PART 1-YES YOUR HAPPINESS CAN BRING ABOUT WORLD PEACE

If you do not wish for world peace, beware! After reading this piece, you WILL be fired up to bring happiness, money or not, to yourself and to others. This blog offers a user-friendly, but hidden-in-plain-sight method of how to achieve world peace through every individual and a majority of us acquiring happiness, Inner Peace or Peace of Mind. This is not about a Pollyanna “have no cares” kind of happiness. It is about developing a stable inner peace.

So how will that work, you ask? Please allow me to walk you through what’s involved starting with the following topics:

What Is Inner Peace (IP)?

It is the same as peace of mind (PoM) and happiness. We are naturally equipped to experience happiness/IP/PoM by achieving maximum positive or pleasant emotions and minimum negative feelings regardless of duration. At different stages in life or in a variety of situations such happiness may range from purely pleasurable to having a feeling of life satisfaction.

Why Do We Need Happiness?

We are born with a need to be happy. Our emotional responses help us respond to circumstances in us and in the world. We are aligned to experience joy whenever our emotions are in the right proportion, as defined above. Because we are programed to acquire it, we just naturally enjoy being happy and so we pursue happiness.

What Does Science Have to Say about Inner Peace, Peace of Mind (IP/PoM) or Happiness?

According to scientific research reported in peer-reviewed journals (that ensure the research is authentic and accurate), a sustained state of happiness or wellbeing actually leads to a wide range of benefits to health, interpersonal relationships and successful performance in many societal contexts. For example1:

Research has demonstrated that happiness makes people more productive and that lower levels of happiness is systematically associated with lower productivity.

In answer to the question: Does Happiness Lead to Success? The research results of numerous studies examined, show that happy individuals are successful across multiple life domains, including marriage, friendship, income, work performance, and health. They further demonstrate that “that happiness … precedes [the][1] numerous successful outcomes …” In other words happiness brought [2]about the benefits not the other way around.

Another study used data from a large US representative sample of 15,000 adolescents and young adults to examine whether happiness preceded or followed wealth. The researchers found that happy people grow up to earn significantly higher levels of income later in life. Interestingly the study also shows that even with children growing up in the same family, happier siblings tend to go on to earn higher income.

Further Scientific Research Demonstrates the Importance of IP/PoM for Social and Educational Competence.

For example:

Research by Joseph Durlak with other researchers shows that happier school-aged children develop superior social-behavioral, mental-emotional, academic and life skills. The study examined programs, which directly address the elevation of positive affect (i.e. happiness) and programs based on SEL, the universal social and emotional learning (also called the “happiness curriculum”) involving 270,034 kindergarten students through high school students. The results are reported to show that these types of school programs increase not only students’ social and emotional wellbeing to a significantly higher level than schools that don’t but as well show notable improvements in academic achievement and student behavior.

In a study titled: “Impact of stress reduction on negative school behavior in adolescents”, the researchers concluded that in the school setting Transcendental Meditation (an undisputed enhancer of IP/PoM) has a beneficial impact in lowering absenteeism, rule infractions, and suspension rates. The controls had a significant increase in the negative behaviors

Science also Confirms the Importance of IP/PoM in Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Life

For example:

Even in hindsight, when researchers (Chida & Steptoe) looked at mortality among people who were previously healthy as compared with those medical issues they concluded that positive psychological wellbeing that is, a happy attitude to life, has a favorable effect on survival in both healthy and diseased populations.

Also, a thirty-five-year longitudinal study (by Christopher Peterson and others) found that the physical health of Harvard University graduates from the classes of 1942-1944 when they were 25, was poorer at ages 30 to 60, in parallel with a pessimistic explanatory style in earlier life. That is, negative thinking in early adulthood appears to be a risk factor for poor health in middle and late adulthood.

A National Demonstration Project conducted in Washington, D.C. tested the effectiveness of the presence of a group of Transcendental Meditation (TM) experts in reducing crime as measured by FBI Uniform Crime Statistics. The demonstration study occurred during a two-month period of a near record heat wave when violent crime usually peaks. During this period the number of Meditation experts increased from 800 to 4000. The study was a carefully controlled experiment (as protection against skepticism and to ensure a scholarly status for publication, in the 'Social Indicators Research' journal). The results showed violent crime began decreasing and continued to drop until the end of the experiment, after which it began to rise again. The likelihood that this result could be attributed to chance variation in crime levels was less than two parts per billion (p < .000000002). The drop in homicides, rapes and aggravated assaults (HRA crimes) could only be attributed to the use of TM. According to the Report, “Importantly, when the research team analyzed the same period in each of the five previous years they found no significant decreases in HRA crimes in those periods.” In other words the 1993 results were a one-of-a-kind occurrence.

These and numerous other studies have contributed to the understanding that IP/PoM or happiness constitutes a set of skills, which people can learn to use. Moreover Science further confirms that by engaging in regular practice to improve our mental state, we actually change the structure of the area in our brain responsible for those mood states and thereby preserve our PI/PoM.

The Importance of IP/PoM Is Reflected in the Growing Peace & Nonviolence Programs at Several Universities

Here are a few examples:

Center for Nonviolence & Peace Studies – U of Rhode Island

The Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education – Stanford U.

The College of St Benedict and St John’s University’s Peace Studies Department

Northwestern University’s Department of Psychology, which also focuses on research pertinent to IP/PoM (e.g., trust and cooperation, pro-social action, altruism, aggression).

So far much more attention is directed at peace building and group conflict resolution rather than at the individual’s proficiency with IP/PoM. Nonetheless results from the studies of Happiness continue to garner respectability and interest from many universities.

Not a single study in my search has refuted the efficacy or importance of IP/PoM. As such decision makers in all areas of society in countries all over the world have ample encouragement to incorporate happiness goals into policies and actions. The leaders in government, business and various organizations however need us, the people, to urge them to include IP/PoM plans in their election platforms and organizational plans so everyone will have access to happiness.

Now we know specifically and generally that IP/PoM has power to improve performance in the world of business, grow required academic and social skills among school children transform and allow people to live better and longer lives while also deterring destructive inclinations in society. For these reasons alone it is worth pursuing the goal of acquiring and institutionalizing IP/PoM.

I have to ask. Do you agree with no less than roughly 80% of what you’ve read so far? If not then go back to review your objections. If you agree however, there’s more. And that is how IP/PoM fits in with world peace.

How do we go From Inner Peace To World Peace?

First, Why Does the Problem of Achieving World Peace Continue To Be Difficult to Solve?

We can put people who contribute to the problem in two groups: Those who benefit from activities that foster social-political unrest, discord and war; and those who cannot see past potential obstructions to peace or don’t know how to bring about world peace. The two groups are complex and by far the largest proportion of their members is not even aware they belong there. I’ll explain.

In Group 1 are those who benefit from social, economic and political unrest, dissension and war in these ways:

Because the vast majority wants a certain level of material prosperity and security, society has normalized greed, so that people do not see their actions as greedy but as trying to get what’s available to them or what they deserve.

Classic examples of economic prosperity, that is people with larger homes and luxurious lifestyle in the community right up to billionaires, motivate others to find ways like they did to acquire the things we feel we too should have, which thereby makes us blind to the effects of the relentless pursuit of material wealth.

Some people try to use power to acquire prosperity and others vice versa. To such people the two methods are interchangeable and therefore indispensable.

The result is that people in this camp do not connect the dots to recognize that their prosperity need and attempts to satisfy it is no different from (and sometimes directly support) that of the manufacturers of weapons of war and mass destruction. Similarly personal prosperity is often the goal of politicians who do not want to lose what they have; or want more and so endorse war or strife, powered by fear or machismo, as they ride the waves of hate, outrage or sentimentalism. Military decision makers and strategists may start with preventing harm and then slide into winning at all costs. All of these people from the least to the greatest are aiming for one thing: material or economic prosperity and security. Because many want a greater share than others, people compete and more often than not, opportunities are gate-kept and strategies are used to obstruct or limit access, which create the ever-present risk of dissatisfaction, resentment and retaliatory backlash, all caused by competition to get more. Security is needed primarily to protect people’s prosperity and their continuing ability to acquire or retain economic status. In participating in these activities many people do not recognize they are (and would even argue they are not) part of the problem, which may range from socio-economic and political dissension to war, and not the solution. In other words unless their motives are friendly and have a goal of peace, the people in Group 1 cannot bring about world peace by competition.

[1] LIST OF REFERENCES TO SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

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