it off. In effect, they create a scoreboard that reflects their effectiveness in following the rules that are established by their religion. Some religions even encourage their followers or their relatives to buy extra points on their scoreboard of life to improve your odds.

Unfortunately, the followers of points-based religions never know if they have enough points to satisfy the person or entity that will be their judge. In addition, they will still have to live with their mental junk.

### *Option #3 Get rid of our mental junk*

Up until now, you may not have realized that this option exists. If so, take a few minutes to imagine what it would be like to have a junk free mind. Your first thought might be that your mind would have a lot of empty space that is no longer occupied by your mental junk.

Certainly, how you view yourself as well as your view of other people would dramatically change. Your attitude about life would also dramatically change for the better as well.

The Bible's New Testament writer of the letter to the Galatians some two thousand years ago said that our new junk free condition will result in us experiencing love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, gentleness, and self-control.

You may have noticed that the writer lists joy and does not mention happiness. That is because option #3 involves a change in outlook which is continuous rather than happiness which is event driven.

In addition to getting a junk free mind, there are several other benefits that are included in this package. Benefits such as, you are guaranteed eternal life with the Creator, the Creator chooses to forget your junk, the Creator dwells in you, and you are adopted into the Creator's family.

About now you may be thinking that this is hard to believe. You may not be sure that the creator exists and if the creator does exist, what do I have to do to get all these benefits?

I can understand your questioning the existence of a Creator. Especially given that you were probably taught that the theory of evolution is proven fact. If so, you've been misled because there is no credible evidence proving that it is anything more than a theory.

On the other hand, there is a lot of evidence that supports the concept of intelligent design. Even if you have not studied biology, physics, or astronomy, you've got to be amazed at the complexity of the body that you live in and our massive universe

that contains an estimated ten thousand trillion billion stars (that number is a one followed by twenty-five zeros).

The next question that may come to mind: if intelligent design is evident, then who or what is the designer? Your follow-on question would be, is the designer also the creator? And your next question would be, who or what would have the capability to do that?

Next, you would probably move on to the “why” questions. What is the purpose behind creation? And getting back to our discussion on mental junk. Why would an intelligent designer design us to accumulate mental junk?

For answers to these and other questions, you can read the Christian Bible, or go to my web site, [www.IsThereaCreator.com](http://www.IsThereaCreator.com), click on the OTTO’S EZINE ARTICLES tab, then click on the EZINE 3 article titled: SO GOD, WHAT’S IT ALL ABOUT? (The rest of the story). This article is an abbreviated rendition of the Bible that I’ve written in the form of a movie script. It takes about a twenty-minutes to read.

Let’s reflect on who God is.

He is the creator and sustainer of everything. He has always existed and will always exist. He is not constrained by time because he created time. He is not constrained by space because he created space. He knows everything, the past, the present, and the future. He even knew you and I before he created anything.

God, His only Son Jesus, and His Holy spirit are unique Spiritual persons. They each have a unique personality, and character. However, they always are in perfect harmony, because Jesus and the Holy Spirit always carry out God the Father’s will.

God is the only creator of life. That’s why he is the only source of eternal life for us.

On the other hand, God has integrity. He is morally right and fair, even in his dealings with his rebellious angel Lucifer and Lucifer’s demon followers.

God’s love is selfless, sacrificial, unconditional. That’s why He sent his Son Jesus to be born as a man, live a sinless life, then take on himself the punishment that we deserve for all the sins that we have and will commit.

If you have never been exposed to this information before, you may find it hard to believe. Especially the part about the unseen spiritual world of the Creator and

spiritual beings such as angels, Lucifer and his demon followers. At least now you know how we humans accumulate our mental junk. We get it because of Lucifer's influence on our earth.

Fortunately, the Bible has proven to be historically accurate. In addition, the more than 1,000 supernatural miracles Jesus Christ performed as well as his death by crucifixion, his raising from being dead and ascending into heaven were all witnessed by hundreds of people.

Another supernatural aspect of what's written in the Bible is that around one third of it is the foretelling future events. And 80 percent of these prophecies, including more than 200 about Jesus' life on earth, have already come to pass.

As you might expect, getting rid of your mental junk, getting eternal life, and having God's Holy Spirit residing in you 24/7 are all made possible by God supernaturally. Jesus described this change that we experience as being spiritually born again and becoming a new person.

Jesus used the term "born" to convey the idea that, just as everything about our physical birth was made possible by our parents, our spiritual rebirth is made possible by God's Holy Spirit. In both cases we are just along for the ride.

Another aspect of this change is that we are adopted into God's family and we have Jesus as our advocate before God.

I know, I know, you want to know how much this will cost you.

Well, it is free. There is no "score board of life" involved. It can't be earned. It is free because Jesus paid the full price for it when he died the spiritual death we deserve, suffered our deserved punishment in hell the three days he was in the grave, and then he conquered Lucifer on our behalf when he arose from the grave. Then, after spending forty days on earth being seen by over five hundred people, his followers watched him ascend into heaven to take his place at the right hand of God.

But you still have not answered my question. If it is free, how do I get it?

Think of it as being a gift that the Creator has prepared for you because he loves you and wants you to be part of his family. As with any gift that is offered to you, you need to accept it to benefit from it.

About now you may be thinking, this gift is different from other gifts that I have received. It is not a material object. Therefore, I can't examine it using my five senses: sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch. It is a spiritual relationship. And being a relationship, it can only be beneficial for you if you choose to believe that God, as described in the Bible, exists and that his Son Jesus is God in human form who came to make it possible for you to have a relationship with God.

I suppose you are familiar with the concept of membership in an organization or citizenship in a country. You know that you have these relationships because you get confirmation via a membership card or citizenship certificate. When you have them, you recognize that they come with benefits and responsibilities.

In the Bible, Jesus speaks of this gift as our being given citizenship in the Kingdom of God. Why is this important? It's important because Lucifer is the ruler of this earth. This means that each of us has been living in Lucifer's earthly kingdom, having citizenship in Lucifer's kingdom by default. So, when we become citizens of the Kingdom of God, we will be giving up our citizenship in Lucifer's kingdom.

At this point, you may be a little overwhelmed with the information about God that we've covered so far. The concept of having a personal relationship with God, the creator and sustainer of everything, may be a new concept to you. It's one thing to know about a person but having a personal relationship with them is something else. Another complication we have in visualizing this relationship is that this relationship is with multiple spiritual persons, with God, his son Jesus, and his Holy Spirit.

This is not your normal relationship that we would have with a person, it is a spiritual relationship with the all-knowing, all-powerful, and continuously existing God who knows all about us, loves us, and wants to have an intimate relationship with us.

Now you know why those of us who have accepted God's gift of eternal life refer to him as "Lord." It's because that name represents all the benefits that are ours because of our relationship with him.

The first benefit that we have is a continuous relationship with God. This relationship started when we invited God's Holy Spirit to dwell in our Heart and

continues unbroken for the rest of our eternal existence. The benefits that are ours from this relationship are awesome:

- We have friendship with God in his three persons; His Son Jesus, His Holy Spirit, and God Himself. We are never alone.
- We have the love and support of all the other people who have chosen citizenship in God's Kingdom. They are our brothers and sisters in Jesus' family. We are all joint heirs with Jesus of all that is God's. No need for a will because we will be living forever.
- We have access to God's power, wisdom, love, and ability.
- The Holy Spirit is our teacher, explaining to us the meaning of God's revelation to the writers of the books contained in the Bible.
- We have ongoing Heart level conversations with God's Holy Spirit as well as conscious dialogue that we call prayer. If we want God to do something that will bring glory to Him, all we need to do is ask Him, using Jesus' name to validate our request.

Secondly, we have become new persons, in that, God has changed us. He has forgiven us of all the wrong that we have and ever will commit. This means that God views us as perfect people because Jesus has paid the full penalty for our sin. Therefore, when God sees us, He sees the Jesus' perfection instead of our imperfection. In other words, in God's eyes, our mental junk is gone!

His Spirit, living in us, guides us in the renewal of our mind. He gives us the power to resist the temptations to do wrong. And finally, after we die, our spirit goes immediately to heaven and we will eventually get a new body like the one that Jesus got after He arose from the grave.

Thirdly, we have responsibilities that come with being citizens of the Kingdom of God. How we live our lives needs to reflect God's presence in our life. Our mind-set is that we are stewards of all that God gives us. This includes time, resources, and relationships.

Not only are we to love God, but also to love other people as much as we love ourselves. One expression of our love for others is to share the good news about citizenship in God's Kingdom.

And finally, our journey will not end. It is eternal. Our life on earth in this body is just a blip on the screen of our existence. Included in our Kingdom journey is the use of a heavenly mansion that is located on streets that are paved with gold and being able to sing in the heavenly choir that assembles to sing praises to God and his Son Jesus. We also get to go on special assignments such as coming back to earth with Jesus when He returns to set up God's Kingdom on earth.

In my case, I look forward to meeting and getting a big hug from Jesus as well as getting to be with all my fellow kingdom citizens who have gone ahead of me. Including family and friends, people like Isaac Newton, Jesus' disciple John, the prophets Daniel and Isaiah, King David, Moses, and Abraham.

### *Conclusion*

Now you understand why the dramatic change in outlook described option #3 results in our experiencing continuous joy rather than just occasional event driven happiness, you may be interested in accepting God's gift of eternal life and getting rid of all your accumulated junk.

Your decision is between you and God. There are no rituals involved. No human or spiritual intermediaries involved. Just a conversation, in your own words, between you and God.

Keep in mind that you will need to be honest in this conversation because God already knows everything about you. He loves you and his Holy Spirit has been involved in convincing you that he wants you to have an eternal relationship with him.

As with any relationship, it will be important for you to apologize for all the things that you have thought, said, and done that are offensive to God. Next, thank God for sending Jesus to pay the penalty you deserve for these offensive things. Then thank him for forgiving you and choosing not to remember them.

Next, given that God is a spiritual being that is not limited by time and space, invite God's Holy Spirit to dwell in you.

Next, given that God knows all about you, you need to learn more about him to fully benefit from that relationship. You do this by reading the Bible and fellowshiping with other people who have a relationship with God.

And finally, share what you have done with other people.

