

REAL, WHOLE, HERE AND HAPPY!

NATURAL HAPPINESS BEGINS

WHEN YOUR STORIES END

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INTRODUCTION.

I heard from someone that someone once said to him that apparently Nobokov once said: “ *All the information I have about myself came from forged documents.*” I was reflecting on that while loitering at my local bookstore in Berkeley one day. I ventured from grazing in the “Spiritual/Philosophy” section which I had frequented years ago, to what, for me, was the brave new world of “Self Help” books. I stubbed my literary toe on many, many books there, mostly entirely devoted to achieving, one way or another, Happiness. I flipped through perhaps a dozen “How to be happy” books to get a sense of what they were saying. I left the store with the thought that, to paraphrase Walt Whitman, perhaps I could contribute a verse or two on the subject.

The search for Happiness is indeed the single and most important driver for all of us. Yet almost all of the Happiness therapies and techniques seem to me to take the seeker off in a direction *away from themselves* and toward developing sundry coping mechanisms to help deal with, and otherwise reduce, suffering. They present a range of approaches which each have their

merit and serve a need. Perhaps what follows will also be useful to those few of us who have tried and tried to find happiness for many years applying these traditional and highly developed “Me” based psychotherapies, and who are now prepared to meet the “problem” head-on...namely, our Self.

I offer this not to deny or refute anyone or any practice, nor to make any claim to the subject, but simply to add, from my experience, some thoughts that I have been graced to realize, and which may be helpful to my fellow seekers.

May you find *that* which you are and be happy.

J.W.

Berkeley, California

*With gratitude for all that happens, and thanks to
Adyashanti for introducing me to myself. To my editor
Janet Marchant, and my wife Alla Marinow, thank you.*

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

For those of us who have become weary of chasing after the ever-receding mirage of “Happiness,” it may be time to step back and ask ourselves if we are going about our search in the right way.

In this ruefully comic tale of one seeker's quest, James Waite explains to us that indeed we have *not been on the right road*—because a “person” who is busy maintaining a personal “story” will never grasp the grail of Happiness.

It is fitting—and ironic—that the idea for this book's outreach to the misdirected seeker occurred to James in the self-help section of a bookstore. Hmmm...*self*-help? Think about it...why does this never work?

Why are you unhappy? Because 99.9 percent of everything you think and everything you do, is for yourself—and there isn't one.

- Wei Wu Wei, *Ask The Awakened*

Real, Whole and Happy offers some reasons why traditional routes to happiness always turn out to be

cruel loops that dump us ungracefully back where we started. In a jolly yet compassionate manner, James Waite describes the last frantic, even grotesque, antics of the Seeker, and then moves on to the Mystery of the dropping of the personal story—a transition that *no-one can achieve*.

Many seekers today find themselves approaching this transition. *The abyss of no-one with no story has come within view!* This book will help them.

Janet Marchant

Dobbins, California

April, 2009

PART ONE: THE LOOP OF OUR DISCONTENT.

STORIES ABOUT STORIES.

In 1985, after some twenty years of laboring in the corporate mines, I left everything. I joined a cult, remarried and removed myself to live in Europe. We settled in Venice. It was the end of a long search.

I had found finally what I was looking for, and was swept up into a totally new life. A renewed life. I had, after many long years filled with soul seeking, *found*. Found the Holy Grail, the End of All Seeking, the Secret Meaning of Life. I was reformed, reintegrated, released and oh so relieved!

In the five years abroad, living in Italy, Greece and England, I worked on a novel. It might have been called *Revelations of a Seeker*. In fact, it was titled *The Last Ideal*.

The main characters were me, in the guise of one David Preston (get it? “pressed on”) and an elusive figure called Sister Perpetual Hope. I worked away at

The Last Ideal for some four iterations during the years of my European idyll. Most mornings I sat perched in my writer's garret, overlooking the bell towers of Italy or the azure blue island seas of Greece or the lush rolling green of England. I sat there and soulfully surveyed my life through my characters. It was a deep personal dredging and widening, the likes of which had never before occurred. Turns out it was my story about "my story." But it's your story too.

My "Sister Perpetual Hope" was just like any other woman or man, mother or father, daughter or son, lawyer or waitress. Life had swept her up in its' sacred and passing passion just like you and me. As for my fictional character "Dave", his "life" was also the same as everyone's: full of secular ambitions large and small. Nature and the law of compensation had bathed both of their lives in occasional mortal satisfactions and rare heavenly pleasures. You know, the tidal kind of pleasures that wash over you even as they're moving away. But more about that later.

For now, let's just say that the whole book thing seemed to be about "Me" and my search for Happiness, caps "M" and "H". My characters mirrored my struggles and in the end, true to the title *The Last Ideal*, they each in their own way, found "true Happiness." The story climaxed in a scene set at the top of the hundred steps of the Basilica San Magiorie. There, high above the rage and roar of Rome spread out below, our hero and heroine finally met. Their years of yearning for love, for happiness, reached an ultimate resolution that left both shocked and thrilled. It was an apotheosis, a completion of that which they both feared they would never find.

And what did they find? They found what they *thought* they were looking for: everlasting love and happiness *within the fiction*, and rode off in the very last page into separate sunrises. Each vowed to live their respective renewals in joy and contentment. At this culminating point, the omniscient author (that's me) ended the story with a quotation from Walt Whitman:

*Noiseless, with flowing steps, the lord,
the sun, the last ideal comes.*

*By the names right, justice, truth, we
suggest but do not describe it.*

*To the world of men it remains a dream,
an idea as they call it.*

*But no dream is it to the wise...but the
proudest, almost only solid lasting thing of all.*

It turns out that the “solid lasting thing” they found in the story faded with the sunset.

DEATH OF MY LAST IDEAL.

Fast forward about twenty years. It's 2008, and a lot of bridge *is* under the water! My *Last Ideal* story had ended *as written* many years ago. The manuscript sits moldering in a box in my closet. But somehow, the story- the search for happiness- lived on. The characters haunted me. Day and night they were revisited in my thoughts. Why? Because they *represented* all that I thought was of value. All that I thought was true. Yes, all that I believed would finally, ultimately, make me happy.

All that was *then*.

But *now*, twenty more years of life experience had brought certain changes. I was tumbled like a rock in a

dryer, some of my edges were rounded, but that happiness I sought so fervently had, once again, eluded my grasp. Now I was...*otherwise*. I was not quite so naive, not quite so willing to believe and trust old and familiar ways of seeing my world. And my characters had moved on too. For one thing, I discovered my dear Sister Perpetual Hope had died after long years of a recurring and feverish malaise that only now is being diagnosed and understood. My original Hope was dead.

And David Preston? (That's me too, right?)

He was pressed on, too, it seems. I get updates about his story in my mind regularly. It seems he moved to California and for a number of years he struggled to stay on top of his spiritual high. He tried to recapture the rapture, but the Last Ideal did not last. A steadily receding contentment revealed a deep discontent, a profound sigh of sorrow. Happiness and the hope for it, had dissolved into the sand at the bottom.

Still, there was an upside.

With the passage of time, my Dave had come to understand something about the value of things. Take Success, for instance. He and Sister Perpetual Hope had talked about that a lot before she died. How good it felt to win and all, how Time is Life and how it could best be used, and how, at the end of the day, as she put it: “things were worth about as much *life* as one was willing to give to them.” She *knew* that much way back then.

She used to quote Thoreau:

“How many a poor immortal soul have I met along the road, well-nigh crushed and smothered under its load...pushing before it a barn seventy-five feet by forty, its Augean stables never cleansed...”

So, when it came to real “values”, me, Dave and Sister P.H. had long ago figured that part out. We co-habited our world without inflicting too much injury to it. *But*

all that still didn't make for Happiness. All that didn't ease me and Dave's one problem: that recurring and deep dissatisfaction that was killing us.

HOW DAVE DIED BEFORE HE DIED.

One day, after light-less years of recurring search and re-search, of endless dreams chased down endlessly, Dave (and I) finally, completely, collapsed. Fell apart in fact. Died in truth. We found out the meaning of that old spiritual axiom, “die before you die.”

Yep, *he* ceased to exist! The *dying* had indeed been painful. The *death* though, was totally pain-free and a big relief, as you may well imagine, given the previous Suffering!

And Dave Preston had been nothing if not for his suffering. He was not so much proud of this suffering he called his own, as he was *attached* to it. Attached, despite and in spite of many attempts to rid himself of his torment. His was indeed, “a life lived in quiet desperation.” That’s what Henry David Thoreau said in *Walden* in 1849 or so. He went on to talk about his storied search for Happiness Lost:

“I long ago lost a hound, a bay horse and a turtle dove, and am still on their trail...I have met one or two who had heard the hound, and the tramp of the horse, and even seen the dove disappear...and they seemed as anxious to recover them as if they had lost them themselves.”

Dave’s death *happened* so fast. One day he was traveling along an uncertain path (after walking down many *certain* paths) when a kind of Realization occurred. Now this realization (small “r”) happened in the “middle of things,” so to speak. There was a kind of *multiple seeing*.

So, while *this* story of Dave ends here, we’ll revisit our Dave character from time to time. But for now, let’s get into some more talk about happiness.

PART TWO:

WHATEVER MAKES YOU HAPPY

WHATEVER MAKES YOU HAPPY

Apparently it took all of our earth's history to muster a billion people on the planet by 1800. Now, in two short hundred years, we're closing in on seven billion! But here's the point: each and every one of us, dead or alive, has pursued the same agenda: Get Happy!

Depending on where we're born, there is an entire pantheon of ideals, advice, techniques, and "paths" to achieve the desired goal. We each build our "Happy House" with a disparate collection of cultural conditions inherent to the manner to which we were born. And to which we have become accustomed. We use any and all kinds of these traditional materials to build and maintain our Ego's Nest. Stuff gathered randomly from sources we know not where and passed on to others we know not whom.

The Big Three Drivers

These classic drivers may seem innocent enough. We get along with them tolerably well. They travel quiet, don't make trouble. At least according to the neighbors who are always "shocked and surprised" when they do! But their nuclear potency is often under-understood! Power, Greed and Vanity are natural Imperatives that drive us all. So how come everything hasn't gone "off the rails" by now?

STRATEGIES AND LOVE SONGS

What is that billing and cooing sound we hear? Are we making it, too? To use an ongoing and active word, it's called "maneuvering." Most of the time it's what we do, or think we do. Maneuver. Make that *all* of the time!

In our daily minor and major maneuverings, we manage with a kind of dexterous art to achieve the things that drive us. (Indeed, truly, we *are* driven, like a BMW!) What we don't get with negotiation, we often fight, scratch and bite for. It's a mutual thing. One enchanted evening, we're driving along calm enough, having just bought our new Beemer, when suddenly we see something interesting...very interesting... in our fantastic halogen headlights. We drive/are driven closer for a better look. Sure enough, we're th...rilled! That which had an unknown-but-craved indistinctness is now distinctly to die for! And if you've got it, you could become road-kill!

That's just the way it goes, right? You/they have something I want and, together or no, one way or

another, sooner or later, we'll work out the respective price. And hey, the knives may come out! And either or both parties may get cut. It's all part of a primal search for satisfaction. Of course, it's individually and nationally veiled with a golden damask Civility. It's a custom that rather nicely shrouds all of human history, don't you think?

Power, Greed, Vanity. To the degree that the following Happiness Agenda provides avenues for expression that will satisfy one or all of the above, *to that degree* we will be "Happy!" (cap "H" with"!"): A La Carte.....

Mind Lifts:

It's no life without our hobbies, right? Or our opinions, ideas and ideals? What would life be without them?

Politics!

Puzzles!

Careers!

Education!

Psychotherapy!

Nova!

Literature!

Philosophy!

Stamps!

Sudoku

String Theory!

Fractals!

Leonard Cohen!

Yes!

Yes!

Heart Lifts

What would our life be without all that feeling good?

Poetry!

Karaoke!

Spiritualism!

Religion!

Fashion!

Self-help books

Entertainment!

Parties!

Volunteering!

Painting(s)!

Music!

Architecture!

Relationships!

Romance!

Divorce!

Travel!

Old habits!

New habits!

Leonard Cohen!

More!

More!

Body Lifts

When we play, we know we're alive, right?

Fitness!

Massage!

Frisbees!

Sports!

Bungee Jumping

Sky Diving

Plastic Surgery!

Drugs!

Sex!!

Therapy!

Piercing!

Viagra!

Oh God!

Oh God!

HAPPINESS ON STEROIDS!

Happiness as we commonly know and experience it has a simple operating principle: *more is more!* All the Elton Johns of the world will tell you that! More of what we want makes for *more happiness*, right?

Well, no, not exactly. Seems that part of the Revolution many of us are in starts right here with the realization that *maybe there's no pot of gold at the end of the proverbial rainbow*. Maybe there's no rainbow even! Ah, no way! What an awful, depressing, life destroying thought! There must be something that will, finally and forever, make me happy!

I *know* there is and when I find it...

And so our search continues, because it must! (until it stops, but that's not now. Yet.) "*The Loop of our Discontent*," as I call it, takes on several, *apparently* different forms. Socially sanctioned or not, like it or not, these forms make up what we call our Life as we

live it. We drive down the road, apparently choosing when and where to turn, chasing after one dream, then another. Or both. Or none...well, maybe just one...But enough of this! You've recognized a few of your personal favorites in the preceding menus; you painfully recall how each seemed to have given you that Starbucks Moment! I'll leave you to fill in the details: where you went, what you saw, who you met, and how absolutely -----! it all was!

THE LOOP OF DISCONTENT, Cont'd.

Trouble is, it all ends, fails, walks or otherwise evaporates, right? Leaving you and me right back where we started: **un**happy. Again. And damned determined to never, never, do that again. Again. Never again. Never! It's a game called Stop!... Don't Stop!...Stop!...

Then finally, *there*...we see it! The *real* problem is... (let it all out! Use lots of yellow, lightly-ruled foolscap to your heart's content. Sure, you can cry.)

The tears flow, and the fiery pain is reduced to smoldering ashes. A faint hearted smoke spiral is all that's left of the dream. Subsequent nights of reflection and days of therapy serve well to throw buckets of sand on the dying embers.

But then a day comes, we're sniffing 'n squeezing melons at Trader Joe's, when suddenly... boom! We have *ignition!*

It's *not* over! Again! No siree! Our spirit mounts up! It's boots, saddle, to horse and away! We ride off in simultaneous directions, screaming "forget the rear view mirror!"

We're riding along, hell bent for that *new* horizon (see above list.) There's nothing...nothing but the sweet sound of hooves and the choking dust behind us. We hang on through one of those curves when... what do we see faintly in those halogen headlights? (OK, I know, I know) Why, it looks like...could it be? ...why it's Leonard Cohen! And he's all dressed up like he's Leonard Cohen, a strummin' an' a singin' ...

"She's a hundred, but she's wearing somethin' tight!"

Beside Leonard is a City Limits sign reading:

Welcome to Compromise, USA

Population: Not jus' you an' me Babe!

Now we're not so sure, but still, the sun looks like it's comin' up, we're tired. So we ride on into Compromise. Why not, seein' as we've come this far. We check our dreams, pitch a tent, and settle in for the long haul. Company's great! Kinda. Sorta. And the food? Served up same as everywhere, we guess. That part is true. If you can believe it.

Before long, hey, we're the Mayor! And first thing we do for Compromise is annex the neighbor, Paradiseville. Then another neighbor, Pleasantville. Then more towns and more folks...until it appears the whole world is *one big Compromise*. We get a glimpse of metropolitan Conceptville but don't visit it until much later.

Well, all that seems to go on f-o-r-e-v-e-r, and for some, it does apparently. But one day the day comes when we don't saddle up quite the same as we are used to. We don't know it yet, but it's the beginning of the Revolution! Or the end. No matter.

A NIGHT PASSAGE, AGAIN

We find ourselves kinda slippin' out the back door early that particular morning. At the first real dawning, actually. And we set out on a Long March to a place we *know*, but not where. And to a thing we *know*, but not what.

Suddenly, it's nightfall, and we pass a sign marking the County of Uncertainty. We trudge on and on, moving deeply into this scary territory. We walk all the long night long—mainly because we can't stop. Not this time.

The journey takes us, or should we say, "prods us," through, around, in and out of what we'll call The Low Country. We may feel like a Pilgrim, but we sure don't see any Progress. Won't see much of that till we get night vision, we reckon.

But then, dead center in the middle of the darkest night...surprise! The UPS guy from Nowhere delivers the new night goggles you'd been asking for *for forever*. Another new dawning occurs! Now we no longer just look. We *see*, actually. Really. In no time, we're off to the High Country.

We head to the Uncertainty County airport and book a flight to Somewhere, a burg we've glimpsed in the High Country. Soon we're above it all, taking the long, long views.

From *here* we see our whole life in a fresh, entirely different, way. We are released, free to roam the cabin, if not the universe. All is perfect...except for a tiny voice inside that says, "how can I hang on to this? I'm going to lose this!"

Then, sure enough, over the intercom comes a shaky voice: "So now, Ladies and Gentlemen, we will be beginning our descent and we'll be smack on the ground sooner than you'd expected. Please stop taking any meds you're on, stash all your garbage and barfbags for next time, and fasten your seat belts. We

know you definitely don't have any other choices when you fly with Air Uncertainty. Scary huh? But thank you anyways, and welcome to ah... *Somewhere!*"

We deplane after a hard landing. We're dragging what little luggage we have left across the marble floors, past a yellow "Caution, Wet Floor" sign and a guy with a mop, wearing an oddly dapper pin-striped suit and smoking a cigarette. He pauses, squints, reaches into his well tailored trousers, pulls out a note that he hands to us, and turns back to his work. We take it, rolling our luggage along, and read:

"There's a crack in everything.

That's how the light gets in."

We pause. Our eyes light up with recognition. We turn around, knowing that it's Him again...but there's no Leonard there. We wonder if there ever was. Still, we have the note, so we stuff it in the right place for these kind of things, and keep rolling.

SOMEWHERE...OVER THAT RAINBOW!

“*Somewhere*” turns out to be a Retreat that looks and feels like a boot camp for seekers. The Dante-esque sign over the entrance says: “Abandon all Hope ye who enter here!”

It’s not until after we check in that we realize that daunting sign is true. We’re led down a long corridor to we know not where by some guide guy we know not who. Deep, deep into the bowels of the beast we descend. We hear a faint singing – whistling and lisping like Judy Garland. The melody comes and goes in wafts of trembling sonority.

The murky tunnel starts to widen, and we see as through a glass darkly, a broad archway that glimmers ahead in the mist. As we come closer, it starts to glow ominously, flashing and scintillating; the music comes in more powerful waves. Just then a huge marquee lights up. We wince with the assault of this multi-colored neon scream :

“RAINBOW LOUNGE – Tonight: Happiness Myths and Assumptions!”

A husky female voice urges us inside: *“Welcome to the Rainbow Lounge, sit where you like Hon, it’s all dreamy here!”*

MYTH AMERICA COMES TO THE END OF THE RAINBOW!

Inside the Rainbow Lounge it's dark; our trembling hands part the curtains of dusty centuries of tradition to reveal... an empty house! Our eyes fix on a figure on stage. It's draped in a veritable Jacobs' coat of many colors. We feel our way to a seat and sit, perplexed.

“Bien Venue, mesdames et messieurs!” announces a diminutive emcee. “the floor show tonight features the following beloved and time-honored myths about happiness:”

The myth of Choice!

The myth of Values!

The myth of Hope !

The myth that Pleasure makes us Happy!

And, of course, everyone's favorite Happiness Myth:

If I only try harder, then I'll be HAPPY!!!!

Enjoy the show.....

THE MYTH OF CHOICE!

Ah Choice, in the land of Cando! We make choices all day, all the time, right? We choose to be happy! Who in their right mind would choose not to be happy? Well, *effectively*, that's what happens! And it happens something like this:

Today, Up Close and Personal

Let's choose what we're going to do today, from our morning cereal out on the patio to say...a delightful lunch at The Woodhouse with a friend, to finishing work a little early, getting an oil change then picking up the kids after school, to having steak tonight with our favorite wine! Sounds good? Let's do it!

Story of Our Day, Take #1

“The *damn* morning milk *actually was* sour, *ruining* our tea. The patio was *really* wet so we had to eat inside, the Woodhouse restaurant was incredibly busy, our *delayed* lunch went longer than *usual* because... oh, forget it! Anyway, we’re terribly late and we *almost* got into a big accident with this *moron* and *could have* died or got fired for rushing back to this *awfully boring* meeting which *should have* been moved to a *better* time next week and anyway it took *so-o-o long really*, which left us not knowing what to do about the kids, which meant we cancelled an *overdue* oil change we *hoped* to do today so *theoretically* tomorrow we’d be free to...oh well, we’ll pick up a nice but *usually lukewarm* chicken for dinner...no, no, we can’t...*don’t have enough* cash, got to lineup *forever* at the ATM... but the boss just called and he wants us to...never mind...Bill can *probably* pick up our desperately crying kids who will *definitely* be cold and wet when he *finally* arrives...”

Not the happy day we anticipated? And tomorrow doesn’t sound any better! But it’s the story of our life, right? It’s *what happens to all of us almost every day.*

So what's going on in this game of our lives? Is eventual "success" really just a matter of *doing* things better?

CHOICE IS NOT AN OPTION!

Everything is changing all the time. Everything. Always. Life is fluid, flowing. It can't be controlled; it slips through our fisted fingers like water. So what can we do?

We can't "do" anything, but we *think* we can. And why do we think we can?

Because, otherwise, we would be forced to admit that we can't control our own life or anything *outside* either! Too scary.

But wait—it gets worse! Watch closely and we'll see we can't even control our thoughts, much less our actions. That's because we are totally conditioned; from infancy we are fitted up with a pair of glasses that give us one view, one perspective about what life is and how it is "best" lived. And everyone around us wears exactly the same glasses, sees exactly the same cultured "reality". Our brains are collectively washed

with received wisdom, conceived opinion, and deceived experience. Within that spin, within that dream, we, separately and collectively, *think* we are free; we think we can do.

“But choice is freedom!” I hear someone say, “I choose what I want and make it happen!” Is that so? Then why are we so unhappy? Could it be that we are operating in a fundamentally dysfunctional relationship to reality? Is there a *missed*-understanding here?

FREEDOM IS CHOICELESS.

Only when we realize completely that we have no choice, no control, can we be free. Free from thinking things could be, should be, other than they *actually* are. That's real Freedom! Only then can we enjoy what actually happens and be truly happy.

Life happens, and we happen to be an expression of that life, albeit burdened with thoughts that contrive some *other* reality. Our imagined reality is the one that says we are the masters of our life; reality itself, and our entire life experience, tells us otherwise, doesn't it?

Look carefully inside. The thoughts about our day condition how we experience our day. They conveniently bundle that which actually happens into an experience package. It's all bound up and neatly packaged with pre-judgments tied to pre-conceptions. Our thought preempts reality, but it does not alter it.

THE MYTH OF VALUES.

And now we stray brazenly into a virtual minefield – Values and Suffering! We mention Values because they are always and everywhere connected to Suffering.

Oscar Wilde once said: “*We know the price of everything and the value of nothing.*” How true, apparently. But let’s take that axiom one step further.

Do we know the *value of nothing*?

“Values” are the things we commonly live by—or imagine that we live by. What’s more, we’ll die for them too! To be precise, we suffer often because of our culturally instilled values. That’s because they describe and define an Ideal World, and not the *real* world as we live and breathe it. The foundations of our modern values are inherited from our culture. They serve about as well as they function...that is to say, not very well. That’s because they are not intrinsically ours, but are instilled, *outside* values passed on through generations until what was wine becomes diluted and polluted water. We bear this inheritance

daily, and suffer for not living up to it; for not, in truth, knowing what we believe and why we believe it. That's because our vague and dysfunctional values constantly remind us of what *could* be, of what *should* be. Anything but what *is*. Our "values" dress up the Emperor who has no clothes. Who *is* nothing. And we, at least some of us, tire of the game. We glimpse our nude nothingness, and, for some *strange reason*, see that living in Truth is vital, functional, and useful and, above all, necessary, if we are to ever be happy.

SUFFERING IS THE ILLUSION THAT SOMETHING SHOULD BE DIFFERENT.

By suffering, we mean psychological suffering, not physical.

Physical suffering is real bodily pain. So, by implication, psychological suffering is...unreal. We don't say it doesn't *seem* to *cause* real physical pain, but that the 98% of our suffering is *image...inary...an* image of the mind. So, for example, let's revisit our Story, Take #1. (You know, that's the one that starts: "The morning milk actually was sour, *ruining* my tea" ...etc." It goes on and on about how things could

or should be *other* than they actually happened, using loaded terms like “ruining,” “incredibly,” “terribly,” -- thereby creating a full burden of misery for both the teller and the listener of the tale.

It's all suffering embellished by the mind, based on its beliefs and values, such as right/wrong, good /bad, like/dislike, etc. Our mind is a giant labeling machine. That's all it is. That's all it does. It contrasts and compares according to its inclinations. And it stores this pre-sorted info in memory. And from this contaminated memory we daily recall all the biased info that interprets our experience of what is happening today...now. So that's our life as we imagine it.

THE MYTH OF FEELGOODS!

And now we enter the *Feelgoods*. It's a well traveled terrain that is very familiar to us. We could say Feelgoods are the stuff of life. When we feel good, life is good. It's kinda like a big beautiful box of chocolates, right? A good life has lots of our favorites in the box. A *great* life contains *only* our favorites. What could be better?

How 'bout a *fabulous* life with a much bigger box, completely stuffed with not only our old favorites, but new ones too! Now! Or very soon!

Notice though, how our life *today* is... semi-sweet and the box is too small? And how fully sweet it will be or should be, tomorrow!

Let's take the lid off our box of chocolates, unwrap some of those beautiful silver and gold foiled babies and taste 'em!

CHOCOLATE DREAMS.

*Praline's 'n Cream, aka "Knowledge!"

Loaded! Over the top with all flavors academic, scientific and terrific! Low on practice and barely a hint of self knowledge.

*Double Delight! Aka, "Progress".

Full of promise, seems to get better and better, then melts away way too fast. New and improved flavor is fleeting. Leaves a taste of something vaguely lost, again and again, that keeps repeating.

*Strawberry Twirl, aka "Winning"

Yes! Nothing like it! Totally, totally satisfying...for 30 seconds! Hints of losing, leaves a bad taste.

*Raspberry Twirl, aka "Achieving"

Tastes like Winning, but has deeper, richer flavor that lasts twice as long...about 60 seconds!

*Cherry Twirl, aka "Respect".

Can't get enough! You'll want more every day, so the flavor won't go away! Strong taste of "How sweet it is". Leaves aftertaste of: "how sweet is it?"

* Cashews 'n Cream, aka "Appearances"

Always looks exactly beautiful. Carefully maintained taste. Hints of casual concern overwhelmed by strong need to impress. Not very sweet.

* Praline Paradise, aka "Faith."

Full of heavenly promise. Taste best on special days or for special occasions. Strong flavors fade but persist.

*Hints of a better life leave taste that endures all things.
Often contains artificial preservatives and substitutes.*

* Mixed Nut Cluster, aka “Family”

The centerpiece in many boxes, this cluster of nuts has a distinct bitter-sweet taste, best described in terms like: “what can I say?..They’re family!” Often light, occasionally deep flavor like coffee. Can lead to addiction and co-dependency. Multi flavors seem like they will never stop some days! Until they do. Hard to unwrap, sticky. Digestion can be slow.

* Assorted Fruit Crush, aka “Friends”

Very strong flavors that attract and hold. Multi colored wrappings are usually easy to undo. Soft centers are chewy, sometimes nutritious, but often contain favorite flavors. Can be entertaining, but taste may change. Difficult to preserve. Ranges sweet to sour. Distinct after-taste.

*Striped Nougat, aka “National Pride”

Often wrapped in red, white and blue, but also comes in other colors that taste different and may be alarming. Chock full of pride and glory. Too sweet for some. Has historical flavors of great accomplishments sometimes accompanied by misplaced after-taste. Certain flavors have strong attack. Packed with added traditional flavor preservatives .

***Rainbow Delight, aka “Color” or “Ethnicity”**

Various color wrappings, shapes, sizes and flavors. Inside indistinguishable. Sweet to some, not very to others. May contain small to large amounts of pre-sweetened prejudice. Occasionally none. Flavors improve with more tasting. Can have Striped Nougat taste. Just great the way they’re made!

***Sugar Plums, aka “ Pretty Things”**

Absolutely essential flavors bring repeated delight repeatedly but not often enough. Must have mixed and varied assortment. Very, very sweet, but could always be sweeter. Fabulous sugar coated outside, sugar coated inside. Talk about delivering great flavor! But doesn’t

deliver! Soon starts to all taste the same. Enhanced flavor doubly improved when spectacularly paired this time with Giant Sugar Plums!

**Giant Sugar Plums, aka “Pretty Big Things”*

Same as Sugar Plums only much more so because much, much more so! Faster too! Totally matchless flavor satisfaction. Comes in exotic coating colors like lush lemon and faded grays. Only one ingredient missing...

**Super Giant Sugar Plums, aka “Power”*

Once you’ve tasted these, you’ll never, ever settle for less! Or settle, period. Dripping, absolutely dripping, and so-o-o you! Nobody gets to taste it...only you! Finally, all that flavor you really NEEDED and were missing and craving. All that in this one, intoxicating and ever-so-

high thrill that's only ...possibly, maybe, perhaps...only currently missing one tiny little thing more...

**Extra Super Giant Sugar Plums, aka "More Power"*

That's IT! Oh, that Happy, Happy Day Flavor! All that taste you could possibly, deeply, truly ever gently insist upon. And all you could possibly drink with it, too! A truly exceptionally elegant and, at once, humbling taste sensation. There is truly nothing like it among you mortals. Truly. Rarest of the rare flavors that cost somebody else a fortune. Sweet, dear Fame that deliciously lingers and improves like the Chateau wines locked securely in your Chateau, nestled and double gated far, far from the madness...the suffering...the toiling ma...what? No, no, Nothing is Missing! Nothing. It's what we've always wanted!

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THE WALLS TRADITIONAL HAPPINESS BUILDS

So far, we've hinted, perhaps more than hinted, that our conventional approaches to being happy have led us, finally, to a brick wall. It's a wall not unlike the Great Wall of China, hand built over centuries, wide and thick enough to patrol, and practically impregnable when attacked. Indeed and in fact, it's a *mental and circular* wall that works two ways: it keeps conventional happiness ideas *inside* and it keeps revolutionary new possibilities *outside*.

And the wall's Keepers are mainly two: Us – the Seekers of Happiness and Them, the Providers of same. The Haves and the Have-nots. Of course, this is an artificial distinction, as often we'll see that we function as both—consulting and advising ourselves, our friends and colleagues. We're a circle of Keepers, both amateur and professional. Our circle remains mostly closed in a mutually supportive and self-assuring posture, at once clapping hands and holding them. A session with our therapist, or a cup of coffee shared with a friend may not exactly bring Happiness, but it is comforting. *And so we learn to cope*, until either the coffee or the relationship cools off! Then, we

turn like mechanized sunflowers toward whatever coping Sun on its trek through our particular world seems to hold the next new promise. And the next, again.

Eventually, after countless circle turnings, those traditional Suns don't rise for some of us like they used to. The circle is broken. A darkness descends, followed painfully by a glimmer of new light. We begin to really question what we *think* is going on. We begin to question everything in the real world context of Change. Is anything permanent? And we wonder how it all happened! How our formerly self-sustaining and looped mind-set ever made us think that the happiness we chased after could be found... but never lost. That, somehow, it would not be subject to change. And that any of the hundreds of experiences and states we can go through could ever deliver, finally, ultimately...Happiness.

But before we attempt to climb our wall and escape, let's scope it out a little more.

A WALK ALONG THE WALLS

Historically, the patrol and maintenance of these extensive walls has traditionally been conducted mostly by ourselves, with much solicited and unsolicited support from Kings and Clergy, Philosophy and Religion, and Society at large. In these modern times, we get support from many more, still *traditional* sources: self-help books and studies, the Internet, friends, relationships, our church and our club and our professional therapists.

Probably, for most of us, we would generally agree that today, both the quantity and quality of happiness have improved. So much so, that we think we're surely the happiest ever on the planet!

"No! No way!" we shout, "who are you kiddin'?"

But surely, what with all that we *have*, all that we *know*, all that we *see*—and this being the twenty-first century and all, we must be more pleased, more content, more delighted, more.... Well, of course not, and we *know* it, right? Nobody can tell us that these are happy times filled with happy people doing their thing! And that we're one of 'em!

“That would be nice though, if it were true!” we add with a sigh.

OK. Agreed. Lots of people are unhappy, but *some* actually are happy, right? And why is that? Here we come to the solid rock foundation of the Wall that towers over us. Look closely, and we can discern an inscribed stone plaque with serif Roman letters that reads:

**WE HOLD THIS TO BE TRUE AND INDISPUTABLE,
THAT THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS IS EVERY
CITIZEN'S RIGHT, AND IS HEREBY FURTHER**

**ENSHRINED BY THIS PROMISE AND GUIDING
PRINCIPLE:**

**WHEREAS ONE IS UNHAPPY NOW, WE DEEM
THIS AS UNCONSTITUTIONAL AND FURTHER
PROCLAIM THAT ALL WILL BE HAPPY IN THE
FUTURE IF YOU DO/DON'T DO CERTAIN THINGS,
OR IF YOU ACT/DON'T ACT IN CERTAIN WAYS.**

**SUBSEQUENT PLAQUES TO BE ERECTED ALONG
THIS WALL AS MORE DETAIL BECOMES
AVAILABLE.**

SIGNED, *WE HAPPY FEW.*

Hundreds of centuries have passed, it seems, and search as we may along and around that Wall, we have never found subsequent plaques bearing any sequels! And "We Happy Few" remains a mystery, too! Although there are a few who claim to be happy.

THE PROMISE OF HAPPINESS

Let's keep the Promise front and center:

To paraphrase, it states: "If, in the future... you do/don't do certain things, or if you act/don't act in certain ways, then you will really be happy *like other people are.*" Or, maybe like "we happy few"?

Many, if not all, of today's leading therapists and otherwise purveyors of Happiness hold out the Promise above. They often start with an attempt to describe what happiness is **not**, followed by an assessment of what happiness is. Something like the following:

Happiness is NOT:

*Wealth

*Power

*Position

*Fame

Traditional Happiness IS:

- *Health and fitness
- *Meaning and Goals
- *Courage and Confidence
- *Emotionally Open and Free
- *Active and engaged
- *Relative and humorous
- *Spiritual and comforting
- *Secure and non-demanding
- *Self-accepting and Loving
- *Relaxing and renewing
- *Family and relationships

We won't go any further here, as this is not the purpose of this book, and others more qualified have done an excellent job in this arena.

Generally, these practices and procedures include *strategies and techniques* to manage and eventually improve our daily lives with effective attitude adjustments, i.e., mind shifts. These, in turn, *help us cope* with issues of Love, Fear and Hope in a loving, hopefully fearless way. Many of these practices are useful, life enhancing, and even life saving. We would be lost indeed, without our New Perspective coaches and their practical, often inspired coaching! They address our, as Nietzsche once said, "human, all too human" side.

That said, we are now going to pass on to the other side...beyond the rainbow. Or maybe, more exactly, right *through* the rainbow. Leaving tradition behind, we'll take a whole, new approach to this thing we call Happiness. It's radical and alarming, definitely unbelievable and, hopefully, destructive! All in a positive way, of course!

And if, at first, our personal happiness and dreams seem reduced to ashes, the acrid smell will pass, and from the ashes may arise *that* which we have looked for *almost* all our life.

PART THREE: A REVOLUTION IN HAPPINESS.

(New Yorker style cartoon drawing of a slot in a wall beside a typical office cooler. Above the slot, a sign with an arrow pointing downward at the slot:)

REALITY EXCHANGE-

DEPOSIT YOUR STORIES HERE.

THE HAPPINESS REVOLUTION BEGINS IN CONCEPTVILLE.

Remember Dave? We left him and his story way back in the book. But now let's look in on Dave again, so we can see how our Pilgrim is progressing, stumbling from place to place, as we do. His story is our story.

He's the Mayor of Compromise now, and if there hadn't been a mix-up, he'd still be there. But as it happens, he ended up in a place called Conceptville:

There was a mix-up at the airport. Dave was tired and confused and he got on the wrong shuttle. He ended up in Conceptville, a place he'd heard of not all that far from Compromise, but he hadn't really seen it before. It was dark, so he decided to stay the night there, get some rest. He checked into the Seevew Hotel—letting

it slip that yes, he's the Mayor of Compromise—and crashed. It was a long night; he tossed and turned. Old dreams of Sister Perpetual Hope had faded only to be replaced by new specters of fears he was afraid of. It wasn't until morning that he got a chance to look around Conceptville. And by then it was too late.

Word had gotten around that he, Dave Preston, the Mayor of Compromise, was in town. When he stepped off the elevator for breakfast, there was quite a crowd. "Welcome Mayor Dave, to Conceptville!" the assembled Officials beamed. Others...unofficials... slapped him on the back and pointed out: " This town ain't called the Braintrust of Civilization for nothin!" It was all almost overwhelming!

There were hundreds of 'em, packed into the heavily draped and dimly lighted Chandelier Ballroom. Those who couldn't get in to the restaurant were sitting in the bar watching the whole affair on flat screens. Others watched remotely in the lobby. Dave was stunned, as you would be. He wanted to run straight out the revolving doors he came in last night, but they

were jammed, and a sign above said, “No Exit.”. Anyway, the good citizens were all over him for autographs. At first, the constant flashing of cell phone cameras blinded him. But eventually, after meeting the various officials, and mingling among the others, he began to observe the strangest thing: Although they all had different first names, they all shared the same last name, which sounded kinda French.

The reason it took awhile to see that they were inbred for generations was, let’s say, “linguistic.” Each of the people he talked to, when asked their last name, pronounced it slightly differently. “Belle,” “Bele,” “Belie”, “Baaf” ... “Belf ” Finally, he kinda cornered this professor guy and got him to repeat his last name very slowly several times. Dave leaned real close, watched the man’s lips. Finally, he saw what he was lookin’ at. They were all called “Beliefs”! And the good Doctor (he’d graduated from 13 prestigious Universities all here in Conceptville!) simply referred to himself as Doctor Belief. Or, to close friends: “Doctor Bertrand Belief.”

After the breakfast reception, Mayor Dave was taken for a ride. They showed him all around town. And everywhere he went...and we mean everywhere...far as he could see, there was nothing but Beliefs. In the streets, in the stores, in the houses, in the hospitals, in the schools, in the companies, in the churches, in the jails, in the government! The whole town was full of Beliefs!

Only the young kids under three didn't know they were part of the Beliefs of the town in which they were born. They didn't mind yet. When they did mind, which would be soon enough, they would join the other boys and girls who *already knew* and they would feel better being one of them.

That evening, Dave retreated to the hotel, got room service and stayed in for a change. He reflected on his day, and particularly the element of sameness he'd seen wherever he went in Conceptville. He recalled that, when he was a character in a novel, the main theme of his fictional life was: "we get what we want."

But this time, “getting what I want” didn’t ring so true. He saw that, even when he got what he wanted at the time, he didn’t want what he got. Certainly not for very long. That was the story of his life: searching but never finding.

He looked back on his day and all the Beliefs he’d encountered. Slowly, it dawned on him that the good people of Conceptville shared more than a name. Their faces sent mixed signals: furrowed frowns and intense eyes were accompanied by big whitened smiles. And he recognized he was just the same...a blood relative! He was related to all the Beliefs, large and small, that he’d run into all day. But just then the phone rang. He debated, then answered:

“Hi, this is Dave.”

“Hello, this is Doctor Belief...ah, we met this morning, I helped you understand...”

“O yeah...I’m glad you called...You’re a doctor, right?.”

“Ah, yes, sort of.”

“Good! Maybe you can help me. Like they say on Monty Python, my brain hurts!”

“Ah...I’m not a medical doc...I’m a doctor of history.”

“What do you do?”

“ I write local and world history...the Story of Life on the Planet. I’m working on the Universe now.”

“That would take a lot of time, wouldn’t it?”

“Yah sure...but others before me...let’s just say I stand on the shoulders of giants who stood on the shoulders...etcetera and so on.”

“So... then what did the original giants stand on?”

“Well, Dave, that’s a long story...they’re the ones we named our town after.”

“You mean Conceptville?”

“Yep, that’s them. They’re the Founding Fathers. Without them we’d have no concept...”

“Yes, I see now.”

“Oh, without them...they’re our...our foundation....Life here would be unimaginable without them.”

“You mean unimagined, don’t you?”

“Ah, that’s a distinction we don’t make here anymore, Dave.”

(long, long silence)

“Well Doc, thanks for giving me this little sight seeing tour. I have to go...back ah...real soon...tonight in fact.”

“Oh, that’s too bad, Dave. Let me know when you’re comin’ back. Not many people leave here...but when they do, they’re always happy to come back.”

“They do, even if they’re not from Conceptville?”

Oh for sure! Everyone’s from here you know. They come back sooner or later, even if it’s just to get buried.”

“Ah...to get...”

“Yeah, of course. The whole town’s a sacred place to be buried in...it’s true. We gather and sing the song of our forefathers”... (Doc clears his throat, chokes back tears.)

“Do you Doctor? How’s it go?”

“Okay, since you’re askin’...”

*“Beautiful, beautiful, infinitely blessed,
The happiest place eternally to rest.*

Saved, Saved, from suffering and fear

What a dream to live and die here!

Just then, a piece of paper was slipped under Dave's door. He heard it slither, but wasn't distracted.

"Well Doc, that's...comforting...to many maybe. But I won't be back!"

"Why not? After all, everyone here is as happy as..."

"No, I don't want...that!...not anymore! But thanks anyway. I've gotta run."

Dave didn't know where he was going, but he knew he had to go. Again. He packed lightly this time, opened

the door, picked the slip of paper off the floor, and glanced furtively at it. What he saw made him step back in, sit down on the bed. A narrow slit of light from the half open door streamed across where he sat, illuminating the paper.

It was a handwritten note:

“Dear Mayor and fellow traveler, thank you for staying at the Seevew Hotel. As always, we are fully booked for big upcoming events all day and every day in the future. I note your stay here is now over. Please check out by ten a.m. today or it will be too late and hard to find another comfortable place for you here in Conceptville.

There is only one way out of Conceptville. You must take the road through Fear like I did. It lies beyond all the Beliefs here, many of which I see you know now. I can

help you out with a map and a few pointers in the right direction. See front desk. Ask for Ed.”

Dave rose, grabbed his things, gently closed the door behind him to avoid disturbing the others, and headed for the front desk. It was that rosy fingered dawn of a new day, as you might well imagine!

But it was too early, Ed wasn't in yet. But one of the tour guides behind the front desk found a package marked for him. Inside, Dave discovered a map and a note from Ed that read:

“Sorry I missed you. Here’s that map to Fear. Everyone finds it different, so don’t rely on anyone’s description-- it’s all very personal. Anyway, the road to Fear is narrow so nobody else can go with you. You must pass beyond all the Beliefs, then take any path – they all lead eventually to the same place. The road you’re on is the right one. Until it isn’t. Then you’ll know and take a new route. It may seem long, but be patient. Something far

stronger—the stuff of courage—will guide you. You'll know you're getting close to the valley of Fear when there's no Comfort Inns to be found anywhere.

Fear itself looks really big – huge! But it's not anything like it appears. You'll find a few friends along the way, and everything you need somehow will be provided, despite your ah..some people even avoid using the word fear, so let's just call it a "painful emotion excited by a perceived danger!" Whistling, in my experience, does not help, but it sure is entertaining! "

Dave's hand trembled slightly; he glanced around, looking for Ed, then returned to the note:

Here's a few pointers:

**Passing through the Beliefs, you'll note that they all live in circles, just like in Fear. They cluster together to sustain and support each other, naturally. But the very fire around which they warm their hands may also be*

used to destroy them. That's because the various forms of belief, when bravely and closely examined, don't exist. They disappear like smoke!

**The Beliefs underlie and give credence to our personal Story. They're projections we collectively agree upon and support for one reason, and one reason only: to protect us from Fear. Of course, there is a natural, instinctive fear which, thankfully, functions well to keep us out of mortal danger. We're talking about psychological fear here, and how it dominates and controls our life.*

**It's easy to recognize the gates of the town of Fear. Fear is always the same: a spinning of some possible event(s) in a speculative future which our mind forecasts as undesirable and to be avoided. So we camp outside the gates of Fear, never daring to go in. Then one morning, we wake up and find that we are no longer as comfortable with the beliefs we live with and we go in despite our trepidation.*

**Inside the gates of Fear, you'll find the inhabitants are nothing like you expected. They are like scary ghosts; they loom large at first, but grow smaller and smaller right before your eyes. The trick here is to just watch 'em, and you'll see!*

**Getting out is not what you'd expect either: you don't leave Fear and the Beliefs behind somewhere. One by one, they just go away...dissolve...right there in front of you! And where you thought you lived in Fear, turns out the same old place is actually Happiness!*

** "Happiness," and the road to it, are not marked on this map. They ARE the map! You'll find Happiness anywhere and everywhere you travel once you're out of Fear.*

And you'll remember what you are...

Happy trails! Ed.

DAVE MEETS THE DEVIL, HEAD ON!

“He was a lucky fox that left only his tail in the trap.”

Henry David Thoreau

Maybe it was just because he was too tired. Or it was too early to travel. Or Dave had to pee. Anyway, the story relates that he went back to his room, opened the curtains and just sat there. And for the first time since he was little, he didn't try to think. No questions, no answers.

He watched the sun rise until it dawned on him. “Maybe I don't *really* want to be happy...all I want is the thrill of the chase!” That thought occupied the rest of the morning. That and one other thing which was not a thought: silence.

Dave sat silently and contemplated more deeply than ever before. Actually, he simply sat there and *watched* for the first time in his life. And he saw that it was true; he did not really want the truth, so much as the *search* for it. Ah, the Great Adventure!

The sun had moved (or so it seemed) around to the other window by the time Dave decided he didn't need to travel to visit Fear. He realized all he feared was right there with him in the room...or maybe in his head. He wasn't sure, and surprisingly, that "not knowing" was OK, too. Something kept telling him...*something* in the silence...told him that the chase was over and that all he had to do...all he could "do," was sit still in silence. And watch.

Thoughts flickered and flashed on the mind-screen endlessly. He saw much and deeply. Mostly, especially earlier, he saw the small, petty stuff...all about "Him" and "His" world, with some about "them" and "their" world, too. Then along came all his worst fears! They paraded before him, flaunting and threatening. The

whole cast was there: Hunger, Pain, Survival, Love, the two twins Doubt and Uncertainty...Death and Dying. Yes, and Fear, of course, which was in the DNA of them all.

The sun stood still, just hung there. It was the longest day in Dave's entire life. He wept, he cried, he laughed, he sang. Darkness fell in the stillness. He ordered room service. He wept, he cried, he laughed, he sang. Then he went to bed, drained empty.

The same old sun woke him. He got up, made coffee and sat like a compass, looking for a direction. The needle couldn't settle on anything significant, so he went for a walk along the marshes. He saw a few old Beliefs but ignored them. By the time he got back, he had not so much a direction as an inspiration!

He called Ed downstairs, invited him for coffee when he had his next break. That turned out to happen five minutes later, so that was a break for Dave!

DAVE MEETS DAVE, HEAD ON!

Ed was short, with a pointy head. Otherwise he was unremarkable. His speech was rather short and to the point.

“Here, read this,” said Ed, thrusting a book into Dave’s hand, “Then we can talk, if you still want to. See ya!”

Dave had expected something more, as you might well imagine. But what he got was more than enough. He fixed a coffee, sat in that same old place in his room by the window, and scanned the thin volume before him.

The book was titled: *The Real Happiness Revolution* and subtitled, “*How Happiness Begins when your Stories End.*”

Dave opened the book. The first page was blank. The next ten were blank , too. He flicked through it; all the pages were blank...nothing about nothing...tabula rasa...an empty slate!

All, except the bookmark. Dave held it up to the light and read:

“In our search for real happiness, it seems we all travel in diminishing circles to eventually return to where we started...here. This. Now. Those years and years of mining for diamonds, of trading in synthetic silks, have taught us their lesson of great price. We know, deep within, not only that all that sparkles is not gold, but all that gold which we held in our hands turned to dust and flowed through our fingers. Like all the *goals we decided to achieve*. Our reach *and* our grasp were indeed exceeded to exhaustion. Perhaps now it’s time for a new approach! One that will take us out of Time. And out of our mind!

To start, we must stop. Stop. Disengage from the mind's reaching. Disconnect from the mind's weak grasp. Put down our mind like a book of fiction, and really look around *here*. See what is, right here in the room. Not what the mind labels things, like "chair," "window," "cat" ... but what, in fact, all this is! Is the "cat" in the "chair" looking out the "window" seeing "clouds" shaped like "fish"? Or is it simply seeing, without labels? And *what* sees? Perhaps we'll glimpse a new reality.

First of all, the "new reality" is not ours. It is not of our making. It's nothing to do with what we "think" about it. It's not the Official Reality created, maintained and sustained by an agreement of mind(s) that we'll call "conventional." It's not a reality based on data *exclusively* from the five senses. Or the sixth sense, the mind. These senses only determine conventional "reality." Nothing wrong with that, as far as it goes!

Conventional reality is limited by one thing: Mind, the central processor of our senses. And all minds, bright or

dull, individually and collectively, cannot ever grasp reality. Reality is inconceivable by that which we rely on for interpreting our “world”, to wit, our mind. While the senses give us feedback according to the five limited sensors of the human apparatus, the mind similarly compares and contrasts the data. Its binary interpretation sorts everything into two piles, identifying through memory, a “world” that is “good OR bad,” “true OR false,” “right OR wrong.” What do you think, yes or no?

Our mind runs on and on, sifting and sorting with a blunt digging device. “OR” is like a shovel that not only puts us in a deep hole, but also buries us while yet alive! So, how do we stop digging?

Our mind asks for answers from its own realm, naturally. But the answers are not within its realm. Even knowing that, it continues to search, now turning to the senses, especially sight, to confirm. Failing that, mind resorts to Feelings.

Feelings are sensations stored in memory, so we're back to mind. It's the loop the ancient mystics called the circle of *Samsara*. Again and again. Until some of us are driven out of our mind! And *in* to reality.

A reality that is Concept Free. Free of traditional material and God based thinking. Free of myths and legends that tell us nothing about the non-realm in which we apparently live and die. And which Non-realm cannot begin to be imagined by mind. Free of words in books like this which are not real, but merely re-present that which is real.

Free to USE the mind as a tool, as a function exactly like any of our senses, not to interpret and produce the *whole* of creation, not to be our Master, but to be a good and useful servant. For a mind used *knowing* its limitations can provide useful info. Like relativity and scale. For instance, the mind can marvel at info like this: "An atom is 99.9999% empty space. The distance between an electron and the nucleus of an atom is,

proportionally, greater than the distance between the earth and the sun.” Wooow! Can you imagine that!

Yes, but no, not really.

REALITY NUMBS THE MIND.

The *actual* staggers the mind. Almost numbs it. For a moment. But then, back it comes, full of more info stuff to “help” us feel we know what’s going on. Stuff that never stops producing 24/7/365! The very “stuff” of comfort, of knowledge.

Ah, but what can the mind’s fictional and fractional viewscape tell us about Reality? Being? This that *is*? Mind stares straight ahead; then, finding an abyss, turns now right, now left, in search of answers it does not actually possess, but which it must presume to have. Finding no thing, it rushes on to its last resort: the Future. If not now, well, certainly...probably... certainly, we’ll have answers to all this stuff...in the future!

Mind does not know there is no future. “Yes, yes, of course,” it says, “I know that!” But it doesn’t. Because it can’t. The inconceivable is just that...inconceivable. *And mind is nothing but a conceiver of concepts.* In fact, it’s

one big Concept. And concepts don't exist. They're vaporware!

But there's something else, a kind of *Knowing* that we do have. One that is not the mind's knowing. One that "feels" more like it's from the heart...but...not really. And we vaguely suspect that that way lies, if not madness or redemption, then, perhaps...dare we suggest...Happiness!

This Knowing we're talking about is...to use the mind's limited terminology, a deep *religious* feeling. But let's bypass the conditioning we've received about all things religious, or related in *feeling*. In fact, let's have a complete and radical mind/body/heart bypass!

What remains is a *way of perceiving* we'll call *Resonant Knowing*.

RESONANT KNOWING

It's the very ground and source of what we are:

We know it when we sit still and really listen.

We know it when we walk quiet in the woods.

We know it when we look and truly see.

We know it when we read this and hear this.

And we know we always have known It,

This, that we are.

THIS, THAT WE ARE.

Resonant Knowing is just another word - another concept - that hints at reality, that re-presents it. Like other similar concepts (the Tao, Holy Spirit, The Self, Oneness, Awareness, Pure Consciousness, Brahma, Shiva, Allah, God...) it identifies a *feeling* that is not a feeling. A specific something that evades comprehension but nevertheless we know exists. It's the proverbial "things unseen". And the putting on of eye glasses (like labeling the unseen with volumes of articulate words) to more closely inspect it, does not bring *it* into focus. It blurs even as it creates distinctions. It's only when we take the glasses off, and set the traditional tools for "seeing" aside, that we *see* that which we all know and love. In fact, it *is* Love.

Our knowing resonates, or "re-sounds" in us. It is a characteristic vibration in sympathy with another vibration, so to speak. Actually, there's no "other" so the

resonance is from Self to Self. From the one Self to the one Self.

It is only in this Self, this Oneness, this that we are, that we find Happiness after searching high and low. And that “high” which we find is not that Nirvana brand of Happiness we were conditioned to expect, with its soaring and noble ideals and grand states, superb as they are! Nor is this happiness itself connected to our *ideas* of lowly and humble sacrifice or the elimination of external “things,” to achieve that Zen simple life.

Happiness is not high, or low, not spectacular, nor subtle: it has NO mind defining attributes because it's *real*.

HAPPINESS IS REAL.

Happiness is real. Reflect on that: “happiness is *real*.” To be real it cannot be a peak and valley experience. It cannot come and go, there today, not there tomorrow. It cannot depend on any *conditions* for its existence. It cannot be given nor taken away, cannot possess or be possessed. No one *makes* you happy. Not even you...especially not “you”.

Happiness does not lie in the hands of the Priests or Therapists who gently massage our ache even as they unintentionally add to our suffering. Nor does it lie in the “you” of your Mind. It is not about altering and adding windows to let more light into the imaginary cavern we conceive is me and my *mind*. It is not a bodily thing either; though we take great pleasure in our bodies, they often as not give us an even greater pain.

So what is this thing we desperately seek which alone will make us happy but which we cannot, in any shape or form, *have*?

WHAT IS REAL HAPPINESS?

First, let's put aside what we already think about happiness, and boldly board, like Columbus, our own little ship to explore a new frontier, called Reality. We're about to travel deep into uncharted territory. This will not be an empirical, scientific expedition, or a philosophical probe into the unknown, resulting in a long treatise in theoretical ideas. We will engage something more discerning than words and ideas to approach our subject. Fortunately, we each are well equipped with a kind of innate sonar that sends out a pinging emission we can rely on to help us navigate these new dimensions. Resonant Knowing runs deep in us, and by any other name, i.e., intuition, conscience, heart, it remains the same. It goes beyond definitions and beyond descriptions. It is a "sensing" device for truth and reality. As such, it "knows" without knowing, "sees" without looking.

Our own Resonant Knowing is that which comprehends, which wonders and marvels at things it does not understand but yet *knows*. It is not supernatural, not imagination, not wishful thinking. It sees all that, and much more.

Nor is this universal Knowing new to us. We experience it, or more correctly, are it! For example, let's flash back to our childhood. (Not *my* childhood, not *your* childhood, but *our* childhood, because happiness, like truth, is universal.)

BEFORE THERE WAS “YOU”.

Remember thinking about what you would like to *be* when you grew up? Now, go back before that. Before you had any notion of what you wanted to be. Before there was any notion of “you.” Before “you” became aware of being “I” or “*me*” or “*Jim*” or “*Jane*.” Before any notion of *want* occurred. Before the mind engaged and began to separate and label its environment.

All we know about that *beforeness* is three things: there was nothing, and everything, and we were happy.

That Knowing is One thing really, but for purposes of seeing, we can separate it with words that seem to give it three *aspects*.

Nothing does not mean empty and void; it means “no thing,” no separate distinguishing of “objects.” No separate identity or entity. All is one.

***Everything** does not mean full of all possible things as discrete objects; it simply means all that is pure potential, i.e. all that is unmanifest, **and** all that is manifest.*

***Happy** does not mean any form of pleasure; it means simply an infinite resting in pure awareness. In other words, “wonder” and “Love.” A deep contentment in the content of all this being exactly **as it is**.*

These descriptions of the indescribable are limited attempts to use words and concepts in the place of that which *is*. We will not go into more words about words here. You *know* what is meant. You even know that there is no real “meaning” and that mind again functions conceptually to find “reasons” and “contradictions” where there are none. None except in the Old Frontier of traditional Mind. But this is about the New Frontier, so let’s continue *as if* we didn’t know all this already!

These statements here are *limited*, they’re neither complete nor without redundancies, apparent

inconsistencies, and much re-weaving and word-smithing. That's what happens when we take the intrinsically whole, like a living frog, and dissect it! Thankfully, we know that words are not the only way we can approach the Real.

WORDS ABOUT WORDS.

It's useful to remember that we are talking about the "wordless" by using... words. Like talking about slaves while being enslaved! That's all we *have* to try to describe the indescribable, to attempt to conceive the inconceivable. All **words are merely pointers**; they indicate the very reality, but are impotent pretenders to the throne. So look behind, around, through and particularly *between*, these symbolic re-presentations of f-a-c-t and you'll see the reality they so weakly illumine...t-r-u-t-h.

THE THINGS YOU ALREADY *KNOW* ABOUT TRUE HAPPINESS.

One thing that we know must be true about being “happy” is that happiness must be something we cannot lose. It must not fade or flee, or what would it be? Not happiness, that’s for sure! So happiness is **timeless and unchanging**. That means Undying as life itself. It *is* life, this seamless ground of our being which has no beginning and no end.

We do not *experience* happiness because we are, say, enjoying an ice-cream cone or a million bucks. **Happiness is uncaused**. It is not dependent on stimulants, on conditions. It makes no requirements, has no demands, expects no results. It is fully and completely *free*.

In fact, it’s not a product of our body or our mind.

It’s not personal, in other words. The body/mind is a mental construction which we assume at an early age is us. Our mind conceives an identity called “me” and proceeds to spin a life called “mine.” In truth, we are not

our body, though it's nice to have one! Nor are we a bundle of concepts we call "me" which are only phantoms of the mind. **Happiness is not conceptual.** It's real and solid and it animates this creature we "think" we are. Like fingers in a glove.

Happiness is not a *part* of life. In truth, there are no parts.

All is One. Whole and entire. It is an illusion, a mind creation, that tells us otherwise. That creates the fictional and the fractional. A mind that, by conceptually defining things, separates "them" from "not them," "me" from "not me."

Look at the word "happiness." Do you see "*happens*" in it?

Not quite, but it's there, none the less! **Happiness happens!** It's spontaneous. It knows all, accepts all because it *is* all. It contains, indeed embraces all that "happens" in our lives. All the mind-made dramas, large and small, which this entity called "me" experiences: Love, Birth, Death, Work, Play, Conflict...whatever! It is

contented whatever the content. Like our earth, it absorbs the blood, bullets, and bones of the battlefield, the pleasures of romance and love, the sweat and tears of living, the promises and the failings of life. All, all are transformed into...wonder and gratitude!

Happiness is only, ever, now. It is nowhere to be found in an apparent Past or an imagined Future. Both “future” and “past” are mind deceptions. Mind proposes a Past vaguely, because selectively, remembered in memory. And a Future based on the same fictional past, and vaguely envisioned in dreams. There *is* only now. Now. Now. This present moment.

And so, in truth, there is no Time. Only a concept about it. And no thing, including time, to be gained or lost. Happiness is infinite...*out* of time. It is not a participant in that missed-understanding about Eternity being “Time without end, amen”.

Happiness is not an achievement. We cannot *become* happy. Or be *made* happy. **We are already happy.** It’s

only our mind that tells us we're not! It tells us that (a) we are not happy now, (b) we were happy before, (c) we will again be happy at some future time *when certain conditions* are met. All mind-play, except we take it seriously. Until we don't. And that happens, when we *see* the mind, remove the "my/me" label and realize that what we *are* is not the mind. Not even in the realm of what the mind knows and can know.

The Unknown life is the only one you're living! All the mind's attempts to control outcomes are just our *ideas* about what is *actually* going on. We overlay this life that is being lived with our ideas and feelings about how it *should* be, *could* be, *will* be, *must* be...other than it is. Life...living, is unknown and unknowable. That's because Reality has no qualities. It *contains* qualities but does not consist of them. It is the Source *from* which all "things" flow. And the Source *to* which we are drawn, in our search for happiness.

Happiness lies in knowing that “we” were never born and “we” will never die. That doesn’t mean we won’t celebrate the human – our Birthdays. Or decry Deathdays. Or whatever we the people and you the person, experiences. In apparent time, all cellular bodies, it appears, die and decay. And *who* we think we are gets buried with it, body and mind. But *what* we are is as undying as Life itself. As undying as happiness.

All of which brings us back to the “who” and “what” words just mentioned above. And to *the* central question of our life.

WHO AM I TO BE HAPPY?

The mind has created this problem of identity. It thinks that if we can sort out which of the characters we really are, and settle in *there*, then, *surely* then, we'd be really happy! The problem here is... there is no problem! Only the mind at play! Our mind never stops playing. That is, until we die, of course. Mind is nothing but movement. And the things that make us happy move on, and on, and on, leaving us... unhappy. Again!

We live and find our "self" identity in "our" mind. But our mind keeps changing. We don't know what our next thought will be. We have no control really, but we think we do! So what we think will make us happy this morning, when and if we eventually "get" it, we often no longer want by noon. We are indeed, driven! That BMW Happycar you finally got last month is just another Car today! Mind has moved on with its endless demands.

And so it goes, morning to nightfall all our lives. Our good ship called Happiness keeps trying to drop anchor in a bottomless, rapidly moving stream! A stream of consciousness that continuously sifts and sorts data into predetermined categories: Right/Wrong. Good/Bad, Yes/No, Sure/Maybe. It even sorts for Truth, identifying what it thinks is true or false, real or imagined. In the words of one Blaise Pascal: “We are always *preparing* to be happy, it is inevitable we should never be so.”

So while mind's been engaged in these words in this book perhaps, is it possible that something *other* than mind is watching in this continuous Now? And is it possible that this Knowing that watches is who we are?

THE BOTTOM LINE.

*We do not progress from error to truth,
but from truth to truth.*

- Swami Vivekananda

The bottom line here is: *if we are unhappy, we simply are not seeing the truth.* We have, all our lives, moved from something we *thought* was true to something else which we *think* will be true. As each new truth fades in our rear view mirror, we weary and despair of ever finding happiness.

But then, one morning, at the end of a long dark night, some of us kinda grow up, our perspective changes, we mature psychologically and spiritually. The ripe fruit drops. We see through to the bottom of things. We see that our dreams are just that--Dreams. They are not *real* and that is why they can never satisfy. We see that our

mind cannot deliver happiness. We've run into that proverbial Brick Wall. Again.

It's not that we're not familiar with each and every brick! After all, we built it many times. And we've been running into that wall at speed for years. Years! And each time, after a period of retreat and reformulation, we got up and rebuilt the Bloody Wall! It's not exactly the *same* wall, we tell ourselves, because we've given it a new look with a new coat of paint. It's bigger, and better, and just what we've always been looking for! We walk around, surveying and savoring this next new True Dream we've constructed. Then one night, when the moon is full, we back away thirty yards, turn and run at it again!

But not *this* time! This time we don't even try to rebuild our shattered dreams.

GOING OUT OF OUR MIND.

This time the difference is *more* than understanding. It is a certain *knowing*. It comes not from our mind, with its densely connected web of mind-made emotions that support and are supported by it. This time it's *real* and true. We see that mind has its legitimate role and function, but that it's only *part* of the show, not *all* of it. We perceive something else very still, very quiet, very familiar. And very real.

Let's call it an impulse to be free. Free of it all!

But mostly free of Fear.

That is, we are afraid to be free. Afraid because, somewhere deep, we know we're nothing. That's *Nothing*, really. We know we've just been faking it, pretending to be someone we're not. We know *that*

burden of make believe, have listened and ignored *that* most of our lives.

So we know we're about as real as a stage-set; that indeed, "all the world's a stage and we are but actors upon it." But we've been too afraid to realize our staging and acting are attempts to cover a naked nothingness.

So we, long ago, set about constructing our infamous Wall of Dreams. And in the very running away from being ourselves we run straight back into it.

Except this time we not only hear, but *listen*. We listen to that barely discernable inner voice.

We listen in stillness. We re-cognize (literally, "know again something that was known before") the impulse as that which will not *make* us happy, but that which *is* happiness itself. We discover that we have a life that is non-fiction. But only, finally, after we give up our fictional

story. And giving that story up can be sudden or gradual. Either way, it hurts. Like ripping off a bandaid. Make that a lot of bandaids, all over the hairiest parts of our body!

Still, air and light now get in, the self-inflicted wounds heal. Sooner or later, if we want this Truth, we'll be up and walking in it. Our fragile appearance now falls away to reveal the solid and the eternal, a.k.a. the Unknown.

UNKNOWN HAPPINESS.

We all want to be happy. But it is this very *wanting* that is innocently misinterpreted by mind, that sends us off when still children on the “wild goose chase” we call our life. Until happiness happens.

Happiness happens without any effort when we give up all the mind’s concepts and stop wanting. We stop wanting anything. It’s over. The search is over, the seeking is 0-v-e-r and we have found.

And what have we found?

Nothing. And Everything. We have found that we are not all the stuff and dreams we *thought* we were made of. And that trying to be what we are not is impossible. And even as those false hopes fade, they are replaced not by new hopes but by a hope-free, care-free, conditions-free, feelings-free, Freedom!

We know that this freedom is not *who* we are, not another “identity”, but *what* we are. This Knowing is Awareness. We are that “no thing” which is *aware* of all things. We are the unmanifest, manifested.

AN INTRODUCTION TO YOUR SELF.

Here's where we talk Truth to Truth. Why? Because only in this way can we ever be truly happy. And, truth to tell, most of us don't really want happiness. We would rather cling to the Dream of Me.

That dream is a complex ball of many interlocking threads which, when combined, form a seemingly solid and seemingly real entity we call "me." We begin to unravel the ball. Or more accurately, the ball starts to unroll all by itself, because we now know that there is nothing we can DO to make anything happen. We simply and clearly note its four main colors and how they entwine and reinforce each other. The yellow threads indicate 'We Are Special.' Red indicates 'We Are Unique.' And blue indicates 'We are Separate.'

Let's get closer to this ball of dreams and substitute "I" for "we" and put the proposal this way: "I am special, unique and separate." That's what we believe is true. And others are the same, of course.

Let's look closer at that fourth thread: it's black, very thick, and much stronger than the other three. In fact, it's what holds the whole thing together – Fear. We're talking about *psychological* fear, not instinctive, survival related fear that keeps us from stepping into traffic.

Now ask yourself the question, “*What on earth do I fear?*”

Let it sit there quietly, like a friend. Just look and look at the question. Most of us go through a long list of existential “fears” but don't get to the bottom because, ultimately, *we're afraid of what we might find.*

We *fear* Fear.

It is that very fear, that black thread, which we must address if we want to be truly happy. And removing the black Fear is hard... because we *fear* it is hard! Once we

actually start to cut and pull that thread of fear that binds that self concept together, the fear unravels quickly, *all by itself*. All we have to do is Nothing..simply allow truth to surface, to heal our invented wounds. We find that our personal idea of fear does not exist. Turns out, it was just another concept. Just like all ideas, Fear is a conceived creature of the mind. There is no such thing as “fear”. Now, and *only now*, we can begin to discover the truth of our *being*.

The search for happiness is like all rivers; one way or another, they all flow to the sea. So no matter what happens, the ways that truth unfolds will take you from there to *here*.

THE WAYS OF TRUTH.

I have deliberately chosen the phrase: “the ways of truth” to address a common misconception, i.e., that there are certain “paths” that alone lead to the realization of reality. Truth is not confined to any religion, any technique, any guru teaching, any “sacred space”. In fact, truth is not even spiritual. Or sacred. It has no defined characteristics; it is free of all we think about it. So none of what follows here is about the *spiritual as such, but about that which lies beyond our holiest concepts of God, Truth, Reality.*

This is not to deny that we all feel a certain spiritual heartburn. It is that very yearning, which we label “spiritual” that pushes and pulls us toward that which, when ultimately seen, is not anything like we *thought* it was. Words imply, point and refer to that which is. And all our most sacred ritual acts and divine thoughts subtly veil that truth which we are, that knowing what we are.

So despite all this, and because all we often have to talk about the wordless is words, let's proceed to outline one of the "ways" we may apprehend the truth.

One approach, which we'll take from the Advaita "teaching," is called the Direct Approach. It involves the use of a specific question: *"Who am I?"*

WHO AM I, REALLY?

Let's see this truth that we are. Find that still, quiet place you *know*. That place where, for now, you're not taking calls from the mind. Let the ego/mind rest, settle. Set your fears aside too, for now. Let it all be.

Now take the question "Who am I" and use it like a shovel and start digging. Be still and listen. And don't stop digging. It may take minutes, days, months or years, but if you use the question *honestly and sincerely*, you will dig through to Happiness.

While you're digging, remember not to hold on to any answers. Keep digging. Whatever you see, let it be. Accept; don't reject, judge or dismiss what you find. Keep digging with that now sharp, now gentle, question "*who am I?*"

"Am I my body?...Really?"

"Am I my mind?...am I a thought?"

“Am I this person I call Jason, Jane, or Jacques?”

“Well, just exactly who do I think I think I am?”

Somewhere, sometime, if you keep digging past the “who” part, your resonant knowing will come to reformulate the question like this:

“What am I?”

WHAT I AM IS SCARY!

“What I am” is scary at first. That’s because we are, with this question “who or what am I?”, leaving the familiar and comfortable shallow waters of the mind, of concepts and “knowledge”.

Lets resort to the “boat” metaphor used earlier. Only this time, we step out of the familiar boat we’ve been rowing in with many others for many years, and we board a deep sea submarine. Let’s call it the “Inquiry”. It’s powered and driven by our own resonant knowing; our hands are off the helm. This knowing is the ultimate GPS navigation we can rely on. There's a stiff wind from behind, as we move into the deep waters of our being. We pass Point Hope, enter the Sea of Despair. We have no Captain, no companions, no crew, no spiritual skills or techniques, no beacons built on terra firma to guide us. All we have to light up the darkness is all we really need: our inner vision, resonant knowing, Awareness.

We give the helm *completely* over to this knowing, stay out of the pilot room of the ego/mind, and *watch* in stillness and silence. Mind keeps screaming how tough and impossible it is to sail these waters which it does not know and cannot know. It tosses and turns us as we pass through deep and powerful currents that threaten to take us off course. But each time, as we test our knowing, and learn to rely on it, we become more confident. More secure in insecurity. Resonant knowing is, after all, *that truth which we are*, and that reality keeps us off those many imaginary reefs. And while it may take us into some spiritual belief nets for a time, it alone can be trusted to move us out and on.

It definitely *feels* lonely and scary. The compass of our mind, that which has always, we thought, interpreted our “life” course, can do nothing but spin in search of a familiar direction. *This...this* is uncharted territory. The Unknown. That which keeps most of us huddled back close to shore. Close to what our mind has “established” as a safe and sound harbor.

In this timeless, deep place labeled by the mind *The Unknown*, we find a kind of real comfort. Here we come to know the *ground* of our being. And that *My Life*, which had a beginning, middle, and an end in Time, is just a false and fabricated story. We have come full circle, only to discover we were never born and can never die. We are at home *here* without an address! We recognize that we, in fact, never really *left* this that we are. That the mind, the ego, had created another reality to explain and describe the *relative* world of the body and its senses. A pseudo reality known only by the extremely limited and yet miraculous mechanisms of tasting, touching, looking, smelling, hearing, and the thinking they naturally and innocently helped produce.

As we simultaneously contact both the “surface” and the “bottom” of Being, the wave and the ocean, we realize a subtle but very significant difference. Everything *looks* the same as before but we *see* it differently. We see that everything is, in fact, One. We see that nothing is separate. All is, in a word, Love.

HAPPINESS IS LOVE.

Once our fears unravel and our specialness, uniqueness, and separateness dissolve, there remains only Reality. It's the *same* world! Just not that world we *thought* we lived in and feared. The *real* world is not in our mind. Not in our imagination. We are left with a functioning mind that we now know how to use. It conceives both banal and amazing ideas. And we are free to *watch* it all, to be fabulously entertained, to enjoy the mystery, to embrace the Unknown which we are, in a kind of *disengaged* engagement. And to take it all out dancing!

We are free to love!

SO WHAT IS L-O-V-E?

Let's try to approach this wordless love, this indescribable yet knowable non-thing, with all that we have...words. For starters, it might be helpful to perform a little brain bypass. The mind's idea of Love is a pile of data gathered and stored since our childhood. Ask it for info about Love and you receive an habitual, conditioned, cultural response. So let's disrupt it a little and call love a new name. Let's invent a new primary, sole source element and call it RK10 [Resonant Knowing 10].

RK10 cannot be conceived or learned, but is already known.

RK10 is not a feeling, but is always felt.

RK10 cannot be given and cannot be taken away.

RK10 cannot be lost or found.

RK10 cannot be achieved because it *is* already.

RK10 has no past and no future.

RK10 is always new, and always old and familiar.

RK10 is substantial as a rock but has no mass or volume.

RK10 contains all that is, but cannot be contained.

RK10 has no defining qualities, but contains all qualities.

RK10 is infinite, but its expressions in cellular matter
“die.”

RK10 is the primary and single source of all and
everything.

RK10 is that which we all seek because it is what we *are*.

RK10 is our Self, the non-substance termed “being.”

RK10 is this Reality of which we are made.

RK10 is the Truth that is neither within nor without.

RK10 is “you” but *it* is not personal.

RK10 is all things and no thing.

RK10 is happiness.

RK10 is this, here, now.

RK10 is all there is.

RK10 is not a word.

RK10 is.

HAPPINESS BEGINS WHEN YOUR STORIES END.

All stories are Fiction. That's true even though some stories get labeled non-fiction. And that's because all stories are limited inventions of the egoic mind. These stories about who we are and what the world is are all conceptual. They attempt to describe in finite terms that which is infinite and constantly changing. Our story as an individual, separate and unique, is not real. Not based on fact, but fiction. *Seeing* this, one sees *all*.

One sees that all one is, is this, here, now. Or Love. Or
RK10!

And not seeing this fiction ,perpetuating the “story”, is the root cause of our unhappiness. We're unhappy because, somewhere deep inside, we are unfulfilled. No matter what we achieve, no matter how we succeed, behind it all there remains a profound deficiency. Something, we know not what, is missing. And lacking “it” we lack all.

This insufficiency, this *missingness*, is driven by an instinctive fear which naturally resides in all living things. It's a natural fear, one that helps our species survive, but one which, in today's times, has expanded its role from physical threats to include entirely *imagined* ones. And *their* number is legion!

Fortunately, that fear is also imaginary. We "think" it's real, but at the same time, "know" it isn't. We *know* this only when we are still. When the mind settles, when a deep silence prevails. Sometimes our fears evaporate over coffee with a friend. Sometimes a trip or a walk in the woods does the trick!

Serenity produces clarity. It is only from this alive, quiet place, not from books, not from teachers, but from this place of stillness, that we can re-new our self, and be happy i.e. content with the content of living. Or more accurately, being lived. Or even more accurately, being *life* itself.

We can be happy because we are, innately, already, happy. We have only confused ourselves with *thinking* that something, somewhere, sometime, *outside* us will “make us happy”.

Remember the Biblical injunction: “Except you be as a child you shall not enter into the Kingdom?” This refers to that quiet, unsullied *childlike* state we all know. It is here we find that “peace that surpasses all understanding”.

So, to experience yourself as a child,(not “your inner child” but as pure awareness) you need go no further than yourself. Simply enquire deeply, “Who am I?” Question the ego/mind’s “reality”. That direct enquiry can lead from the superficial to the real, from an *apparently* known, to a truly unknown.

It is here *in the Unknown* that we really live. Only our mind has superimposed an imaginary picture called “reality” on our life. It is this very insubstantial, non-

nourishment that leaves us empty and unsatisfied. The more we attempt to map and understand that which cannot be understood, the more unhappy we are.

The Unknown is what we *are* and the very source of our security. Our *thinking* otherwise is the source of our insecurity.

Life—as our body/mind experiences it—is fragile and fleeting. But life as we come to know it is an endlessly beautiful and unfolding grace.

Life as we *know* it does not have an agenda and can never disappoint. It is our mind-manufactured projections overlaying what *is*, that set up expectations founded on wishful thinking.

The wonder of it all is that we are actually *here*. That we are this love, this awareness, that lives through and as us. That manifests in the ten thousand things we call Roses,

but which by any other name, smell, taste, feel, look and sound, are the same – the play of consciousness.

“Existence=happiness=being.”

-Ramana Maharshi

Each moment, each day, is served up fresh, to delight and amuse this awareness we are. We are free to enjoy it, to watch it come and go, as a child watches without any mind filters, without any grasping. We do not imagine or want things to be *other than they are*. We are free of the mind’s incessant chatter. We...what we are... simply watches and is happy to *be*.

We discover our day, our *aliveness*, moment to moment, surprise after surprise. And wonder at it all!

*Happiness is a great and fulfilling Wonder that embraces what is, **exactly as it is.***

“There is a very simple secret to being happy: just let go of your demand on this moment.”

Adyashanti

“Hardly anyone has been told the following truth: In order to be genuinely happy there is one and only one thing you need to do – be rid of those attachments.”

Anthony DeMello

“The one who would be constantly in happiness must frequently change.”

Confucius

THE HAPPINESS REVOLUTION ENDS IN CONCEPTVILLE.

Dave turned the bookmark from side to side. He marveled that all that Ed wrote was there on a bookmark. He flicked through the empty pages of the book and re-read its cover: **THE REAL HAPPINESS REVOLUTION; *How Happiness Begins When Your Stories End.*** Dave smiled, got up and went for a quiet walk. He knew now why the pages were blank.

Our Story begins and ends here. Dave never left Conceptville to go to Fear. He found what he was looking for right where he was...not above his head, but under his feet, so to speak. Fear was right there, *beneath* Conceptville. He stepped out of his “story” into life. Now for some, it’s gradual. For him, it was sudden.

There actually was no map. All it said was: “Everything you need is here, now.” No Map. No Conceptville. No Fear, either. He discovered it was all *imagination*. The Beliefs were just that...beliefs! About as *real* as words; about as *real* as feelings!

But mostly, he re-discovered. He found that he was already happy! Or, more accurately, he *is* happiness!

And, as always, life keeps happening in, around and through him. He happened to resign as Mayor of Compromise. He happened to settle in Conceptville knowing that he could never again *live* there. That all happened because well...everything just happens!

You won't find Happiness here in this book. Or “get it” someday, like the mind promises. No one has *it* and can give it to you. You *are* the answer. What does that Awareness, that Resonant Knowing, tell you you are? Ask your Self: “Who am I?” You may discover that this

unknown self, this unknown life, is the *only* one you're living.

That way lies reality, wholeness and happiness.

PART FOUR: REAL, WHOLE, HERE AND HAPPY

ON BEING HAPPY.

The only happiness I know is the same happiness we all share. It's a happiness that is deeply contented with itself. One that makes no demands on this or any other moment. It is agenda-free. It is free of all ideas about being free. That's because happiness has no idea about what it is. It simply *is*.

Living a happy life is not a matter of picking and choosing, a careful editing of what to leave in and what to leave out. Happiness accepts all of life...the *whole* of it, with an openness that is simple and almost child-like. Does something please? That's fine. Does something anger one? That's fine, too. The moods of the mind come and go like the weather, bearing now sunshine, now rain, now wind, now calm.

What remains, watching, is *this that you are*. Will there be rain later today? *Who* cares? *Who* knows? All awareness knows is that there is only *now*, and that

just now it is not raining. And that if it were, it would simply be raining. Not raining on *my* parade, just raining. Ditto for happy/sad. The mind/body is interpreting reported data in the habitual way.

There is nothing *personal* here going on. The senses are reporting what they are equipped to report. They do not bring delight or sorrow: they bring data that can be used to pilot ourselves on the planet. That is, until the data reaches our conditioned body/mind. When the conditioned mind gets involved and is *believed*, then we saddle up and ride off thinking that we must do something about everything, including the weather. We engage in useless emotional swings that have never, and will never, change or affect anything. And while it can be useful to see actual rain coming and put on a raincoat, we treat all the areas of our life with the same belief in the *minds' perspective*.

We sift and sort, thinking we *can* or *should* select the elements of our day, our life. We create, with our minds, a complete picture of our life. Its content is

filtered by our attitudes and experiences. And these same attitudes filter ensuing experiences, and so on and so on. All *that* produces this phantom of a life we think we're living.

A life that actually has almost no *new* experience happening because we are seeing things continuously through the same old lenses. How could we see, feel, know anything different? Or how could we actually connect to what is *really* going on? We see exactly what we want to see, and get exactly what we want to get, and call that life – *ours* and *theirs*. That is, our conditioned mind attracts a certain life, because it overlays on every moment, *apparent* choice of a select “take” on reality. It seems to choose from an infinite menu those things which will make it happy. But mind/body always makes the same “choices.” It always has its habitual preferences based on its “experience.” And it will continue to urge repetition in favor of comfort with the familiar. That's the Loop. And that's what produces what we think is us. Us living our life filled with pre-judged, pre-experienced... “experience”!

No wonder we are deeply unhappy on this invented merry-go-round. No wonder that we are dis-turbed! That dis-comfort fills our days and nights. That all this mind-made happiness we manufacture leads to dis-ease.

GOING OUT OF OUR MIND.

Being happy is not a state of mind.

Being happy occurs when we are truly “out of our mind”! When we are not engaged in the throes of what our mind is telling us, we are free to simply be. Our mind then *serves*. Not being our Master, it appropriately embroiders and decorates, is part of the human apparatus that we can watch with wonder. We hear its absurdities, its definitions, its distinctions, its color commentary, and do not engage. That’s because we know that while it is entertaining, even informative and useful on occasion, our mind is not giving us anywhere close to a *complete* picture of reality. It is interpreting and serving up the same old - same old, on a platter of whatever color we fancy. What is *actually* happening is something *other* than that which our mind would have us believe.

CAN ANYBODY BE HAPPY?

You've got the same body as me. The same in specifications, if not in detail and finish! We humans have these marvelous bodies that we *think* are us. Are they? Is that body you call you really *you*? Let's take the physical heart –yours and mine. They're functionally the same right? Give or take a little blockage here, a little murmur there! Now look at your hand. Same as mine, more or less. Check out your whole body, and you'll see that *functionally* we're all the same.

So why on earth would we think that we *personally* are our body? We are all variations on the same theme. A theme that's composed of myriad and subtle differences in shape, color, size. But do those manifest variations make “me” as opposed to “you” special and unique? Our bodies are plainly for our use, but to claim them as “who” we are is a *missed* understanding that occurred when we were infants. Back *then*, before we were three or so, we had no body! We had no

awareness of any *separate* thing. We took celestial ages to discover our toes! Then eons to find the rest of it. But even then, we did not *think* of being a separate identity, of being *contained* in a body that was especially “mine”. We were, then as now, pure awareness. Unlimited. Some sages would say “unborn.” Imagine that!

Our infant bodies grew, and along with them, our minds. It is our mind that learned to make distinctions. It began to establish form in what was formless, to ascertain qualities in what was unqualified. Those formerly unknown entities hovering around the crib became known as “Mom” and “Dad” and sister Sue and brother Lou. And we began to have *relationships*, i.e. to relate to the world as if it was composed of distinct and separate parts and individuals. Crazy huh? Along came this creation called “me,” then, by definition, “others.” “Our” body was sure to follow, along with the whole rest of the train we call “me and mine.” And that “world” we labeled “ours.”

A BODY OF KNOWLEDGE.

We learned all this by association, by the mind's cognizing of all the incoming data around us into a picture of "who" we are. (As distinct from "what" we are, which is the ground of our being.) We made it all up as we went along, shaping and reshaping new "realities" as they became *known* to us. We collaborated in this giant creation of our collective minds because everything we were exposed to as infants gently and sometimes rudely persuaded us to conform and confirm. That's what happens because life *happens* that way. We are influenced and in turn influence. It's a mutual and agreed upon form where we "each" support each other's concepts of Reality.

Life since then is all about a "me" in the center of a world that's constantly threatening to annihilate this "me." A *me-ness* that is carefully constructed and maintained, but which, underneath, we *know* to be a fragile invention. That's what we know, that's how it

feels. And that vulnerability scares the hell out of us!
Maybe that's why it seems impossible to be happy!

WHY CAN'T YOU BE HAPPY?

We've indicated that the mind as thinker can't be the source of happiness. That's too fleeting to endure. And that the body is not who we are. What's left to discuss is that last bastion of who we think we are - our *ego*. It's what we think is really "me." Our identity. Our name, rank and cell number. I mean cell number, as in prison!

Although they are one, we are separating "ego" from "mind" here, just to get a clearer look.

You cannot be happy because there is no "you." You are an invention of this thing called "your" ego. The collective and imagined center of the construct called "me" is...nonexistent! There is no such critter! There never was nor ever will *exist* such a critter. Cute as he or she may appear! But let's be clear: the mind, even our ego, is lots of fun and useful to build bridges, write and read, tell stories, etc. It's just not the foundation

upon which to build an identity. It's not *who* you are, so how could an erected ego ever feel secure and be happy? It's not going to happen!

The egoic mind is formed in early childhood. It's a kind of defense mechanism developed to protect us from fear.

A "fear" which we have never had before, slowly appears in our mind. This newly formed fear is an *apprehension* of some *imagined mishap* that *might or might not* occur in *the future*. Note all the italics in that last sentence: *apprehension, imagined, mishap, might or might not, the future*.

This fear is created by our ego out of nothing. That is, there is no *need* for this psychological creation. This is not instinctive, survival related fear that is naturally generated. This is a mind-spin. Our ego has waved its magic wand and introduced *qualifications* where there previously were none. Where before, we had no

separateness, no distinctions, and were free simply to *be*, we now have this device that filters its preferences to support this new, emerging image of “me.”

THE STORY OF ME

The story of “Me” gets written every subsequent day and night as egoic mind adapts and adopts its surroundings. “Mary” now absorbs personhood from culturally endorsed and shunned *qualities*, to create a “personality” that will get along well with others. So we “become” somebody. And we daily negotiate, beg, borrow and steal what we think we need to survive and, we hope, prosper, in this otherwise threatening world. We have this newborn identity called, say, Mary or Larry, and we are stuck with its preservation and maintenance for the rest of our lives, come Hell or high water! Ergo, the Fear!

DISAPPEAR THE FEAR

Fear *seems* well founded. After all, *it is real* and it is *who we are*, right? What happens if we even *suspect* otherwise? Just the admission of that thought takes a courage which we cannot summon from our experience of being “me.”

What if we actually lost our identity? What would become of us? Truth to tell, nothing would happen because who we thought we were all those years since childhood is only a mind-game. In fact, in letting go of this imaginary person, we cannot win or lose anything. That’s because that “me” was and is not real. So in ending this weird relationship with a fictional character, we end up where we began, in and as pure awareness.

It is this awareness, *this that we are*, that knows true from false. It knows that for years we’ve been *acting* like we’re one of those old town movie sets in a

cowboy western. You know, the ones complete with beautifully adorned front facades that hide the tin sheds behind. In ride our friends and colleagues, and what a great town we show them! Worse, after our friends have ridden through, we have to double back in the dark, tear the damn old town all down and put it all back up again *before* our duly impressed friends ride in for breakfast! Now that gets tiring!

What if, for once, we didn't put up the facade? What if our friends saw the tin sheds behind? If we're not the facade, and not the tin sheds either, what have we lost? Nothing. What have we gained? Everything that's real remains, of course. That love which is the unchanging source of happiness, remains. And we are free to be what we are: infinite, immortal and wise. Alive and alert, we live fully, experience fully. And, without trying, without even knowing, we rest in the insecure, secure. Secure because we are deathless, timeless awareness. And very, very content. Oh yes, and HAPPY.

WHAT ON EARTH IS HAPPINESS ALL ABOUT?

Well, it's not about you. Or me. Or us. Happiness, like Love, has no I.D. It has no qualities, no characteristics. It is pure wonder! It's a wonder that manifests into myriad forms, just for the joy of it! It's a wonder that we are living, really!

“Soul, mind, ego are mere words. These are not real entities . Awareness, consciousness, is the only truth. Its nature is happiness. Happiness alone IS - enjoyer and enjoyed merge in it...There is only contentment.”

“Your nature is happiness. You say that this is not apparent. See what obstructs you from your true being...The obstruction is the wrong identity. Eliminate the error. The patient himself must take the medicine to cure the illness.”

--Sri Ramana Maharshi

And what is this medicine, and why is it so hard to swallow?

The medicine is Truth, and the swallowing of it is lethal. Lethal to ego and spiritual ambitions, lethal to mind and concepts, lethal to ideals and illusions. It is pure poison for personality. It yanks out all pretence by the roots. No wonder it's not popular!

No wonder there's so much unhappiness! We...most of us...want anything but the full, undiluted truth. It is only when we get a spoonful of it shoved down our throat, only when we get a hint of the taste of it, that we savor the flavor.

We taste the freedom, the freeing that only reality can give, the relief that only truth can give. We rediscover as we uncover. And we reclaim and reconnect to that source which in fact we never lost, but only *thought* we lost.

And, a funny thing happens here. We realize that it is true; it is our *nature* to be happy! We realize that our innocent childhood miss-taking of the world around us as separate objects, as discrete and labeled parts that our cultural conditioning attracts or repels, is simply not the way it (really) is.

This, That We Are is happiness, the revolution is over, and we are abiding in that which, by it's nature, is real, whole and happy.

END.