

9 HAPPINESS CONTRACTS (from FB)

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ONE – The Perfectionist Contract

- **Super Ego Belief:** “I must be perfect in order to deserve happiness.”
- **The Rule:** you have to be good, extra good, and better than you are now, in order to deserve happiness. Happiness is permissible just so long as you dress well, speak politely, make no mistakes, get everything right, be a model citizen, take responsibility, think no evil, and never read pornography.
- **The Fear:** Maybe I’m not good enough for happiness. Not yet, anyway. First, I have to make a better version of myself, and then I can deserve happiness.
- **The Example:** In the film, *Chocolat*, the village major, the Comte De Reynaud, played by Alfred Molina, opposes the work of Vianne Rocher, played by Juliette Binoche, an expert chocolatier. He’s trying to be good, and to suppress his desire for pleasure. Too much suppression and control blocks joy.
- **The Mistake:** Happiness is not a gold star. Happiness is not a reward. Happiness cannot be bought with good behaviour.
- **Soul Meditation:** You can rewrite your contract by remembering that the goal of your life is not to make a perfect self; it is to see that you are perfectly made.
- **Affirmation:** “I love and accept myself unconditionally.”

TWO – The Martyr Contract

- **Super Ego Belief:** “I must sacrifice something valuable for happiness.”
- **The Rule:** happiness demands sacrifice. This rule, like all the others, is learned, not real. Did you grow up with a martyr in your family?
- **The Fear:** Happiness is selfish, and that’s why you fear that too much happiness is not good.
- **The Example:** In the film, *Straight Talk*, Dolly Parton’s character, Shirlee, gets a job as a telephone receptionist for a talk-radio station. “Get down off the cross, honey – somebody needs the wood!” says Shirlee to a caller who wants help with being in sacrifice in her marriage.
- **The Mistake:** Happiness is not selfish. Social research studies show that happy people are naturally generous, loving, sociable, open, and committed to the happiness of others.
- **Soul Meditation:** You can be happy if you are willing to sacrifice (i.e. give up) fear for love, guilt for joy, separation for oneness, ego for God.
- **Affirmation:** “My healing and my happiness is a gift to others.”

THREE – Work Ethic Contract

- **Super Ego Belief:** “I must earn happiness.”
- **The Rule:** happiness is earned through hard work. Disciples of the work ethic believe in labor 24/7 and power breakfasts! They believe that happiness is an achievement, success is a struggle, and inspiration comes from perspiration. You can be happy only after the work is done.

- **The Fear:** Happiness won’t happen unless I make it happen.
- **The Example:** Anyone who overdoes it! Executives who work too hard; mothers who try to be super-mom; students who revise too much; artists who over-rehearse; athletes who train too hard; chefs who try too hard to do their best, etc.
- **The Mistake:** You are trying too hard to be happy. You think that more success is the key to happiness. Actually, happiness increases your chances of success.
- **Soul Meditation:** Happiness is not something to achieve; it is something to accept.
- **Affirmation:** “Happiness is a divine free-bee.”

FOUR --Suffering Ethic Contract

- **Super Ego Belief:** “I must suffer in order to know happiness.”
- **The Rule:** happiness must be paid for with a suffering tax. You can suffer now and be happy later, or, you can be happy now and suffer later.
- **The Fear:** I fear I’m not eligible for happiness. I’m a misfit in God’s creation. I’m the one that JOY forgets to include.
- **The Example:** Shakespeare’s character Jaques, the melancholy philosopher, in *As You Like It*. “I can suck melancholy out of a song, as a weasel sucks eggs,” he brags. And Eeyore, the gray-blue donkey, in *Winnie-the-Pooh*, who lives in a gloomy part of the woods. “Good afternoon, Eeyore,” says Piglet. “Good afternoon, Piglet, if it is a good afternoon, which I doubt,” replies Eeyore.
- **The Mistake:** Suffering doesn’t make you more significant than anyone else or more real. It doesn’t make you a great person. And, by the way, happiness is deep, beautiful and interesting – if you give it a chance.
- **Soul Meditation:** Just because last term you signed up for the school of hard knocks, doesn’t mean you have to take the same class again.
- **Affirmation:** “True joy cures the need to suffer.”

FIVE-- The Understanding Contract

- **Super Ego Belief:** “I must understand what happiness is.”
- **The Rule:** to be happy I have to know how to do it. Happiness is a problem to be solved. It’s an inquiry. It’s a research paper.
- **The Fear:** I’m afraid I haven’t got what it takes to be happy.
- **The Example:** You stand in front of two doors. One door has a sign hanging on it that reads “Happiness” and the other door has a sign that reads “Lecture on Happiness.” Which door will you choose?
- **The Mistake:** Happiness is not learned; it’s remembered. The soul is already happy. Happiness is not to be understood; it is to be enjoyed.
- **Soul Meditation:** Notice how good it feels to stop trying to get your head around happiness. Happiness is a quality of the heart; you helps you feel comfortable in your skin, and it arises naturally in your mind when you welcome it.
- **Affirmation:** “Happiness happens when I least inspect it.”

SIX-- The Guaranteed Contract

- **Super Ego Belief:** “It’s important to have a guarantee.”
- **The Rule:** to be happy you have to be on your guard. After all, this happiness could be a test. Ideally, happiness should come with a guarantee. That way you could trust it, and it wouldn’t let you down.
- **The Fear:** Happiness is not safe. Can I really trust happiness? Will this love last? Is it really okay for me to be this happy? Can I trust myself to be this happy without ruining it?
- **The Example:** In one of my favourite films, *Defending Your Life*, Daniel Miller, played by Albert Brooks, buys a new BMW. He’s never been happier. He immediately crashes the car and dies. He gains consciousness and finds himself in a Waiting Room. He discovers life was a test after all. Did he pass the test? You’ll have to watch the movie!
- **The Mistake:** For as long as you believe you must deserve happiness, you will look for guarantees, warranties, and seals of approval for even small amounts of happiness. You fear a visit from the Karmic Debt Collectors.
- **Soul Meditation:** Happiness research confirms that circumstances have only a short-term, negligible effect on happiness. No wonder egos are neurotic. However, the soul experiences unreasonable happiness, which is joy. And joy doesn’t need a reason, and therefore it can’t be taken away.
- **Affirmation:** “Joy is my compass. It helps me to be safe, to feel supported, and to be guided.”

SEVEN - The Searching Contract

- **Super Ego Belief:** “Happiness is something I have to find.”
- **The Rule:** to be happy you have to search for happiness.
- **The Fear:** Happiness is somewhere else. I won’t find happiness. The Bonus Fear: what if happiness is boring? What if it’s more fun to search for happiness than it is to be happy? And what if I make the wrong choices? And what if the grass really is greener somewhere else.
- **The Example:** My favourite comedian is Bill Hicks. He had a hell of a life. He smoked, he drank, he partied, he got cancer, he died when he was thirty-three. He often finished his stand-up shows with a sketch called *It’s Just a Ride* in which he reminds us that happiness is a choice between love and fear.
- **The Mistake:** Happiness is not about getting there; it’s about being here. Happiness is not a thing “to have”; it’s a way of being.
- **Soul Meditation:** There is a world of difference between searching for happiness and following your joy.
- **Affirmation:** “Happiness is where I am.”

EIGHT -- The Big Contract

- **Super Ego Belief:** “Happiness is something I must be in charge of.”
- **The Rule:** Happiness is self-reliance. To be happy I must be strong. I must make myself big – bigger than happiness. I must be impenetrable. I must wear special shoes to cover my Achilles heel. I must be in control.

- **The Fear:** Happiness will hurt me. Happiness is too soft a thing for this harsh world.
- **The Example:** Have you watched the movie *Citizen Kane*? Mr Kane, played by Orson Welles, was a newspaper magnate. He was forceful and lustful. He tried to conquer the world and build an empire through a ruthless pursuit of power. He was never satisfied. There was always something missing. On his deathbed, his last word was “Rosebud.” Many tried to solve the mystery of what Rosebud meant. Rosebud was the trade name of the sled that Kane used to ride as an 8-year old boy.
- **The Mistake:** You can’t control happiness, you can’t control life, and you can’t control other people. Have you noticed that what you try to control the most causes you the most grief? Real strength comes from surrender; and from letting go.
- **Soul Meditation:** Franz Kafka wrote about an “indestructible happiness” within. Is there such a thing? The mystics say that if you look into your heart you will find an “unbroken wholeness”. Could this be so? If you’re going to look you will need to drop your defences.
- **Affirmation:** “Happiness is a cosmic colonic.”

NINE - Peace Agreement Contract

- **Super Ego Belief:** “Too much happiness isn’t worth the trouble.”
- **The Rule:** My happiness must not interfere with the happiness of others. It mustn’t make waves, rock the boat, or stir up trouble.
- **The Fear:** Happiness will cause unrest. Question: if you were completely happy who are you afraid it would piss off?
- **The Example:** In *Waiting for Godot*, by Samuel Beckett, Vladimir and Estragon, wait endlessly for Godot to arrive. Who or what on earth is Godot? If you wait too long for everything to be okay before you allow yourself to be happy, you’ll forget what you are waiting for.
- **The Mistake:** You believe that if you forego your right to happiness it will make it easier and less complicated for others to be happy.
- **Soul Meditation:** Your gentle smile brings a touch of heaven to this world. Your happy laughter brings us comfort and joy.
- **Affirmation:** “I have a right to be happy.”