

BEYOND HAPPINESS: SOLVING YOUR SEARCH

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Introduction

Young couples in Japan like to be married in complete Western style – with the bride in white and the bridegroom in black, cake-cutting rituals, an immediate honeymoon, and so on. A little Japanese girl at a wedding whispered to her mother, “Why is the bride dressed in white?”

The mother replied, “Because white is the color of happiness, and today is the happiest day of her life.”

The child thought about this for a moment and then said, “So why is the groom wearing black?”

Not receiving a good answer, she turned to her father, and asked the same question, “Why is the bride dressed in white?” And he replied, “because all the household and kitchen appliances come in white!”

While we don’t know how the marriage fared after the wedding – some one said, “I was unhappy until I got married, but by then it was too late” – that family experienced unhappiness around their house that day!

Beyond Happiness is our subject today. But *Solving Your Search* is our purpose today. Let me ask you:

Are you happy? I mean, happily happy?

Not just temporarily or superficially happy?

Would you like to find deep happiness? To go beyond happiness?

--Beyond happiness, to something deeper than money can buy?

--Beyond happiness, to something longer than this world can give?

--Beyond happiness, to a something stronger than your circumstances?

A happiness that is deeper, stronger, longer than what you have ever known?

Would you like to progress in happiness, enhance your soul, and fulfill your search?

Then I want you to listen carefully to our treatment of *Beyond Happiness: Solving Your Search*.

There are two groups searching for happiness – the unhappy and the happy, that I’d like to address in this talk. If you fall into one of these, I’d like you to hear from you. The former – I’ll call them the “unhappy unhappy” – they face a quantity of happiness problem – the need for *more* happiness; and the

latter is made up of the “unhappy happy” – they face a quality of happiness problem – the need for *better* happiness.

1. *The Unhappy Unhappy*: You seek *more* happiness. You search for happiness, any happiness in your life. You are saying, “I’m unhappy; and I’m unhappy about being unhappy,” for if you are happy about being unhappy, as some are, you really are not unhappy. Today, you are not happy about how unhappy you are – it seems like you are deficient in happiness – either by temperament or circumstances. You simply don’t have enough happiness about you. You experience an unhappy hollowness.

At the start of the recent global financial crises, a patient told my dentist friend, “My wife is so afraid, she is hysterical. I’m going home to liquor her up.” Not butter her up, or cheer her up, but liquor her up. She is unhappy being unhappy, and the contagion spreads. You understand that kind of doom and despair.

So you have very little happiness in your life. It seems like you have missed out on a percentage of happiness that is available. You feel a happiness-shortage; experience a happiness-crisis. You’ve been left out or feel left out. You experience a verifiable happiness deficit. Woody Allen, the famous movie director once said, “Most of the time I don’t have much fun. The rest of the time I don’t have any fun at all.” You too wonder if the quantity of your happiness could be handled by having more, adding more, doing more, loving more.

Let me give you a bit of quick happiness in your present unhappiness: the happiness-deficit may be okay for short periods in your life, but not as a life-long state. Many a breakthrough in life, science, and technology has come from disgruntled people who are disgruntled about being disgruntled. And if you are among the unhappy unhappy, you may be motivated to read on to find the solution to unhappiness at the end of this message.

2. *The Unhappy Happy*: You seek *better* happiness. You search for a better kind of happiness in your life. If you are saying, “I am happy, but not as happy as I could be. My happiness is not that good – not deep enough, long enough, or strong enough. I’m unhappy with the level of my happiness,” I invite you to read on and contact me too.

Hotels around the world advertise “happy hour” – “a period of time, usually in late afternoon and early evening, during which a bar or lounge features drinks at reduced prices.” We even have a restaurant in my city’s down town – “crappy hour!” I suppose this place and time is allotted for unhappy happy who can afford to be crappy.

You’ve experienced many of the experiential “highs” there are to experience. You know much that this earthly life can provide in terms of happiness. You are the envy of your neighbors, of your social network, of your business colleagues. You value their respect, relish their petty jealousies. You’ve already had all the “feelings” that people feel when they are happy.

You have tried a mix of therapies – laughter therapy, mood therapy, humor therapy, even shopping therapy! You have tried religions and relationships. You’ve experimented with philosophies and psychologies – psycho-spirituality, psycho-therapy, pop-psychology; eco-psychology. You’ve sampled movements in the history of happiness: everything from self-actualization (Abraham Maslow), to Gestalt (the narrative construct of Fritz Perls), to Esalen. You’ve sampled holistic medicine – somatics to access the mind through the body. You’ve tried self-talking and positive thinking to create new realities. You’ve checked out the art and science of living and the art and science of happiness. You’ve taken a stab at all kinds of self-help strategies – from the simple to the most sophisticated, though the simpler ones seem cheaper, easier, and superior.

Mr. Kumar went to the psychologist to get counsel for his anxiety and unhappiness.

"Doctor," he said, "I've got trouble. Every time I get into bed, I think there's somebody under it. I get under the bed, and I think there's somebody on top of it. Top, under, top, under. You've got to help me, Doctor; I'm very unhappy and I'm going crazy!"

"Just put yourself in my hands for two years," said the good doctor, "come to me three times a week, and I'll cure your fears and make you happy again."

"How much do you charge?"

"A hundred euro per visit."

Six months later the doctor ran into Mr. Kumar at the market square.

"Why didn't you ever come to see me again?" asked the psychiatrist.

"For a hundred euros a visit? A bartender cured me for ten euro."

"Is that so? How?"

"He told me to cut the legs off the bed! Now since the bed is flat on the ground, there is nobody under it; and since I can't get under my bed, nobody is on top of it. My happiness has come back."

Like the man in our story you've tried cheaper and simpler attempts at happiness. But you are unable to sustain it and maintain it--if you could only heighten it, deepen it, lengthen it, and strengthen it, what it is!

The unhappy happy have a need is to keep it, now that that they have it, but it keeps slipping away. They have it, or at least some version of it. They try to preserve it, but fail to retain it! Or as one person said, "I am quite happy, but I am not sure I am very happy."

If the quantity problem – points to something you are lacking, and therefore needing more; the quality problem – points to something that is missing and needs to be bettered.

So, are you needing more or better happiness in your life?, I'd like to invite you into solving your search for happiness – toward more and better happiness, whether you are happy or unhappy, or unhappy about being unhappy, or unhappy about being happy.

Here's how this simple reflection develops. (1) We will look at your search for happiness; and then (2) we will look for a solution to your search.

Happiness—Your Search

The search for happiness may well be the purpose of life according to some philosophers. "Happiness is the meaning and the purpose of life, the whole aim and end of human existence" said Greek philosopher, Aristotle, "that fountain head of the river of gold" which is western philosophy.

Or, in *The Art of Happiness*, the Dalai Lama's very first sentence reads, "I believe that the very purpose of our life is to seek happiness....we are all seeking something better in life. So, I think the very motion of our life is towards happiness."

Not many matters are more intuitively obvious than happiness – its presence and absence. You know when you have it, and you know when you don't. Tell me on our website (rameshrichard.com): "I'm happy," or "I'm unhappy." And even if you are not happy right now, you once were happy. Happiness can always return – at the finding of a surprise, or recovering something you've lost, etc.

One of the healthiest emotions human beings can experience is happiness. To apply a paraphrase of a well-known statement about families: "all individuals are happy in their own ways; but unhappy in similar ways." My wife is happy tending to her flowers; and I am happy to find time to think...away from email!

The Pursuit of Happiness

We pursue happiness in various ways. Look up today's newspaper, watch a television program, or read a high-quality magazine and you'll find obvious evidence of the human pursuit of happiness. We find happiness in

1. The Pursuit of *Things* is a rather common way of pursuing happiness. When you receive a gift; or when you buy something you've always wanted; or even find a really good deal on what you've not wanted – like I recently did at a pen show at 1/6th of the retail price! And often happiness in things comes from what they signify – identity, status, enjoyment, or functionality.

2. The Pursuit of *Experiences* – vacation spots; sports events; playing or listening to preferred music; a thriller or a comedy movie; doing drugs, alcohol or sex – they all bring a certain degree or kind of happiness. Do not forget gourmet food. Philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau quipped, "Happiness: a good bank account, a good cook, and a good digestion."

3. The Pursuit of *Relationships* – another common way to find happiness, and perhaps, the deepest way that psychologists think that our needs for happiness can be met. As a teenager, I was bemused by a sticker which read

“Some people bring happiness wherever they go; others, whenever they go” meaning, “whenever they leave!” It may have been an early romance; or your ongoing relationship with your spouse; even the extra-marital energies you place on relationships with peers, mentors, business partners, golf partners, gossip partners, drinking partners, etc. which bring you happiness. A relationship with a pet – a dog, or cat, even a robotic dog or cat – have been known to give human happiness.

4. The Pursuit of *Accomplishments*: This is an easy path to happiness. Whether earning a degree or closing a business deal; winning a race an election, or a bid on an internet auction sites finishing an “impossible” project on time and under budget – are all accomplishments that generate happiness. Sometimes others’ accomplishments make you happy too, like your favorite sports team wining; your kid excelling in studies; your husband getting a promotion.

5. The Pursuit of *Behavior*: Behaving in a certain way, to meet other’s expectations of you or your own moral expectation spawns happiness. Sometimes you surprise yourself: You have been able to meet your own religions expectations! And other times you even do wrong to make happiness. Though addictions, immorality, or criminal activity go against your conscience, you are able to rationalize that behavior since it makes you or others happy.

6. The Pursuit of *Ideas*: The pursuit or discovery of new ideas, in intellectually stimulating environments – the university, laboratory, or the library – has created and confirmed academia. Absent-minded professors often do not look happy, but you should talk to them. It’s their preoccupation with the pursuit of ideas, especially in the humanities, which makes them forget themselves.

7. The Pursuit of *Ideals* also causes happiness. The desire to do something good, beautiful, and significant, brings happiness. When we serve others, especially those in need, helps us live our own lives better.

The phrase “pursuit of happiness,” is part of a trinity of rights that stands at basis of the bulkiest economy in the world. I have found, however, that everywhere across the human race, even if people don’t subscribe to the right to life and liberty, believe they have a right to happiness, or at least desire the right to pursue happiness in their lives. So much so, that May 6th has been designated an international laughter day.

Search Strategies

The pursuit of happiness can be reduced to a two-part strategic mix: addressing the hollowness of life with quantitative enhancement; and the shallowness of life with qualitative enrichment.

1. *Quantity of life strategy* – a *get more* strategy. Often implemented by those who feel happiness is sourced in *things*, it is the dominant strategy of people, to reach a number or place to find happiness.

With some addition or multiplication of *material* things; subtraction or division of the quantity of things, they feel they could fill life up to the top. An easy to grasp understanding of happiness – it is almost like a level to attain – an empty container, or partially filled tank, that life can be filled up to the rim. Somehow life seems deficient, and the “more” happiness that can be added or multiplied, unhappiness can be subtracted or divided, the more one will be happy.

A boy said it was his mission to find happiness by teaching a girl arithmetic. He kissed her once, and kissed her twice and said, "1 + 1, that's addition."

In silent satisfaction, she sweetly returned the two kisses and said, "Now that's subtraction."

Then he kissed her more, she kissed him more, without an explanation.

And both together smiled and said, "That's multiplication."

Then her Dad appeared upon the scene and made a quick decision.

He kicked that boy once, twice, and kicked him hard some more until he flew in the air and landed three blocks away and the father said, "That's long division."

There are several problems with a material, external, quantifiable version of happiness. Let me give you the most obvious one: The quantity strategy to happiness is *not supported by considering those* who have a lot more than less. They are oversupplied with all that humanly defines happiness, and yet they are unhappy! Why? Because happiness is more than (not less than a certain level) quantity – it's a quality of life.

For example, in a socio-cultural study of the subjective components of happiness between the great countries of Italy and Cuba – they not only identified, but sampled 21 cross-culturally shared components of happiness – like health, family, love, money, work partner etc., between one of the highest and lowest in per capita income; one of the strongest and weakest economies in the world – the former with art and culture and pleasurable options galore – and the latter with almost nothing extravagant, and it concluded: "Overall, Cubans *perceived themselves* as happier than Italians." We may discount Cuban happiness as ignorance... perhaps, that's why they call ignorance as bliss when people are in blisters; but a quality of life is only tangentially, not integrally related to a quantity view of life.

Having more doesn't grant or guarantee proportionately deeper, longer, stronger happiness.

2. *Quality of life strategy* – a *feel-more* strategy. Happiness as a quality problem addresses the need for better happiness. You are reasonably happy with the way things are, and yet you don't think you are there yet. You

own a lot of life's offerings, but there's still a shallow-feeling. You wonder why you aren't happier, while being happy! That is, you are happy, but you are not happy being happy – at least at the level of happiness you think you should experience.

When you are unhappy with the level of happiness, you explain the pursuit of happiness by attributes and aspects of happiness. Since no one seems to know what happiness really is, except by its attributes, we move from *metaphor* to *metonymy* – naming a thing by its attributes. Here are some: A man and woman experiences qualitative happiness, says one life-coaching website, when he or she

- 1) has Self-respect
- 2) is Assertive
- 3) lets go of the past
- 4) has a meaningful goal
- 5) carries adequate human connection

These are sometimes called the subjective components of happiness – not what you *have*, but what you *feel* that counts for happiness. This is a much better description of happiness – *well-feeling* is a greater index of happiness. Why?

Universal feeling: Everyone is agreed that happiness is a feeling – a feeling of pleasure and satisfaction. This well-feeling is universally experienced – or at least can be universally experienced – many religions and strategies are put together for that very purpose – to give happiness to everyone. This “universal and intuitive” sense also tells us that there is a hard-wired desire, a constitutionally-built aim towards happiness. A self-evident, hard-wired desire that is pursued intentionally by human beings breaks the life-connection between humans and even the highest of brutes. A brute would be much more than a brute, if it actively pursued happiness, but a human is less than a human when he or she doesn't intentionally pursue happiness. Humans want to permanently preserve our subjective well-being and continue to progress toward greater experiences of it.

Relative feeling: We have entire different ways of going toward happiness. One parent says, “spending time with the kids brings happiness;” another says, “spending time away from them is the best happiness.” It is a subjectively idealized feeling, but feelings keep moving.

I don't have to define happiness for you – dictionaries talk about a “characteristic” marked by pleasure.” I do not even have to describe happiness for you – you know when you have it, and you know when you don't. If you are happy right now, congratulations, but keep reading. If you are unhappy right now, of course, you are reading.

We all start at different places, and are genetically constituted differently, and we have different values, temperaments, experiences, and backgrounds, we go at happiness in different ways. All of us happy in our own ways, but unhappy in the same way – the failure to achieve, maintain, and sustain happiness. Our
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inability to maintain sustained happiness on our own – with thousands of years of humans attempting to manufacture happiness, leads us to consider going beyond happiness.

To a definite extent, studies show happiness depends on material and quantity – especially for security and survival needs. But once those basic needs are met, the search for happiness succumbs to the law of diminishing returns. The findings of the “World Database of Happiness” run by Rotterdam professor Ruut Veenhoven, says having a \$1b doesn’t compute to 1000 times the happiness of \$1m – whether you add, subtract, multiply or divide. Or in the world’s largest nation, life-satisfaction declined between the years 1994-2007, a period in which average real incomes grew by 250 percent.

In both our quantity and quality strategies, we find that the reason for our happiness is subjective – we all have happiness in our own ways – write me a note and tell me what makes you happy; but the reason for unhappiness is objective – you lack more or a better happiness.

Beyond Happiness: Your Solution

Why is happiness so elusive? Is it because happiness is an illusion, even a delusion? If we want happiness and we pursue happiness, why is it that happiness seems so hollow, shallow, short-lived and anemic?

Those are the questions that philosophers have discussed since ancient times, and are now being considered by the “positive psychology” movement, a burgeoning attempt to keep humanity on track in the pursuit of happiness. Except, philosophy keeps poking holes in the academic study of happiness, and deflates their expectations. Just when psychology identifies happiness, philosophy asks for rational proof of its identity, and both psychology and philosophy fail us.

The philosophy professor gave the class a test. He placed his chair on the table and, turning to the blackboard, wrote, "Prove to me this chair does not exist." Most of the nervous students began intently scribbling out long dissertations. But one member of the class wrote down just two words, and then handed his paper to the teacher. The professor had to smile when he read the student's answer: "What chair?" He got the highest marks on the test.

We are not absolutely sure what happiness is, but we can’t deny it, especially since we wholeheartedly pursue whatever it is – except the nature of the topic leads us to paradox.

What is happiness? We don’t know what happiness is:
“The more you focus on pursuing it, the less sure you are of finding it, since you are not sure what it is.” That’s the human story of human happiness – the more you pursue it, the more you need it, and the more you need to pursue it, whatever *it* is.

Happiness in psychological and philosophical literature extends from (1) temperament – genetic factors which provide a certain set-point of happiness in individuals; to (2) circumstances in which we find ourselves – e.g., freedom of speech; to (3) happiness as a decision or a choice.

There could be a case made that “happiness” originally translated to virtue – intellectual and moral virtue in early understandings of the concept. Almost no one I know holds that view of happiness any more. Happiness, is far more existentially and personally defined by people than philosophically or morally so. In fact, most moderns would see happiness as the *opposite* of intellectual and moral virtue.

Now, what is a paradox? Remember that old subtle line, “a paradox is a couple of doctors romancing each other! Until they get married, and they experience the paradox of happiness!” They were unhappy till they got married, but when they got married it was too late to become happy!

Paradox is used in logic – where a consequence which flows from a statement invalidates the statement. For example, if the statement which reads “this statement is false” – is true is false, if false is true. “

Or here’s another: “Is the answer to this question, no?” If the answer is “yes,” then it is “no,” and if the answer is “no” it is yes, that it is no.” Philosophers have catalogued several kinds of paradoxes – logical, ethical, philosophical, mathematical, physical etc.

Happiness Paradoxes

Let me identify three psychological paradoxes of pursuing happiness – three of them:

1. *The Paradox of making the subject of happiness, the object of happiness.* You are the subject of your happiness, the one to feel happy. But you can’t be a worthy object of your happiness, unless you are completely pure, humble, and powerful, and glorious – like a god. If you make yourself the object of happiness then you fall into idolatry. It’s called ego-centrism, me-centrism, or self-centrism. We make a lot of people unhappy while making ourselves happy. You have confused the pursuit of happiness vs. right to happiness. You “use” others for your agenda...because they are there to make you happy...your wife, husband, kids, friends, employees, boss, etc.

Just because we possess the right to pursue happiness, doesn’t mean we have the right to happiness. My right to happiness may end at your right to unhappiness, and then only the powerful and mighty win, at our expense. If happiness is a right, the rich and the strong would be the only happy ones. And the rest would feel victimized by them, until they meet some one richer and mightier. Happily, or unhappily, the rich and the powerful are not that much happier than the poor and the weak, as long as the latter are wise.

Now, if everyone has the right to happiness, then happiness needs to be measured, to see if their rights are being addressed.

Researchers on happiness would really like to measure happiness so we could dispense it like medicine or products to every one. "A burgeoning academic discipline called "affective neuroscience" can "see" happiness via technologies like "positron emission tomography" – the so-called PET scan – which enables researchers to relate emotions to blood flows in the brain. Which means that SWB [subjective well-being], long regarded as inescapably subjective, now has objective counterparts."

Happiness and unhappiness are so prevalent, that we are frustrated that some of the basics of existence cannot be counted, quantified, and prescribed, in a push-button "have happiness scheme" or a pill-popping – "have happiness strategy." But how indeed could we measure happiness? Can happiness be measured like Gross Domestic Product?

One country in the world thinks so, to measure Gross National Happiness, especially through polling people. "In a beautiful land that sits at the roof-top of the world, there is actually a Gross National Happiness (GNH) Commission – how to boost morale while becoming modern. Why only measure GDP (Gross Domestic Product), and not GNH, and why not write policies on this matter? English Philosopher, Jeremy Bentham, speculated that nations could apply a "felicific calculator" to achieve the greatest happiness of the greatest number" (also noted in Barber).

Can economic growth and personal happiness go together? Authorities really find it difficult to measure it, so the country has set up a Happiness Commissioner – and a local think tank to conduct a nationwide survey on what makes people happy and what makes them sad or stressed out. From the data, they will use create economic growth policies. Researchers fanned across the country (in small countries it is easier), and interviewed more than 1000 households with nearly 300 questions, and then they pinpoint sources of unhappiness or tension." What they are actually doing is measuring is *unhappiness*.

After all is said and done, perhaps, individual happiness cannot be measured. May be the best we can do is measure corporate *unhappiness*!

Here's the paradox – you can measure happiness only if we considered ourselves the object of our happiness pursuits; rather than happiness being the object of our pursuit. We are the subjects pursuing the objects of happiness; we are not the objects of our pursuits of happiness.

2. The Paradox of making happiness the purpose of our lives when we should view it as the result of our pursuits. We all need purpose, a worthy purpose, a high purpose. However, we don't want to make our very own happiness – the purpose of our life. Nothing could be more frustrating, and places wearisome burden on you than having to create your own happiness, and thus bring on more unhappiness!

If something bigger than happiness needs to be the purpose of our lives, then happiness will result. However, if you make happiness the purpose of your life, you will fail in both purpose and result. Eric Hoffer, an American social philosopher remarked, "The search for happiness is one of the chief sources of unhappiness."

Here's the paradox – true happiness can only be approached indirectly, not directly. However, if happiness is the purpose of life, then we have to approach it directly, and we land up being unhappy. It's like trying to make spontaneity the purpose of your life, "trying too hard is the surest way not to achieve spontaneity." Or, you want to forget yourself as much as possible, but you have to remember yourself to forget yourself.

3. The paradox of making the means of happiness the source of happiness. All our pursuits can be the means to happiness, but not the source of happiness. In this way we can have million, billion, trillion, quadrillion ways to become happy, but we can't manufacture deep, long, and strong happiness to stay happy with mere means. In fact, all our unhappiness can be connected to our very human propensity to create our own happiness, create our own realities, and thus succumb to ourselves as gods, and not to God as god. We therefore violate whatever whichever God has for us. To be creator of your own happiness, from inside your mind or outside with things, is too much of a burden for mere humans, who are subject to deprivation and depravity.

How much am I responsible to create my own happiness, out of my inner realities?

I could recommend to you a list of ways to be happy rather than being unhappy. Happiness researchers suggest that (1) each day you write 3 things you are thankful for; (2) having loving relationships; (3) forgive often – forgive others and forgive yourself; (4) engage in physical exercise; (5) serve others; (6) keep away from destructive stuff even if makes you happy; (7) set goals and reach them etc. Those conditions for happiness will certainly lift up your spirits, and your emotion will follow your will. However, that happiness is still hollow, shallow, and short – notice they need to be done frequently, every day if possible; and most often you don't have the strength of will to do it. You don't have the power to meet those conditions.

I recommend these tactics, but I don't want you to confuse condition and causation. You can meet the *conditions* for happiness – even those require a degree of happiness, a degree of subjective well-being, to meet the conditions themselves or you'll fail. But the problem is you start expecting the conditions to *cause* happiness.

Sometimes called the "paradox of correlation" – it is the paradox of establishing a tighter relationship between condition and cause without adequately taking all factors into account. For example, cities with a large number of churches, temples, and mosques have a higher crime rate, but one is not the "cause" of the other. It's just that both larger number of worship houses

and higher crime rate result from larger and higher population. We all know people who have practiced these happiness conditions, but aren't happy enough for their liking, because they keep doing it! These may be good conditions to keep in order to stay happy, but not to getting happiness in the first place. All these do not cause happiness. Happiness is not sourced in them.

Getting happiness is much more difficult than you can imagine or envision. No human can create happiness for you, not even yourself. You may have heard of "Supernova Burnout," the frequent reason why highly successful people indulge in self-destructive behavior and illicit criminal activities at the height of their careers – to (whether they know it or not) release themselves from their "gold-plated psychological confinement." The high number of high-achieving people wanting to escape their circumstances after years of arduous work to get there "is a paradox.

So getting to happiness just by getting more things and feeling better will not produce it. Do you know why? It is because happiness is not our default state. It is a default need, a default desire, but it's not our default state. So the question is, "How do we change this default state to meet the default need?"

The Solution to Your Search

The only way to change our default state is to go beyond happiness, to go straight to the only and true source of happiness. This is where I want to bring introduce you to the solution. Because like in every paradox, unless you go beyond the tension, you can't address the tension.

What is beyond happiness? I'm going to call it, joy.

Joy is an extension, an expansion, an intensive case of happiness. It's enhanced happiness; it's beyond happiness. Actually, scientists have done some research and they're able to distinguish between the structures of elation, gladness, and joy.

There's a distinct structure to joy, the way we carry ourselves, what we communicate, behavior patterns, the state of mind. Joy is different than happiness. It is of a different order. Joy is beyond happiness. You see, happiness is well-feeling. Joy is well-being. Happiness can be faked. You can fake yourself, you can fake others. Joy cannot be faked. Joy actually sends signals which cannot be faked to those who are watching. They know there is underlying joy, some depth in you because happiness is hollow, shallow, and thin but joy is deep, weighty, and thick.

Happiness relates to circumstances. Joy is not confined to circumstance. It can be found in any circumstance. Happiness can be found even in wrong doing. But joy cannot be found in wrong doing because it opposes your conscience. Happiness exists with your emotions, but joy is found along your will. Happiness is an emotion, but joy is beyond happiness. It actually communicates aliveness. Joy reveals something way beyond well-feeling. Happiness is

temporary. Joy can be sustained, even eternally. Happiness and sadness don't go together. But joy and sadness can go together.

I remember a friend of mine, after he suddenly lost his wife of many decades, overnight, in the middle of his tears, as he was talking to me said, "Ramesh, I have no laughter in my life, but I do have joy."

Pain is the opposite of happiness but pain is not the opposite of joy. Joy is beyond happiness. There's a wonderful proverb which comes from Kenya which says, "Happiness has its seasons but joy is the field which can be harvested at any season."

So how do you go beyond happiness? Happiness itself seems so elusive and may be an illusion. Are we just deluding ourselves to think we can get beyond that elusive concept of happiness? Are we left to thinking our sad thoughts, singing our sad songs and feeling our sad ways between temporary flings at happiness? Or is there really a way to go beyond happiness into joy itself?

I'd like to point you to a way. To the way. To go beyond happiness to a joy that will fill you, overwhelm you, and will generate life itself. This is possible because of one of the major distinctions between happiness and joy. While happiness is an emotion and only an emotion, joy is also an emotion that communicates life. It's a dynamic model of reality itself.

Here is a thought experiment. Who do you think has the kind of happiness you want, that you wish for, you work for? Who do you think has the kind of happiness which is undefeated, undiluted, unimaginable, unlimited? Perhaps no one. You're saying, "That's an out of this world kind of happiness, no one has that kind of happiness."

Actually, you're wrong. There is One who has that kind of happiness, undefeated, undiluted, unlimited, and unimaginable. You have to go beyond humanness, to go beyond happiness. You're saying, "I can't go beyond humanness, perhaps beyond humanness can come to me." You've identified the problem of access.

To go beyond humanness in order to go beyond happiness is not possible for you and me except if God's very own joy comes down and accesses us. What if God came down? What if God came down and offered you joy? What if God came down and simply gave you joy? Would you receive it?

Consider these words, the words of God-Jesus who says to you, "I have spoken to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full." He speaks his words to you so his joy may be in you and that your joy may be full. Listen to the offer there and the gift there, "My joy in you," that's a quality, God's very joy in you.

This joy is simply a better happiness, or even the best happiness. It is of a different order, the best kind of joy, the best of it all. God-Jesus is saying "My joy can be in you." You don't have to pursue your own versions of happiness because God's joy can be inside you. That means you cannot create your own joy.

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That means you don't have it inside you by default. You've got to receive him to receive his joy. God's joy can only be gotten when you receive God into your life.

Some time ago in Hong Kong I met a beautiful lady. She was a world-class jeweler whose name is found all over the internet. The previous night she was talking to a friend of mine and they went beyond business to personal issues and so my friend asked me if I would have some time to visit with her?

That afternoon at 2:30 I went up to the top floor of this fine hotel. (It costs about \$10,000 a night and she rents it for 100 nights each year to sell her beautiful jewelry to the rich people in the region.) When I walked in, security found me there. They let me into her presence and then she talked incessantly for about 30 minutes. She talked about how her husband and she had invested and lost lots of money during the Asian economic crisis; and how since then, they've gone through a nasty divorce; and how their only daughter was married into a non-jewelry making family and thus would not continue in the jewelry business. She went on to tell me how her younger brother had fallen into a coma five months prior and had not woken up. To make things worse, just a couple of weeks before we met, her younger sister had been diagnosed with lung cancer. She heightened her voiced, moved toward me and asked, "Now, Professor, why is all this happening to me?"

I replied, "I don't know why all this is happening to you. But one thing I know, God has been trying to get your attention."

She responded, "Yes, that's right. God has been trying to get my attention!"

I said to her, "Would you be willing to receive His gift of life and of joy into your life in the middle of all of this unhappiness?"

She said, "No, I won't be willing to receive his gift because I can't afford it. I even give my brother's doctor a new piece of jewelry every month so that he will continue to look after my brother. I should do that much at least for God."

I replied, "No, no, no, that's not what I'm saying. I'm going to rephrase my question. If God were to make an exception in your case, and simply give you His life, give you His life and all it means, would you receive it?"

She paused and then answered, "Why, professor, I've been looking for God's life all my life. If it only means receiving it, I'm willing to receive it."

So we bowed and we talked to God. And this is what she said, "God, I'm sorry I've tried to find my life on my own. I want your life in me." She admitted to the fact that her own version of happiness, which had consisted of accomplishments, things, experiences, business, behavior, ideas, and ideals that she had ardently pursued, could not offer happiness. In fact, the consequences of that pursuit were harder than she could possibly imagine.

However that afternoon, she was willing to receive the Lord Jesus who took the consequences of her past decisions on him, took her place in the

penalties she deserved. He received the pain and penalty of her sin in death, and rose again in order to guarantee joy into her life.

She lifted her face and there were tears coming down her cheeks.

My friend who had been with us then remarked, "This is the first time in 37 years that I had seen her happy." The very first time! You know why? God's joy, Jesus' joy, had now invaded the jeweler's life. That joy of Jesus is only the first part of his promise. The solution to receiving God's joy is receiving God Jesus into your life.

The second part of Jesus' promise is that your joy may be full. Not only will God's joy be in you, but your joy will be full. Now that's quantity! God's joy in us represents quality, and our joy being full represents quantity. That's what you've been looking for, haven't you? Not only the best-est, but also the most-est, to coin a superlative of superlatives. All of us are deficient in our happiness but our joy can become full because God's joy is now in us.

God's undefeated, unlimited, unimaginable, undiluted joy can become the basis of our happiness, regardless of what we go through and regardless of what circumstance we face. Regardless of what feeling you feel, His joy will come in you and your joy will be full.

Some time ago, I was in Mexico City to meet a man who was one of the wealthiest men in his country, and therefore one of the wealthiest men in the world. We chatted for over three hours and his story was appallingly sad. From my calculations, he was on his seventh wife, or at least with his seventh woman. He owned homes all over the world. He had energy resources and business propositions that would revitalize anyone, anywhere. But he was a sad man. Not a single time during that whole conversation did he crack a smile. He was bearing unusual burdens. He was an *unhappy happy* one. He was unhappy with the levels of happiness that he had achieved.

When I left him that night, and headed for my hotel room, I ran into another man at the shoe shine stand. I said, "Shoe shine?" He said, "Yes, sir." As I got my shoes shined, I engaged in conversation with Alejandro (his name was on his badge). He had been shining shoes for about 3 years in that hotel.

There was a brightness about him in his face. Finally I had to ask him, "Alejandro, what is the secret of your bright face and happy heart?"

He replied, "Sir, only three months ago I've learned English, so I'm not as good in speaking, but here it is. I have been shining shoes for six years, but three years ago I came into this hotel. Shining shoes is my job and occasionally I show people the elevator doors. Three years ago, I also received Jesus Christ into my life. My life changed. I have many problems in my life but I have joy. My shoe shining is a reflection of my relationship with Jesus Christ."

I went through an amazing experience in just a few minutes. I had just been with one of the richest men in the country, who was also one of the saddest men in that country. And now just a few minutes later I was with one of the

poorest men in the country, who also was one of the most joyful men in his country. Do you know why? Because he had received the Lord Jesus into his life.

If you would like joy, real joy, the joy that the world cannot give, that's beyond every circumstance that you cannot easily define, I welcome you to consider the words of the Lord Jesus who said, "I've spoken these words to you so that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be full."

You're saying, "I want that kind of joy." As simply and humbly and honestly as you can, I want you to talk to God. Tell him, "I don't know joy. I can't find joy. I've tried many things, and maybe it's out there but I want it now. I have disqualified myself from joy because of the way I have lived. I have done wrong. I have sinned, but I want all that to be taken care of, to be removed permanently, to not be counted against me. I want to be freed into joy, to go beyond happiness. Lord Jesus, thank you for taking my place and dying instead of me to pay my penalty. And thank you for raising yourself from the dead so you can guarantee me joy." Then say to God, "Come into my life. I want your joy to come into me, to provide me the power to be joyful. I want your resources for joy. I want to go beyond happiness. Come into my life." And He will change you.

One of the most redemptive shows on television is called *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*. A redemptive show of the highest caliber, the building team chooses a family who doesn't have much of a house. They come into this broken house and plan a complete makeover. They destroy the old house, keep some little memories of the old house, and try to meet the expectations of the people in the house. And then they build a brand new home. It's a great show. It's misnamed because it's not simply a cosmetic makeover. It is an architectural do-over. That kind of a redesign and rebuilding is what Jesus offers to you and your life.

He offers to you a complete do-over. Not a cosmetic, external happiness but an internal rebuilding so that you can have his joy in you and so that your joy may be full. Would you like God's joy into your life? Then receive God-Jesus into your life. And he will become the source of your joy. He becomes the purpose of your life. He becomes the object of your happiness. If you would like to receive God's joy into your life, receive God Jesus into your life.

Come to our website [www.rameshrichard.com] and write to me, maybe we can dialogue. My whole team is waiting in order to receive your notes and we want to put you on the journey to joy.