



Secrets of the Masters: Marci Shimoff

The Missing Factor...Happiness

Although people today are achieving more, enjoying more, and receiving more in their lives, they frequently still feel something is missing. They always thought fame, money, success, and beauty were the keys to happiness. But once achieved, there's often a sense of something missing, rather than a feeling of happiness. In spite of all their accomplishments, they still haven't achieved true happiness.

Marci Shimoff, acclaimed happiness expert and author of *Happy for No Reason*, defines happiness as "the known physiological state of peace and well being that doesn't depend on circumstances." It's a happiness that transcends all the reasons—money, fame, and success.

In doing the research for her book, Marci discovered statistics on the benefits of being truly happy:

- Happy people make at least \$750,000 more money over their lifetime.
- Happy people are 35% less likely to get sick than unhappy people.
- Happy people, on average, live seven years longer than unhappy people.
- Happy people enjoy more fulfilling personal relationships.

Her research also revealed that we all have a "happiness set point." No matter what happens in our life, each of us will remain at the same happiness level unless we consciously do something to improve it.

The set point is 50% genetic—we're born with that. Ten percent is our circumstances, so changing our physical situation won't really change our happiness set point. The other 40% is habitual—our learned thoughts and behaviors. That's where we can really make a difference. By changing our habits and thoughts, we can change our lives. We can be truly happy.

Happiness Leaves Clues

Studying the lives of happy people provides clues for applying the principles of happiness in your own life. Marci did just that when she was writing her book, *Happiness For No Reason*. She interviewed 100 happy people and discovered they have different habits than everyone else. In distilling that information, Marci created a metaphor of an Inner House of Happiness to represent the seven areas in a person's life representing the fundamentals of being truly happy.

Marci's Inner Home of Happiness:

1. **Foundation:** Take responsibility for your life; take ownership of your own *happiness*.
2. **Pillar of the Mind:** Don't believe everything you think; your beliefs can hold you back from achieving happiness.
3. **Pillar of the Heart:** Let love lead in your life.
4. **Pillar of the Body:** Make your body happy, beginning with your cells; invest energy and healthy food in your body.
5. **Pillar of the Soul:** Plug yourself into Spirit; connect to something bigger than yourself.
6. **Roof:** Live an inspired life; find ways to serve yourself and to serve others in the world.

7. **Garden:** Surround yourself with happy, supportive friends and loved ones.

Myths that Sabotage Happiness

According to Marci, our society revolves around two myths, the first of which is the Myth of More—the more we have the happier we'll be. No matter how much we accumulate, we still feel it isn't enough; we always want to attain even more. And once each object is purchased, achieved, or won, the "newness" of it quickly wears off and an emptiness fills us, driving us to accumulate yet another item.

The second myth is the Myth of "I'll be happy when..." filling in the blank with any goal you feel will bring you happiness. Often it's "when I receive that raise," or "when I lose those extra 20 pounds." It pushes happiness off into the distant future, making it impossible for us to become truly happy.

Both myths focus our energy and our attention in the wrong direction. They force us to focus on the *reasons* for being happy, not on being happy for no reason at all. Success doesn't bring us happiness. It's the other way around...happiness brings us success.

Continuum of Happiness

At the lowest end of the Continuum of Happiness is straightforward unhappiness. The people you'll find here are the 25% of Americans who are unhappy.

The people populating the next step on the continuum are those who are happy for bad reasons. These people mask their unhappiness by pursuing temporary pleasures or fixes. People with addictions, or who overeat and overwork all fall into this category.

Those who are happy for good reasons occupy the next step. These folks are working for goals and achievements. While that's a wonderful thing, it's still not being happy for no reason—there's still something missing.

At the highest end of the continuum are those who are happy for no reason. They set goals from a place of fulfillment. As Marci points out, "They're not trying to extract happiness from life; they're there to bring happiness to life."

Making a Shift in Your Life Can Change the World

Making yourself happy can be the best thing for you, for your loved ones and colleagues around you, and for the entire world. Research has shown that a shift made by as little as one percent of the world's population will result in changing the whole world. Understanding how we can change our lives to become happy will affect everyone around us and will change our world.