

POSITIVITY

Happiness is more powerful than we recognise



B.K. MOHINI

Watching little children in a family gathering brings great joy. We watch their enthusiasm, their innocence, and their sweetness. These qualities are not just for children. If we wish, we can maintain this joy within ourselves.

It all depends on how we think, what we give our attention to and what we appreciate. If we want to maintain happiness within ourselves, a good practice to adopt is to watch what kinds of things we are giving our energy to during the day. Everyone has to occupy themselves in some way for their livelihood. Everyone has responsibilities. It is how we go about doing those things that makes us happy or unhappy. If we look back over the day and see that we spent it in worry, criticism, anxiety, or irritation, how can we expect to be happy tomorrow? And yet that is what we all desire, a happy today



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and a happy tomorrow.

The beautiful thing about contemplating only good things in our minds and seeing the best we possibly can in each one and in each situation is that it has such an influence on those around us. Each one in our own world, has their own inner world and as they are inspired and influenced by our happy approach to life,

they in turn affect those in their orbit. Understanding this, it is easy to see how one person can make a massive difference. We must all have met one of those kinds of people, the ones who always have a smile on their face and a kind word on their lips. It is a form of service to humanity, a selfless, altruistic gift to the world. One who is altruistic will adapt to everything because the self is not an obstruction. Such a one has the ability to always say, “very good, very good” about whatever is going on. The one who is able to do that will receive so many blessings from others. Imagine being

able to make each one you meet, raise a smile, no matter how their day is going.

The incorporeal Father of all souls is ever cheerful. He is the Ocean of Happiness. In meditation, connecting to that One Father, we can absorb as much happiness as we want. It is this kind of happiness that sustains us, helps us through all our personal difficulties and enables us to share happiness with others. When enough of us fill ourselves with this power of joy, it will change the world.

B.K. Mohini is Additional Administrative Head of the Brahma Kumaris.

STRENGTH

AMPLIFYING INTUITION IN A TIME OF GREAT NOISE



STEPHEN BERKELEY

Each one of us has ‘intuition’ —the ability to know or understand something instinctively rather than through conscious reasoning. However, even though that inner voice is whispering to us most of the time, we fail to hear it, because of all the inner and outer noise. Sometimes we do hear it faintly but ignore it and fail to act on it. However, in a world that is increasingly noisy, there has never been a time when our ability to hear our inner voice, our intuition, has been more needed. We need to find ways to amplify, to turn it up, so that we can hear it, especially when we most need it, at those pivotal moments in life.

There are many ways we can do this. In my experience the two most powerful ways are through a consistent and regular practice of meditation and to remain grounded. Two stories that in a sense ‘bookend’ a 13-year-long experience may illustrate the point. Before the experience began and when it needed to end, I heard and acted on my intuition. The beginning was on New Year’s Day, 2006. I was in the last day of a seven-day silence retreat. I was reviewing the year that had gone, by reading through my journal entries. As I closed the book, I quietly thought, ‘So, what’s going to happen in 2006?’ Like a flash of lightning, with crystal clarity, the thought came, ‘You are going to quit your job and work outside of Australia’. My reaction was quite calm, even though I was loving the best job I had ever had. I was intrigued.

In February of that year, I was travelling in Sri Lanka, giving talks on the power of meditation, in banks, tea plantations, corporate settings. All the time quietly aware that some change was



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to happen, and looking for signs. From there I moved on to the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University headquarters in Mount Abu. There is a hospital there. My background of administrative roles in health care had meant that I had visited the hospital often during the previous eight years, and knew

many of the personnel. One of them approached me and asked what I was going to do in 2006. When they went on to ask if I could join them for a period of 12 months, I knew that it was the sign, and said yes. I stayed for 13 years.

Towards the end of the 13-year period, I was in Australia, on a visit to my fam-

ily. The year was 2019. I was taking a walk on a deserted beach when a sudden storm began. I decided to move a bit further inland for some protection against the elements. I found myself beyond the sand dunes in a beautiful tea tree forest. I walked beneath this beautiful canopy on a sandy path, where small patches of crystal-clear water reflected the light and the leaves. I could hear the ocean behind me, and I felt so grounded and serene, in the pure joy of the raindrops falling on my head. Then, like a sudden flash of light, the thought came, ‘something big is going to happen—you have to come home’. It took me by surprise. But by now I knew to take this voice seriously. I listened, I heard, and left Australia with an empty bag. I gave the hospital plenty of notice and returned to Australia. Although there had been murmurings of a new virus in the world, it was only later that year that the ‘something big’ became a reality.

When I look back on those moments, I understand that they did not come out of the

blue. I had the practice of meditating every morning and evening. In meditation we cultivate silence, which is essential if we want to hear our intuition. There is the constant reflection process of refining the impact of meditation on our relationships and interactions, to remaining ever more peaceful. At the same time, as in the second story, I remain grounded. In other words, I am present in the moment. In the forest, I was really connected to the earth. When you really are fully aware of your five senses, it enables the sixth sense, or intuition to be more alive and awake.

Meditation practised regularly, daily, is the most powerful way to create the silence needed to listen for, hear and act on what our intuition is telling us. With ever-increasing noise in the world and in our minds, what better time could there be to perfect the art of meditation?

Stephen Berkeley is Director Global Business, Flyntrok Consulting. He lives in the Brahma Kumaris Centre, Brisbane, Australia.

A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

It is not the load that breaks me, it is how I carry it. Carrying a load in an unbalanced way can make me fall. ‘Carrying’ a responsibility with fear or resentment will break my spirit. I find the right balance when I hold a responsibility lightly and with dignity. Keeping my eyes focused forward, I maintain a steady pace towards my goal. Today let me carry my responsibilities in a balanced way.

PROSPERITY

HOW WEALTH CAN BRING LASTING JOY



B.K. USHA

Happiness is normally associated with possession of wealth, which is why people toil and employ various means to earn and enhance their income. Money can certainly make life comfortable and widen the range of opportunities available to us for education and employment, but it cannot buy happiness.

Studies done in various countries have shown that rising incomes alone do not make people happy. A household’s income contributes to life satisfaction, but in a limited way. Other things matter more: com-

munity trust, mental and physical health, and the quality of governance and rule of law. It has been seen that raising incomes can raise happiness, especially in poor societies, but fostering cooperation and a community spirit can do even more.

The most apparent difference between the rich and the poor is in their access to basic amenities. While the poor suffer from deprivation, most people in affluent societies have a surfeit of amenities above basic needs. Yet the conditions of affluence give rise to their own set of problems which afflict the wealthy. Obesity, diabetes, psychosocial disorders, and addictions to shopping, television, and gambling, all originate, directly or indirectly, from economic development. These disorders have been compounded by the loss of communal bonds, the decline of social trust and rising anxiety levels associated



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with financial insecurity.

Studies have revealed that many well-to-do people do not feel happier as their income rises. One reason is that they compare themselves with others. They are happy when they are higher on the social or income ladder, but when they see others also prospering, it takes away some of their joy, which is totally lost when they look at those doing better than themselves.

The worries and insecurity that come with possession of huge wealth also weigh on the minds of the rich. While the poor readily mix with others in their communities as they have little to protect or lose, the rich tend to isolate themselves as they seek to safeguard their possessions and privileges. As they look upon their less fortunate compatriots with suspicion and fear, they become more worried and insecure.

In prosperous nations, societal factors such as loss

of social trust or declining confidence in government counteract any benefits felt from higher incomes. Another reason is adaptation: individuals may initially feel happier when their income rises but then they lose some of that happiness as they get used to their higher income.

They then seek to increase their income even more, and this craving for more money brings unhappiness. Psychologists have found repeatedly that individuals who put a high premium on higher incomes generally are less happy and more vulnerable to other psychological ills than individuals who do not chase higher incomes.

In essence, the pursuit of material wealth at the expense of peace of mind and inner happiness drives the rich to sorrow. People earn money in order to lead happy lives, but in the process forget that happiness, not more and more money, is their goal. If they avoid this

mental trap, they can experience the joy and freedom that prosperity can bring.

That joy can be multiplied and shared all around with a slight change of attitude. Much of the anxieties of the rich stem from their wish to hoard or hold on to their wealth. That is not a wise thing to do. Prosperity is not a matter of chance or good luck; understanding the law of karma makes it clear that it is a reward for hard work or good deeds, done in this life or earlier. This reward can be enhanced through generosity. Willingly using one’s resources to benefit others brings great satisfaction, besides earning us goodwill and blessings from people. All these act as a tonic for the mind, filling it with happiness and contentment. That is the right way to live a prosperous and happy life.

B.K. Usha is a Rajyoga teacher at the Brahma Kumaris headquarters in Abu Road, Rajasthan.