

BUSINESS EYE

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How do we find key to happiness?

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This week's nonsensical musings presented to you as fake wisdom come to you on my first full day back in a cold Blighty after a few weeks away.

I have, of late, been delving into the idea of happiness to understand what it would take to make Buckinghamshire the happiest place on earth.

On the surface it seems counter-intuitive that at a time when we have never been healthier nor wealthier, suicide rates should be climbing, levels of teenage depression are rising exponentially and general happiness measures

are hitting all-time lows.

It turns out that there is a crumbling structure to happiness, identified by Professor Sir Anthony Seldon, who established the 'Happiness Project'.

The foundation stone for happiness is an understanding that life is only random if we choose to make it so.

In other words, I need to accept that I am responsible for my own life and everything in it.

If we don't all do this then we are doomed to live the lives of victims.

This will keep us angry, frustrated and feeling oppressed by all those people we will then choose to project blame on to.

Knowing that only you can be responsible for you, and that sitting in the driving seat of your life is a necessary but insufficient condition to make you happy is the car on the road to joy, but there is more to joy than simply taking to the wheel, you also need to know

how to drive there.

In my observation many people are unhappy because they are too busy trying to be happy.

We all actually know what would make us happy, but we spend our time doing pleasurable things that we find tempting, often driven by the fear of missing out.

The pleasure paradox is where our narcissistic selves reside; where I am the centre of the universe.

In this place I will seek out pleasure in all its forms, often by buying it.

The people around me become objects for my pleasure and any positive emotional lift lasts only fleetingly like the sugar burst from fast food.

Our appetite for pleasure is seemingly insatiable - there is always more to be had but the feeling never lasts.

Beyond this pleasure dome from which many are doomed never to escape lies the realm of happiness which we actually experience as a by-product

of living well with others who we treat as our equals.

Then beyond happiness lies joy, which is the place where others have become more important than us and our aim is to serve them and in doing so we find joy.

It strikes me that more and more people remain trapped in the pleasure dome, which explains why fewer experience happiness.

It is rare these days to find someone living in a state of joy - I'm not sure I know one.

It is why the online dating world struggles to bring joy to its participants.

The vast majority of people are not on their first relationship and are looking for someone to bring them pleasure to reverse the pain of the past.

They also tend to believe that everyone else is looking for the same.

The mindset is 'can you bring me what I want', because if not I'm swiping left.

Occasionally you will read a profile which suggests that



Think about what you can give, as well as take.

the person is looking to give as well as take, but if you were to list a profile which read that your aim was to bring yourself to the service of the other it would be assumed that you had a submission fetish.

Yet what is a joyous relationship if it's not two people

dedicated to improving the life of the other rather than moaning that their bottom is too big or they play too much golf.

It's the same in networking.

This only works if you focus first of what you can give to others rather than what's in it for you.