

HELLO, HAPPINESS

CHRONIC JOY TAKES DISCIPLINE AND PRACTICE

BY SIBYLLE PREUSCHAT

The elusive mind state known as happiness is forever sought and seldom recognized, even when it's found. But some folks do better at the search than others. For those who arrive in this world with good brain chemistry, satisfaction comes easily. Others need to learn techniques for making happiness a chronic condition. Many spiritually oriented thinkers assure us that through discipline, meditation and focus on the here and now, we can learn how to reclaim our soul's birthright of boundless satisfaction despite our outer circumstances. Therapists and lifestyle coaches are more apt to suggest cognitive tricks aimed at redefining negative events and accumulating joyful moments.

Most experts agree that once you have enough money to meet basic needs, it's more important to seek relationship quality than a pay raise. Indeed, scientists involved in a field of study called "happiness economics" say that being harmoniously married brings the same satisfaction as putting \$100,000 in the bank every year.

The task is to always look for ways to increase our delight. More sex always makes us happy, these researchers say, as long as it's loving. And kisses and hugs release pleasurable endorphins in our brains. Other big joy-producers are found in our activities. If there's something you love doing, do it regularly! The potential for happiness also rises when you do something that you feel contributes to a cause bigger than yourself or attempt to clear guilt, anger, hate, grudges or selfishness from your being. To find out more about your happiness levels, check out www.authentic happiness.org.

WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

"Our subconscious minds might not be ready to give up feeling sorry for ourselves, feeling victimized or bad, because at some level those feelings serve us – getting us attention, for instance. Through **yoga** asanas, **breath work** and **meditation**, we can reach quite deeply into the physical, mental and spiritual bodies and release whatever needs to be released. We are God in some respect, but we've forgotten; (in yoga) we're trying to reunite with the infinite. Joy, happiness – that's our true nature. (But) we've chosen to create challenges for ourselves. (This helps us) as souls to grow."

TOM RUSSELL, kundalini yoga instructor, polarity therapy practitioner, Toronto