

If Happiness Has A Secret, This Is It

Those who can laugh without cause have either found the true meaning of happiness or have gone stark raving mad. - Norm Papernick A sobering thought for consideration. Mr. Papernick is not someone around whom I would spend much time laughing. What's the mystery about happiness? I was asked a few days ago by a radio host what we "could all do to make us all happy." He was quite disgruntled that I refused to pull a magic formula out of my hat. I explained that his question could not be answered "for everyone." Happiness is defined by each of us for ourselves. One way to ensure that we won't be happy is to accept the definition given by someone else. Each of us is so incredibly different, with different experiences and learning, that by the time we are old enough to really appreciate what happiness could be, we can't share it with many others because it means something different to each of us. Actor Danny Bonaducci (of The Partridge Family fame), a guest on the same radio show that day, said that at one time he had "cars, women, alcohol, the other substances" but they didn't make him happy now. I told him that if he thought he would find happiness by following the definition given by anyone who stood to make money off him, he was surely looking for happiness in the wrong place. Danny might indeed have been happy when he first got each car, each woman, when he first began each bottle of alcohol or when the first hit of each drug kicked in. He paid his money, had his kicks. It didn't last. But he was happy briefly. What can make people happy is a subject that just about everyone has an opinion about. The opinions often don't pan out in real life as I have observed. Most people don't even follow their own advice to find out. A truly happy person may not be stark raving mad, but he is certainly unusual. What would you think of someone who suddenly began laughing in your presence, for no apparent reason? I am not convinced that a person who has found the true meaning of happiness will laugh without cause. He may, however, smile just because his world is right and good and he feels good about it and himself. Gobbledy-gook! OK, you define happiness and be honest about whether you live that way or not. If you don't live your own definition of happiness, do you have a right to an opinion about what others should do to make themselves happy? Donald Trump believes he is happy. I would hate his life. But he lives the life he has determined makes him feel best. I could not survive in his life, but then he could not survive in mine either. For one thing, my hair is messy for most of the day. I know what happiness is. I live it. It works for me because my belief and my lifestyle agree. I will only give you one hint about my happiness. I was never able to be happy so long as the most important person in my life was me. The more people I care about, the happier I find myself. The less I am the centre of my attention, the more I care give to others and the happier I am. Maybe it won't work for you. Get your own definition. Then live it. Bill Allin Turning It Around: Causes and Cures for Today's Epidemic Social Problems, striving to make life's major decisions clear. Make them for yourself. Learn more at <http://billallin.com>

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