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## ELUSIVE HAPPINESS

“Happiness is of the soul. The soul can never be cut to pieces. Nor burned by fire, nor moistened by water or withered by wind.” ~ Bhagavad Gita

There is only one goal in life, being happy. Success, prosperity, abundance are just by-products of it. Much like Einstein's theory of relativity, happiness is relative to every person. For example, a packet of chips may make a roadside beggar happy, but maybe not you. And there lies the problem. Happiness is all around us, if we choose to feel it. Yet we choose to be crushed down by our own sky high, sometimes unattainable expectations. We consider every negative turn in our lives as the end of the world. (Even I don't practice what I preach)

With India being the most depressed country in the world, with every sixth Indian suffering from some sort of depression, we need to re-evaluate our lifestyle. Are we overworked? Are we overambitious? Are we poor? Let me start on why I chose to write this. A 14 year old girl was found dead in a school toilet, in June 2019, who had killed herself in a very brutal way with a 3 page long suicide note. There she had apologised to her parents for not being able to fulfil their dreams and that she was exhausted and she needed sleep. That bright and beautiful girl could have been saved. She may not have been an IAS/ Doctor/ Engineer, but she could have been an artist or a writer. We, as a society, failed her and many others like her. We shun the topic of mental disorders like its taboo. We ignore the first signs and symptoms of depression and so do our close friends and relatives. All she needed was some psychiatric help and maybe less pressure from her parents. As the new generation of parents, we must make sure that we and our children do not fall prey to such extreme circumstances. There is a long gap between depression and suicide, and timely intervention can turn your life around. I know this because I too was 14 once and used to sit in the same classroom as her and chose to visit a therapist when I noticed the symptoms. I was lucky that my therapist was so good that it took me 1 week of sessions with her to overcome all that stress. And on my 15th birthday, our school newspaper had published articles by me and her on the same page. We congratulated each other over chocolate.

Human emotions are like the ECG plots, sometimes up, sometimes down. Life throws challenges at us and we overcome some, we cannot overcome others. And its not our job to overcome each and every challenge. Sometimes we can sit back and let life win the challenge. We will experience grief, stress, elation, joy. However happiness is born out of our interpretation of each of these emotions. Close your eyes and evaluate the good and the bad of every situation and then focus on the positives. In the various shades of grey that our life passes through happiness lurks camouflaged in every shade waiting to be discovered.

Do not compromise on happiness. Be it a job, a place, a relationship, if it is not making you happy you either leave or you adjust. And there is ALWAYS an alternative. We are too lazy to find it. And when in doubt keep calm and trust your peers, they will give you the necessary cheers and say “This too shall pass.” As a friend, relative, parent, it is very important to notice the signs and symptoms of depression and counsel our loved ones out of it or motivate them to seek professional help. There is light and dark in everything, choose light and choose to show light to those wandering helplessly in the dark.

“Those who realise the self are always satisfied. Happiness can only be found within self.” ~ Bhagavad Gita

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