

## ***If You Want To Be Happy, Accept Life As It Is And Let Go Of What You Cannot Control***

### ***Stay In Your Lane***

***“We cannot change anything until we accept it. Condemnation does not liberate, it oppresses.” — Carl Jung***

***It's a given, we want to control the irrepressible parts of our lives, believing we will attain happiness then. I liken the thought to catching fireflies at night, certain you have caught them all. It is only later you realize there are more around and so you concede defeat. I wish to emphasize one important key principle in this article. The rest is details:***

***Happiness = Accepting what is and letting go of what you cannot control.***

***It sounds simple right?***

***Then why aren't we happy?***

***Because what looks easy is often difficult to apply in real life. We want happiness to fill a void in our lives, but we don't want the struggle and difficulties that go with it. Yet the pain and struggle serve as a reminder to stop influencing circumstances beyond our control. I often remind others to stay in their lane. Meaning, you have no business poking around in matters outside your control because life is bigger than you and will impose itself upon you each time. It has many millennia of experience and a toolbox of tricks, compared to your humble few decades of life.***

***“If you believe the outer circumstance is yoked inevitably to your story about it, then you will surely be at the mercy of whatever is going on in your life,” explains author Jan Frazier in The Freedom of Being: At Ease with What Is. I've researched countless books on happiness over the past decade, including attending seminars by respected psychologists, and concede that happiness is much simpler than we think. Whilst I do not discount their tireless work and research, I believe happiness is accessible once our thoughts are in harmony.***

***It is our thinking that gets in the way of achieving happiness, not having a bank account full of money, fancy cars, or luxury homes. Whilst these are good things to have, they wear off after a while and are meaningless if you cannot find peace and contentment within.***

### ***The Meaning You Give Your Experiences***

***“We must let go of the life we have planned, to accept the one that is waiting for us.” — Joseph Campbell***

***Man is responsible for his problems because he creates them through his thoughts. Nothing outside you has meaning save for the meaning you give it. Your brain assigns meaning to life's events to make sense of what takes place. Tony Robbins says: “Meaning equals emotion and emotion equals life. The meaning you give your experiences will always change how you feel — and the emotion you feel always becomes the quality of your life.”***

***Yet the meaning you give can be inaccurate if viewed through a distorted lens. For example, if you've been cheated on in a relationship, the meaning you ascribe to future relationships will be based on a lack of trust. This is neither right nor wrong, but one aspect of the picture. Robbins says: "Are your patterns helping or harming you? It's vital to remember that our perceptions are creative — if we define something as negative, that's the message our brain receives and responds to by creating an emotional state to reinforce that reality."***

***This is an ideal point to reinforce the main point of this article. Your happiness lies in reframing events to accept what is and let go of what you cannot control. Psychotherapist David Richo writes in *The Five Things We Cannot Change: And the Happiness We Find by Embracing Them*: "We can learn to accept life on its terms. We can even find its terms satisfactory. We do not have to shake our fists at heaven."***

***We do not have to demand an exemption or take refuge in a belief system that muffles the wallop of the givens by promising a paradise without them. We can craft a sane and authentic life by saying yes to life just as it is. Indeed, our path is "what is." Referring to our earlier example where your trust was squandered through infidelity, the lesson gained is that you are likely to choose a trustworthy partner in your next relationship, given its relationship to your happiness. Contrast helps to shed light on what you value most and will be important to you.***

***To further emphasize the point, you accepted your previous partner's transgression, noting you may have played a role in co-creating an unbalanced union. Note, I am not implying you consented to the unfaithfulness, however as a complying party you are still responsible for the events that took place. Therefore, your lesson is to accept the dissolution of the relationship and release all judgment, anger, and hate by healing and forgiving yourself and your former partner.***

#### ***Learn From The Experience***

***"Change the changeable, accept the unchangeable, and remove yourself from the unacceptable."— Denis Waitley***

***To continue harboring anger and resentment ties you to the other person and does little to help you heal. You are likely to bring the toxic emotions into the next relationship, repeating the damage of the past and labeling future relationships as toxic. Robbins reaffirms the need to reframe how we interpret life's events: "Reframing is the difference between being constantly disappointed and being consistently satisfied." Amid the backdrop of acceptance is the invitation to let go of what you cannot control.***

***In this example, you cannot control other people's actions. You cannot control whether they will return your love. You cannot control if they will be faithful to you.***

***However, you can control your response to what happens. You can control the meaning you give to the event. You can control the lessons gained from the experience and carry them into the next relationship.***

***You can control whether you remain a victim or an ambassador for inner peace and harmony. These are powerful lessons, yet we ruminate on what went wrong in the past rather than how to carry the lessons forward. George Bernard Shaw wrote: "We are made wise not by the recollection of our past, but by the responsibility for our future." I'm not saying it is easy and it may take years to achieve. It is a more worthwhile path than being a victim of your circumstances.***

***Dr. Alex Lickerman says in The Undefeated Mind: On the Science of Constructing an Indestructible Self: "Approaching painful internal experiences with an attitude of acceptance, in contrast — accepting that sometimes we're weak — paradoxically may be the key to our becoming strong." It is a given whilst we cannot control the circumstances of life, we can control how we respond to what happens to us. This is a measure of our commitment to accept life as it is and let go of what we cannot control.***