

Happiness and Healthiness

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What connects the factors that are important in our lives? Is happiness only possible when we are healthy? Is there truth to the adage “A sound mind in a sound body”? What does our appearance have to do with it? Many questions, and one could formulate many more. I am going to try to offer some ideas from my therapeutic work and perhaps a few answers. However, the following remarks do not claim to be comprehensive.

Our values have changed in recent years. Striving for happiness, health and joy are at the top of our rankings of life goals. Advertising, the internet, television and such are constantly reminding us just how important these needs are. They show us many ideals we are supposed to achieve. Consumerist society is selling us the idea that possessions open the door to happiness. Is that really true? In our haste to fit the requirement profiles, we are often quick to lose touch with ourselves. Our fast-paced age also poses a particular challenge. Faster, better, bigger, more optimised, more perfect and more connected are some of the key words that drive us forward. Our rhythm is getting faster and faster and we are always chasing time.

In my opinion, this leads to the important question: “Have we become functional units and expectation fulfillment machines?” I created these two terms several years ago, in the course of my work. Expectations set for us by parents, friends, employers, society, social media etc. Do we as individuals fall by the wayside? Do humans as such fall by the wayside? What does being human mean in this society? Do individuals still have spaces where they can be themselves, without feeling pressure or the

need to fulfill any kind of expectations? Does this freedom exist? Did it ever exist? And what about our own needs? Do we take time for ourselves? Who controls our time?

In the following, I am going to illuminate some aspects and try to answer some questions or offer ideas. However, I do not claim to be comprehensive here. Questions open doors. Questions open the door to possibilities. Questions don't need to be answered immediately. They can inspire us to change our perspective, take a step in our personal development; they can stir our curiosity, make life more colourful and point to or open doors to new possibilities. All coins have two sides. This one does, too. Questions can scare us and make us freeze etc.

The list is long, and I'll gladly leave it to your imagination and creativity. I want to emphasize that we can look at situations and occurrences from different perspectives. There is always a positive and negative side. We live in a polar world, and without this polarity, life wouldn't be possible. We often forget that, focussing just on one side and pretending as if the other side didn't (doesn't?) exist.

First of all, I would like to explain a few terms before discussing various questions.

The definition of happiness

I would like to offer you a few different definitions of happiness, because a single definite definition doesn't exist.

Albert Einstein

Happiness is what makes you smile.

Desiderius Erasmus

Happiness requires a man's readiness to be what he is.

Michael Tepassee

The most important requirement of happiness is gratitude.

Marcus Aurelius

Your life's happiness is determined by the nature of your thoughts.

Albert Schweitzer

Happiness is the only thing that doubles when it is shared.

Ludwig Feuerbach

Your first duty is to make yourself happy. If you are happy, you can make others happy, too.

Unknown

True happiness is based on the treasures you collect in your heart. Being happy doesn't mean having the best of everything, but making the best of everything.

Happiness is that feeling that comes over you when you know life is good and you can't help but smile. Happiness is a sense of well-being, joy or contentment. When people are successful, or safe, or lucky, they feel happiness. Different people feel happiness for different reasons. Supreme happiness: feeling blessed.

This small selection of definitions of happiness shows how subjective the matter is. It is strongly dependent on the current mood. Biochemically speaking, happiness is (the?) merely the presence of 'happiness hormones' (serotonin, dopamine, oxytocin and endorphin). It is possible to influence personal

feelings of happiness with your own thoughts and actions.

What are the requirements for being happy?

Is happiness always connected to being "successful" and "healthy"? Does happiness mean the same for everybody?

Living conditions, such as daily noise exposure, the commute to school/work, the quality of personal relationships and our communication, our spirituality and many other factors influence our feeling of happiness. Activities such as sports, music, creativity etc. also play a role, as well as gratitude, mindfulness and many more.

The story of the smiling stone

Once upon a time, there was a mysterious village of happy dwarves. They always gave each other little smiling stones.

The recipient was happy, because the smiling stone smiled at him, and joyful in the knowledge that the other dwarf liked him. It always used to be this way. Every dwarf gave a smiling stone to another and received one in return. The precious stones of joy never ran out.

But near the joyful village lived a sinister fellow. Misery and envy were his constant companions. He couldn't understand the joy, the loving community of the little dwarves and begrudged them their carefree life.

Once, as a dwarf walked through the woods, he met the sinister fellow and gave him a smiling stone to make him happy. But the dark forest dweller did not take the stone, but whispered into the dwarf's ear,

"If you give your stones to anyone and everyone, you will soon have none left."

That wasn't true, of course, because if you give something, you always get something in return. It was the same with the smiling stones. But the words of the sinister fellow had sowed a seed of discord. The smiling stones were no longer freely given, but kept in their pouch. Soon, everybody went on their way without looking after the other - the smiles vanished; everybody was just busy amassing more possessions.

Discontent, reticence, joylessness - those were the new traits of this once so loving and happy people. Many years passed. People rushed through life. They didn't look left nor right. „Help yourself and you've done a good deed," they all thought.

But somewhere in the deep slumbers the story of the happy little people with their smiling stones. An old man had heard the story from his father, who had heard it from his mother...

This old man told the "Tale of the good ancestors" to his granddaughter. Quiet and pensive, she went to work. In her pottery shed, where she usually made jugs and bowls, she shaped small, smiling clay faces. Then she went out and gave the little smiling stones to her friends.

At first, people laughed at her a little and called her a harmless lunatic. but some people liked the idea. The smiling stones made them happier, even when they just touched them in their pockets. More and more people began to give smiling stones again - and with them the gift of joy, laughter, love and courage.

Author unknown

Definition of health

Definitions of health also vary greatly. Here are a few definitions of health that I found on the internet.

For many people, health is the absence of illness. This is the view espoused by the medical-scientific model used in the Western world. In 1946, the World Health Organization (WHO) defined health as "condition of complete physical, mental and social well-being, not just the absence of illness."

Scientists in the field take the view that health must be seen in a holistic way. This means that various influences and the interaction of these influences must be taken into account. These influences can be differentiated as individual factors (physical, mental, social), societal factors (e.g. peace, income, integration or marginalisation) and environmental factors (living conditions, traffic etc.)

According to Jürgen Freiherr von Troschke (1996) "health can be understood as a somatic, mental and social ability to shape and handle life."

Klaus Hurrelmann (2000) defined health as "the condition of a person's objective and subjective being, which is present when the person has balanced their physical, mental and social development with their opportunities, goals and respective external living conditions. Health is compromised when one or more of these areas face challenges that the person cannot handle and master given their current life phase. This detriment can, but doesn't have to manifest in social, mental and/or physical abnormalities."

According to these definitions, a person is healthy when their risk factors and protection factors (resources) are in balance. It is important to keep

finding or maintaining that balance. Thus, health is not merely a wish or life goal, but an essential part of daily life.

Definition of illness

There is much more of a consensus regarding the definition of illness. It is interesting to note that there are many illnesses, but only one health, so to speak.

The definition I find to be the most powerful and comprehensive, is the one according to Hans Kruppa:

Illness is a symptom of a life gone astray. It slows down the speed of movement in the wrong direction, because a slower life can find the way back to itself. The body refuses further superficiality and forces life to go deeper.

The definition of illness according to the Shipibo is interesting as well. They define illness not as the individual fate of a person determined by happenstance, but as an expression of a problem in the community. When one member of the community continues to be sick, the entire community feels responsible. It is never seen as a personal problem.

This approach to defining illness was a strong influence on me and goes far beyond the approach of current mainstream medicine. Conventional medical methods search for the external causes of an illness, e.g. germs, genetic defects, metabolic issues etc. And in many cases, there is no external factor. In keeping with this approach, therapies are being developed, which should fight the root cause, but mostly end up treating symptoms.

Here are a few examples: Antibiotics, antidepressants, antihistamines, antihypertensives. I'm sure you noticed that all of these are "anti", meaning that it is all about the fight.

At this point, I would like to state explicitly that having conventional medicine is a good and important thing and that we need to use it whenever necessary. Just take surgery, for instance. Developments in this field are excellent. Our conventional modern medicine is outstanding in the fields of acute and emergency care. However, it is a dilemma of modern conventional medicine that it treats the body or the psyche - "either-or".

Does health always comprise body, mind and soul? Our perception was informed by the concept of "sound mind in a sound body". We must question this. In my long career, I have been fortunate enough to experience that people with disabilities can also have a positive outlook on life and be happy. So, we must ask what fears and concepts are behind the above creed that is so deeply rooted in our society.

Through many years of experience, I have come to be convinced that healing the mind and soul must be the priority in order to allow the body to follow suit. It doesn't have to follow though. The field of psychosomatics shows us how stress, trauma, negative feelings and concepts can influence our body and make us sick. Before discussing this any further, I would like to say a few things about psychoneuroimmunology and epigenetics.

Psychoneuroimmunology

Psychoneuroimmunology is a branch of modern psychosomatics. It is concerned with neuronal and

biochemical communication channels between a person's mind, brain and immune system. The brain, mind and immune system are closely connected. The goal of this complex system is protecting the organism and life itself from constant dangers and stressors. Regulation of these factors is closely connected to the mechanisms of processing stress. These results support the position that alternative medicine and energy medicine need to be used in more cases. The findings of psychoneuroimmunology confirm the insight of many millennia that body and soul are a unit. Current research points to the necessity of treating people in their entirety.

Epigenetics

The brain researcher Isabelle Mansuy says the following about epigenetics:

Epigenetics tells us - You can change your life. Deep within your own body. We are born with certain genes, but we are able to influence their effect. This requires changes in our behaviour, mainly

- a sensible diet,
- social interaction,
- a healthy lifestyle,
- the insight that you don't want to work yourself to death, just so you can afford to keep up with the Joneses and
- being aware that life is finite.

Simply put, epigenetics studies the impact of the environment, the soul and the mind on our genes. Lifestyle, human relationships and experiences influence genes and the immune system. Genes need to be activated and deactivated. These "on and off switches" of the genes (epigenetic influences) depend on a person's thoughts and emotions and, ultimately, even on their spirituality.

Apart from fixed genetic codes, there are others - dynamic, epigenetic codes. In the course of our own individual lives, these epigenetic changes allow cells to react to environmental changes and factors without the need to change the DNA. Epigenetic modifications play an essential role in controlling the development processes in plants, animals and humans. Epigenetic programs also control important reproductive phases and early embryogenesis, which is why they are crucial for stem cell biology.

The discovery of epigenetic controls of genes and the cell functions connected to them points to vast potential for practical and pioneering medical applications. With the results of medical research and quantum physics, energy and alternative naturopathic medicine becomes more and more accessible and comprehensible.

Symptoms are seen as guideposts pointing to the needs of our soul, not as annoyances that need to be eliminated. Illness can bear many gifts, if we change our perspective, focus on the moment and rid ourselves of the fixed idea that our bodies need to be in a certain state. This change of perspective can heal.

Health is a process, just as healing is a process that needs the involvement of the entire person (body-soul-mind). This process requires great mindfulness and care. A process is something we integrate into our lives - such as making a habit of a healthy diet, inner purification exercises or a fitness regimen - and keeping it up. The medical approach of the future will involve electromagnetic diagnostics and therapy, combined with methods of treating our consciousness. Two thousand years ago, the Buddha said, "We are shaped and moulded by our thoughts."

Switching genes on and off is influenced by inside and outside conditions. Inner conditions include the emotional, biochemical, mental, energetic and spiritual landscape of a person. Outside conditions include the social network and ecosystem in which the person dwells. Examples include diet, toxins and social rituals. Every day, our thoughts and emotions influence our genes, just as our family, work life etc. The discovery that our genetic activity largely depends on factors outside of our cells, turned the dogma of genetic determinism on its head. DNA is not destiny. However, positive epigenetic changes require favourable conditions as mentioned above.

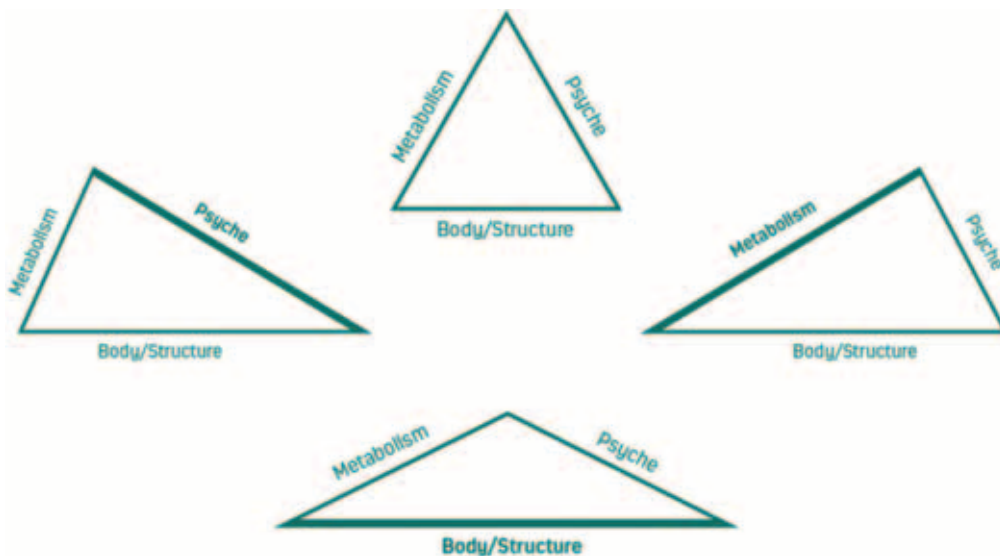
Every minute, about a million cells die in our bodies. And every minute, a similar number of cells are created. All cells are periodically replaced. If self-destructive habits and emotions, as well as external events, conveyed bad epigenetic signals to the old cells, it is possible to generate healthier new cells with positive epigenetic signals.

When we change our minds and psyches, we also renew ourselves on an epigenetic level. All decisions we make, consciously and unconsciously, in all phases of our lives have significant epigenetic consequences.

The conscious decision of questioning ourselves and paying attention to the pointers our body gives us is essential. I like to say that the soul can neither speak nor write. It uses our body to tell us when something is amiss. If we pay attention to the signals and treat our body with care, we can prevent diseases. It is our responsibility.

The health triangle

This graphic shows that it is all about balance, i.e. being and remaining balanced. This simple illustration shows how one influences the other. If there is a great stressor on the psychic level, it has an impact on the structure of the body. And the metabolism is affected as well. If we are under constant stress, we



develop the so-called stress metabolism. All of this affects our emotional life and our psychic state. I would like to point out here that everything is connected and that we should never just look at one isolated thing. It is important to perceive and consider human beings in their entirety of body, soul and mind. Research continues in the fields of epigenetics and psychoneuroimmunology, and these findings are confirmed.

Let me come back to epigenetics. Simply put, epigenetics is concerned with the influence of external circumstances on our genetics. Which now poses the question.

What are external circumstances and situations?

As humans, we must also be seen as organs of perception. We experience situations through our senses and our experiences have direct emotional effects. We react to our environment, catastrophes, stressful situations and the like in physiological and psychological ways that have a direct physical effect. We feel and assess in any situation - and we make decisions, consciously and unconsciously. This means that we make judgements on everything that is and everything that isn't.

Allow me to repeat that we can all be considered as organs of perception. Our sensations (emotions/feelings) and our resulting assessments and decisions determine who we are. Each of us makes an impression on others. But we tend to forget just how much we are directed by our emotions and that we show them on the outside. Very few among us walk this earth with a poker face. We decided early on, in our childhood, through what kind of "glasses" we will see the world. Put very simply - is the glass half full or half empty.

This may be one of the reasons why insights are a good thing but don't necessarily change things in our lives. Rational decisions are often not sweeping enough for us to be willing to give our lives new drive or a new direction. The most important decisions are made on the unconscious level. They depend on our emotional experience of life situations and on our interpretations and judgements of them. And on the decisions based on these things.

To illustrate human behaviour, I like to use the metaphor of the apple tree.

- It doesn't matter to the tree whether the apples are grown big or small, whether they meet food industry standards, whether the apples are smooth or rough with spots - it just keeps making apples every year.
- The tree doesn't care whether the apples are picked or fall to the ground, whether birds will eat them - it just keeps making apples every year.
- It doesn't suddenly decide to make pears or square tomatoes - it just keeps making apples every year.
- It does what it was meant to do.

What does the metaphor of the apple tree have to do with us?

We all grow up in a world of expectations. We learn to define ourselves through accomplishments and success. We want to be praised and receive recognition. The question is what do our accomplishments have to do with us? Do the accomplishments touch on who we really are? What is the real point?

Is it about me or about me as a functional unit and expectation fulfillment machines (asylum)?

I created the term 'expectation fulfillment machines'. The apple tree of our metaphor doesn't care about

expectations and accomplishments, but just does what it was meant to do - it makes apples.

From which vantage point does each of us see the world?

Through what kind of glasses do we look at it? How we perceive the world is an individual and unconscious decision made in our early childhood. As I said, our perception is a choice - is the glass half full or half empty. That also means that there are different realities, different worlds in which we live. Here is an example: Siblings describe their parents. In many cases, it sounds as if they are talking about completely different people. In my work, I often see how our view of things, our perspective, shapes the impression we make on others and our personal presence.

Our presence is an expression of our inner attitude, our emotional and mental balance or imbalance. People around us pick up on that. We are oscillation patterns. We react to people and perceive their presence. We do not just perceive it with our senses, but also with our bodies. We all say things like "she's/he's not on my wavelength", "she's/he's unbalanced" or "I wouldn't want to meet him".

Here are a few illustrations from Stanley Keleman's book "Emotional Anatomy - The Structure of Experience". Take in those pictures for a moment and try to be open and be curious to experience their effect.

The decision process

We interpret, evaluate, judge and decide always and constantly, but most of the time unknowingly. We are always making decisions about everything consciously and unconsciously about everything



what is and not is. The assumption is that we start making decisions while developing in utero during pregnancy. The foetus reacts to certain states of the pregnant woman. What she eats, how she handles stress or conflicts, how she reacts to her environment etc. This means that the foetus has its basic needs, such as food, safety, connection, belong to, met through the umbilical cord, yet still reacts to the world outside via the mother. Birth is a tremendous challenge for mother and child and leaves a lasting impression on all involved.

In my experience, cutting the umbilical cord is an extremely important act. From this moment on, having all needs met is no longer completely assured.

The new-born has all necessary abilities to get his or her mother to meet these needs. Hormonal changes in the mother's body support this. Ideally, mother and child bond after birth. They get to know each other, find their wave length and their life together begins.

Apparently, the child's basic decision about the perspective/point of view from which it will approach life happens very early. Is "the glass half full or half empty?" This seems to be rooted deep in the subconscious and appears to be manifest in the cell memory. This basic point of view influences our entire life.

Needs

There are basic needs that ensure our survival, such as warmth, shelter, food, sleep, comfort, belonging, support, self-determination, identity, freedom and others. We are imprinted to expect that our needs are met from the outside, i.e. by others. This expectation is so basic that it goes unquestioned for a long time. It is an unconscious process. As adults, our crises often offer us a chance to change our perspective (as an "update"). We can come to the realization that we must, first and foremost meet our own needs. This liberates us and makes us less susceptible to manipulation. Sometimes, our imprints, habits and entanglements are so strong that we keep meeting the needs of others. Or on the opposite we manage that others fulfil our needs. Years ago, I coined the terms "functional unit" and "expectation fulfillment machines/asylum". Phrases like "If you love me, you will..." fall in this category. How do we react to these conditional assertions? As children, we hear many confusing mixed messages (double binds).

In our culture of conspicuous consumption, the soul often remains hungry despite the chance of material wealth. One possible question is whether pain can be perceived as an unmet need. Our vulnerability in the face of unmet needs is very valuable, because without it we harden inside. The strategy of not feeling anything might have been occasionally useful in childhood, but as an adult, I am able to meet my own needs and "update" my perspective. Here, vulnerability doesn't mean weakness, but the strength to effect change. It is a basic condition of being able to choose different interpretations, evaluations and concepts and progress in our development, i.e. a constructive life path (glass is half full).

Value judgements

My (value) judgements keep me from accepting everything what might be possible. Our view of the word, glass half full or half empty, influences our interpretation and judgement of situations. Is a life without judgement possible? We judge all the time. We can become aware of it and learn to be mindful with it.

The two wolves

An old Cherokee sits by the fire with his little granddaughter. He wants to tell her something about life. He says, "In our lives, two wolves fight with each other. The first wolf is hatred, distrust, enmity, fear and struggle. The second wolf is love, trust, friendship, hope and peace." The little girl watches the fire for a while, then asks, "So, which wolf wins?" The old man is silent. After a while, he says, "The one you feed."

What about stress? What is stress and how does it impact our view of the world? How does our basic decision influence how we handle stress?

First of all, stress just means a change in our environmental conditions to which we react, meaning that there is positive and negative stress. Basically, everybody is able to handle stress. Alternating between phases of activity and rest (or) is essential. The impact on our survival reflexes, our fight, flight, and play-dead reflexes (instincts), is crucial for our survival strategy, apart from our unmet needs that we would like to see met by others.

A compact encyclopaedia of biology defines stress as follows:

(stressors or stress factors). In the early stages, stress can be seen as a “physical expression of a general mobilization of the organism's protective powers” (Selye) Stress is a phenomenon that can be observed in animals and plants. The stress factors are often the same.

The survival reflexes

The survival reflexes are reactions to a threat. In life-threatening situations, the body supplies the necessary energy at a moment's notice. The body perceives a threat and triggers a cascade of physical and mental reactions. Every situation we encounter is quickly judged on an emotional level in order to decide whether it is dangerous or not, friend or foe.

For me, stress is a changed environment and living situation that can change at any time. However, there is positive and negative stress. In the case of danger and/or stress, a human has three options: Fight, flight or play dead. In mankind's early days, all three reflexes had to work automatically. I like to tell

the story of the sabretooth tiger. When a sabretooth tiger came along, humans didn't have time to strategize and make a plan how to handle the situation. A reasonable solution that had the greatest chance of survival had to be found automatically: Fight, flight, or play dead. These reflexes are still deeply rooted in us today. We know this from stressful situations in everyday life: We would like to attack the other person or flee from the situation or crawl into a hole and be invisible. Or we are insulted and aggressive, react with a blackout, insensitivity, monotone speech, trivialization etc.

In defining situations, in which our feelings are hurt, in which we are insulted, desperate or angry, we also activate one of these reflexes, which influence our survival strategies. Our survival strategy is also influenced by our needs in the respective situation. Some people made the unconscious decision to fight. They tend to be more easily annoyed or angered and can exhibit a thirst for power or similar traits. Other people choose the play dead reflex in defining situations. When stressed they tend to react with sluggishness, they withdraw and they may become depressed. Possibly they tend more than others to traumatization. They feel helpless and powerless facing the situation etc. If the flight reflex is selected, the person will try to escape the unpleasant situation and remains vague and elusive. When working with people, it is important to take these survival reflexes into account. These reflexes are still important today, but they should go back into sleep mode after use and wait until they are needed again. Given the high stress level of everyday life, these reflexes are always active in some people. A constructive approach to the innate survival reflexes is desirable and worth striving for as well as working on the needs.

My model of the car with just one gear

When we are born and begin to find our bearings in the world, we make many unconscious decisions. If, for instance, bonding with the mother doesn't work so well, we choose a survival strategy early on. We want to survive, and children are brilliant, because they know instinctively, which strategy will secure their survival. We usually keep that survival strategy. In my work, I like to illustrate this with the example of the car with just one gear. We can run this survival gear at high revs, normal revs or low revs. It is still one and the same gear. It is the survival gear - and we did survive. But there comes a moment when we want to live. That's different.

Our cars have five or six gears which we use depending on the driving situation. It is on us to add life strategies/gears.

How prepared am I to change my point of view?

Usually, a crisis leads us to a point where we can make new decisions. I like to illustrate this opportunity with a story or metaphor of the path of life.

The story of the points of view

A mother from an affluent family took her daughter out into the country to show her how poor people lived. They stayed with a poor family on a farm for a few days. After the trip, the mother asked her daughter, "How did you like our little trip?" - "I liked it a lot, Mama." "Did you see how poor people live?" asked the mother. "Sure!", the daughter replied. "Well, tell me what you have learned." The child said, "I noticed that they have four dogs, but we have only one. We have a pool in the garden, but they have an almost endlessly long brook at their doorstep. We have lanterns in our garden, but they have stars that shine much brighter in the night. Our yard stretches

to our garden gate, but theirs stretches to the horizon. We have a small property, but their fields reach as far as the eye can see. We have servants, who prepare our food, but they grow food for others. We have to go to the shop when we are hungry. Their food grows right in their garden. We have a wall protecting our property, but they live in a good neighbourhood and don't need walls." The mother was dumbfounded. The daughter added, "Thank you, Mama. Now I see just how poor we are." Poverty is not about having little, but about needing a lot.

Peter Rosegger

Is happiness the key to success? How do we define individual success?

Success is something different for everybody. While some define success through their economic accomplishments, others see it in their personal relationships, projects, social activism etc. Basically, it can be said that people, who follow their calling, are happier. Happy people are more relaxed at work and handle challenges more calmly.

UBUNTU: I am, because we are

A European researcher offered a game to hungry children of an African tribe. He put a basket with sweet fruit under a tree and told them: First one at the tree wins all the fruit. When he gave them the start signal, they took each other's hands, ran together, sat down and enjoyed the treats. When he asked them why they had all run together even though each of them had had the chance to win the whole fruit basket, they said, "Ubuntu - how can one of us be happy, when all others are sad." In their culture, Ubuntu means: "I am, because we are."

Source unknown

What does our everyday life look like with a claim to happiness and health?

Do we obsessively pursue a permanent state that advertising presents to us as desirable? It is possible to work on ourselves to increasingly achieve a state of mindfulness and acceptance and end the constant war within us. The stream of thoughts going back and forth in our minds is what I call our "mental movie". We need to be willing and committed to keep looking at it. For me, one of the most important questions we can ask is, "What does this have to do with me?"

Deceleration is a buzzword - but is that even still possible? Where are our old values? Have they served their time? Who am I without all this? Am I happy about how the digital world rules my life?

These are just a few of the questions each person can only answer for themselves. The question of the Canadian healer Oriah Mountain Dreamer is evocative:

We are not just defined by our work, but by all roles we have chosen for ourselves, more or less consciously. Is a person in a leadership position, for instance, who rushes from one appointment to the next and tries to fulfil all requirements, even capable of dealing with themselves and their life? Is a threatening illness, a burnout or another defining crisis necessary to rip a person from their "accustomed" life? When that happens, people often miss the rat race, which is like a drug. The person is driven by the idea that they must get back to work immediately and all other ideas are first dismissed as pipe dreams.

How are happiness and health connected to each other? What is the effect of gratitude? How does our immune system react to it? Epigenetics and

psychoneuroimmunology prove without a doubt that happiness has a positive influence on our immune system and our entire well-being. The same goes for gratitude.

What are the effects of the internet and social networks? Am I happy about how the digital world rules my life?

Companies like Google promise search results, contact to friends, maps, love, success fitness, discounts and much more. Is that really true? Opportunities and chances are sacrificed to probabilities. Is it still possible to have individuality, self-determination and autonomy?

The digital age has one rule: No matter what the problem is, there is a technological solution for it. Is that really true? Does the whole individual still play a role here?

How did the smartphone change the world? Social networks are the most popular online services, mainly due to their interactivity. The user creates a profile and feeds it with personal information. The user uploads it and makes it - and him- or herself - public. Then the user connects and becomes visible to everybody.

The internet is the dominant medium. We can't imagine life without it. Do social media make us forget our social skills?

New technologies can have a lasting effect on our life. And they strongly influence direct communication. Of course, social networks have their pros and cons. The question how social networks influence our personal life, our social behaviour, our society and our life does not really have a clear answer. But it is clear that social networks take up a lot of our time.

Regarding our technological and increasingly digitized world, there are still many unanswered questions, which might not even have been asked yet. Still, they concern each and every one of us personally. Do I still decide what I want to communicate or is the social pressure and non-perception of our own inner limits so huge that we share too much of ourselves?

Conclusion:

EACH HUMAN BEING IS AN INDIVIDUA AND HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE THEIR OWN DECISION.