



Causes Of Happiness, by Dalai Lama

The purpose of life is to strive for happiness.

Every sentient being has the right to survive; this means having a desire for happiness or comfort: that's why sentient beings strive to survive. Therefore, our survival is based on hope - hope for something good: happiness. Because of that, I always conclude that the purpose of life is happiness. With hope and a happy feeling, our body feels well. Health depends on a happy state of mind.

What is happiness? Sometimes physical suffering can even bring a deeper sense of satisfaction like with an athlete after a grueling workout. So "happiness" means mainly a sense of deep satisfaction. The object of life or our goal, then, is satisfaction.

Now, what are the causes of happiness? A calm mind is very important. It doesn't matter, our physical situation; mental calmness is most important. So, how can we bring about a calm mind?

Now, to get rid of all problems, that would be impractical; and to make the mind dull and forget about our problems, that doesn't work either. We have to look clearly at our problems and deal with them, but at the same time keep a calm mind so that we have a realistic attitude and we are able to treat them well, deal with them well.

The more compassionate our mind is, the better our brain functions. If our mind develops fear and anger, then our brain functions more poorly. Buddhism says the same. When negative emotion develops, we can't see reality.

Compassion and affection help the brain to function more smoothly. It gives us inner strength and self-confidence and that reduces fear, which, in turn, keeps our mind calm. Therefore, compassion has two functions: it causes our brain to function better and it brings inner strength. These, then, are the causes of happiness.