

Getting it together

Do you know how to be happy?

Is there any such thing as a happy person? Looking around at all the bored faces and empty marriages, it's easy to see why so many people have asked this question.

But the fact is that many people have learned how to feel satisfied and happy in most aspects of their lives. Furthermore, these happy individuals all seem to have certain characteristics in common.

First, and most important, these people have placed a high priority on personal happiness. They have come to see that nothing in their lives is worth as much as feeling satisfaction and giving happiness to the people who they care about. Jobs, material wealth, ideologies and comfort are seen as vehicles or backgrounds for happiness, not as substitutes for it.

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By BOB TRENZ, Ph.D.



Truly happy people don't passively wait for conditions to shift in their favor. They are active and purposeful in their pursuit of personal satisfaction.

They recognize that they can have an important influence on their own fate.

They are willing to take responsibility for what happens to them, rather than finding someone else to blame things on.

Trusting in their own ability to make the best of even relatively uncomfortable situations, happy people are risk takers. This is not to say that they are impulsive and careless, but they are not likely to pass up an opportunity for fun and adventure just for the sake of comfort.

Happy people have learned the value of trying new experiences instead of only walking down old familiar trails.

Being successful at living a happy life means being successful at dealing with other people honestly and considerately.

Happy individuals have learned that telling others your honest feelings in the most tactful way possible is by far the most efficient way to relate.

Deception, they have discovered, makes life too complicated. Being inconsiderate results in being treated with inconsideration in return.

Rather than giving up on traditional institutions, the happy individual has found that he can make them work for him. He has come to see the essential benefits of marriage, family and religion.

Instead of rejecting them he learns to adapt them to his individuality. Happiness for such individuals comes from simple pleasures.

They have discovered the importance of providing for one's own survival needs. They enjoy the self-sufficiency felt when they grow a garden, paint their own home, cook their own food or repair their own plumbing.

TRULY HAPPY people have learned to have positive expectations for their world. They have learned that when one expects the worst from people he will get what he expects, and the opposite is also true.

Happy people are more trusting of the motives of others. They look for the best in everyone, and they frequently find it.

Finally, happy individuals like themselves. They see themselves as worthwhile, loveable and respectable.

Although they are aware of their own weaknesses, they accept them as part of their humanness. They also accept the weaknesses of others.

It's not too surprising to learn that happy people are often very well-liked too.

Bob Trenez is a Rochester psychologist and marriage counselor. Questions for Dr. Trenez may be sent to the Observer & Eccentric, 410 N. Main, Rochester, 48003.

Teenagers' emotions

"Understanding the Emotional Needs of Teenagers" is the subject of a new course offered by the Center for Continuing Education at 27000 Farmington Road, Farmington.

The course will be taught by Kenneth Acheson on Mondays, from 7:30-9:00 p.m. beginning Jan. 12 as a non-credit course. It is recommended for parents as well as adults who work with teens.

Acheson believes the emotions of teenagers has a lot to do with their individual conduct, and his course will give an explanation of some of the conflicts today's teenager is experiencing.

He has a prolific background in practical experiences related to meeting the emotional needs of both children and adults. He has served as a school psychologist, done practicum experiences in two inpatient hospitals and one out-patient clinic. He has also been involved in testing and counseling at the Rosemead Graduate School of Psychology in California.

One of his current goals is to set up a therapeutic half-way house for delinquent teenagers.

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