

Happiness Conditioning:

In the second key, I looked at programming - all the conditioned beliefs, assumptions, values and needs that were put upon you as children, and which you maintain. Well, happiness also belongs here. You have been conditioned into what you believe constitutes happiness and where you get it from.

Everyone has their own experience, but basically the universal conditioning is that happiness comes from things outside ourselves, including possessions and experiences. You can see this from the above exercise - you want and chase after things because you believe you need them to be truly happy. And there lies the problem, because material *things* can never bring lasting happiness. They can bring you excitement, and stimulation and satisfaction, etc. but those feelings don't last. Think of how excited and *happy*! You felt when you got something new that you had your heart set on - a car, computer, whatever. Now be honest do you still get the same excitement, or do you just take it for granted now?

All these things you chase after exist in time, you want them in the future, you get them in the present, and then they pass into your past. Yet you exist throughout all of that. Once the excitement is past, all you can do is focus on something else, but that too will pass. All too frequently you meet people who have become depressed, disillusioned, cynical, resigned, etc, because the things they have chased after have failed to bring the real happiness they were seeking.

Now I am not saying it is wrong to want things - desire is part of your true energy; but when you depend upon those things to make you happy then you become disillusioned in the end. Another level of expectation is people and relationships. You expect to find eternal happiness and bliss in the arms of your lover, or in the perfect relationship. And again you are destined for ultimate frustration and disappointment with this line of thought.

Any worthwhile counsellor will tell you that one of the causes of many relationship disputes and break-ups, is that each is demanding that the other make them happy in some form or another. I cannot be happy unless you are like this, or unless you change in some way - the list goes on! And it is the same trap: expecting, and demanding, that some person outside yourself should make you happy. If you are not happy within your own self then you will not find happiness anywhere in life.