

THE KEY TO HAPPINESS IS A FLEXIBLE ATTITUDE

If we bought together the happiest 10% of people in the world, what do you think that they would all have in common? Good looks? Career success? Lots of money? Wrong! The happiest people in the world are those who have the most flexible attitudes. These are people who don't get upset when things go against them, they are happy to compromise, are never rigid in their thoughts and very rarely are they demanding on others. They are able to bend with the situation.

A key attribute of happy people is that they are willing to accept that some things are beyond their control and therefore they do not demand that things should be different. That is not to say that they are weak, to the contrary they are often very focused on achieving specific outcomes.

If you think for a moment about the things that have created distress in your day today for example, you will probably find that your distress has been caused by; rigid, irrational beliefs on how you believe things should be;

“We can waste our energy shaking our fist at the sky and demanding that things should not be this way. Or we can accept that we live in an imperfect world and focus on the things that are within our control”

Albert Ellis, a leading psychologist and pioneer of Cognitive Based Therapy, has observed that people by their very nature are inclined to think in ways that are irrational and self defeating. When he refers to irrational he means that our thinking goes against our inbuilt desire for happiness and survival. Irrational beliefs result in anger, frustration and low self esteem to name a few. And many of them contribute to unhappiness and distress in our everyday lives.

Changing the way we think about a situation will change the way we feel.

The good news is that whilst we might not be able to change other people or our life circumstance, we can change the way we think about them. And if we can learn to think in a more balanced way, we can stop upsetting ourselves every time a problem arises.

WAYS TO CHANGE YOUR THINKING AND IMPROVE YOUR HAPPINESS

Here are a couple of quick tips that I work through with my clients to help them change their thinking;

- We all have our own values that we live by and these are often deep rooted from a very young age. Be conscious of not expecting others to live by the same values as you. After all we are all different.
- Beware not to make judgments of others based on your own values, expectations, and situation. Just because you are having a good day doesn't mean the person next to you is as well. If someone speeds by you at the lights on the inside lane, you can either judge them and say how impatient and dangerous they are driving, or you could think, wow they are obviously in a hurry, I hope everything is ok.
- You cannot control everything in this world. Next time you become annoyed by something or you are worried about something, think to yourself; “What can I control here?” If you can't control the situation, accept that is a fact and don't try to change it.

By making these small changes to your thinking, very quickly you are stopping yourself from becoming angry, and from feeling distressed. Instead you will become more flexible and create greater happiness in your everyday life.