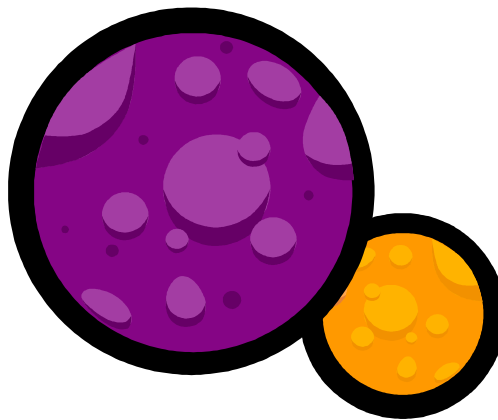


The Discipline of Happiness

If you could look in every heart and every mind you would find an equally sized feature of a certain type – when this facet of the heart grows, it grows equally in the mind – when it diminishes in the mind it diminishes in the heart. Whether the mind causes the heart segment to grow, or vice versa, I don't know; but it is clear that they grow or shrink in unison.

What is equally true, is the growth or diminution of this feature is precisely counterbalanced by an exact, but opposite, expansion or shrinking of another facet of the heart and mind. When the purple increases, the orange decreases and vice versa – they cannot merrily co-exist because they compete for the same area of the heart and mind.



What are these?

Thankfulness – Sense of Entitlement

And the part of the heart they occupy?

The Contentment – Happiness/Dissatisfaction – Misery Region

Every gift enters into, and builds up, the thankful or entitlement part of the heart and mind. As we practice and build up one area, we shrink the other. Dissatisfaction and misery come naturally and easily through the habit of ingratitude. Happiness, on the other hand, requires work and discipline, that will eventually develop into a habit of thankfulness resulting in even greater and deeper happiness. A material blessing without thankfulness will be, in the end, a curse.

There are two, mutually exclusive, attitudes and views of life:

Looking around at all we have versus looking at what we don't have.

Many a person has lived their entire life miserable (and making everyone around them miserable!) about the relatively little things they do not have while ignoring the abundance they possess. In some cases, they only see and appreciate a blessing when it is gone – you most commonly hear, for example, those who are ill say: “If you have you health you have everything!”

The primary difference between “just getting old” and maturing as you age is that just getting old is the result of not looking for and developing disciplines to make you BETTER as you age – a year or decade without working on a new discipline (to mitigate the natural consequences of aging) is surely a period of increasing unhappiness.

Thankfulness is the catalyst for making material gifts emotional and spiritual blessings.

Be like the Psalmist proclaiming the truth of God’s grace:

LORD, you have assigned me my portion and my cup;
you have made my lot secure.

The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;
surely I have a delightful inheritance.

I will praise the LORD, who counsels me;
even at night my heart instructs me.

I have set the LORD always before me.
Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; ^{Ps 16:5-9}

“Don’t Worry – Be Happy” doesn’t work.
Be Thankful! Be Happy! will EVERY time!