

**From the book: *The Untethered Soul – The Journey Beyond Yourself*
by Michael A. Singer**

**Excerpt from Chapter 15:
*The Path of Unconditional Happiness***

The highest spiritual path is life itself. If you know how to live daily life, it all becomes a liberating experience. But first you have to approach life properly, or it can be very confusing. To begin with, you have to realize that you really only have one choice in this life, and it's not about your career, whom you want to marry, or whether you want to seek God. People tend to burden themselves with so many choices. But, in the end, you can throw it all away and just make one basic, underlying decision: Do you want to be happy, or do you not want to be happy? It's really that simple. Once you make that choice, your path through life becomes totally clear.

Most people don't dare give themselves that choice because they think it's not under their control. Someone might say, "Well, of course I want to be happy, but my wife left me." In other words, they want to be happy, but not if their wife leaves them. But that wasn't the question. The question was, very simply, "Do you want to be happy or not?" If you keep it that simple, you will see that it really is under your control. It's just that you have a deep-seated set of preferences that gets in the way.

Let's say you've been lost and without food for days, and you finally find your way to a house. You can hardly make it to the doorstep, but you manage to pull yourself up and knock on the door. Somebody opens the door, looks at you and says, "Oh my God! You poor thing! Do you want something to eat? What would you like?" Now the truth is, you really don't care what they give you. You don't even want to think about it. You just utter the word "food." And because you really mean it when you say you need food, it no longer has anything to do with your mental preferences. The same goes for the question about happiness. The question is simply "Do you want to be happy?" If the answer is really yes, then say it without qualifying it. After all, what the question really means is "Do you want to be happy from this point forward for the rest of your life, regardless of what happens?"

Now, if you say yes, it might happen that your wife leaves you, or your husband dies, or the stock market crashes, or your car breaks down on an open highway at night. Those things might happen between now and the end of your life. But if you want to walk the highest spiritual path, then when you answer yes to that simple question, you must really mean it. There are no ifs, ands, or buts about it. It's not a question of whether your happiness is under your control. Of course it's under your control. It's just that you don't really mean it when you say you're willing to stay happy. You want to qualify it. You want to say that as long as this doesn't happen, or as long as that does happen, then you're willing to be happy. That's why it seems like it is out of your control. Any condition you create will limit your happiness. You simply aren't going to be able to control things and keep them the way you want them.

You have to give an unconditional answer. If you decide that you're going to be happy from now on for the rest of your life, you will not only be happy, you will become enlightened. Unconditional happiness is the highest technique there is. You don't have to learn Sanskrit or read any scriptures. You don't have to renounce the world. You just have to really mean it when you say that you choose to be happy. And you have to mean it regardless of what happens. This is truly a spiritual path, and it is as direct and sure a path to Awakening as could possibly exist. Once you decide you want to be unconditionally happy, something inevitably will happen that challenges you. This test of your commitment is exactly what stimulates spiritual growth. In fact, it is the unconditional aspect of your commitment that makes this the highest path. It's so simple. You just have to decide whether or not you will break your vow. When everything is going well, it's easy to be happy. But the moment something difficult happens, it's not so easy. You tend to find yourself saying, "But I didn't know this was going to happen. I didn't think I'd miss my flight. I didn't think Sally would show up at the party wearing the same dress that I had on. I didn't think that somebody would dent my brand-new car one hour after I got it." Are you really willing to break your vow of happiness because these events took place?

Billions of things could happen that you haven't even thought of yet. The question is not whether they will happen. Things are going to happen. The real question is whether you want to be happy regardless of what happens. The purpose of your life is to enjoy and learn from your experiences. You were not put on Earth to suffer. You're not helping anybody by being miserable. Regardless of your philosophical beliefs, the fact remains that you were born and you are going to die. During the time in between, you get to choose whether or not you want to enjoy the experience. Events don't determine whether or not you're going to be happy. They're just events. You determine whether or not you're going to be happy. You can be happy just to be alive. You can be happy having all these things happen to you, and then be happy to die. If you can live this way, your heart will be so open and your Spirit will be so free, that you will soar up to the heavens.

This path leads you to absolute transcendence because any part of your being that would add a condition to your commitment to happiness has got to go. If you want to be happy, you have to let go of the part of you that wants to create melodrama. This is the part that thinks there's a reason not to be happy. You have to transcend the personal, and as you do, you will naturally awaken to the higher aspects of your being. In the end, enjoying life's experiences is the only rational thing to do. You're sitting on a planet spinning around in the middle of absolutely nowhere. Go ahead, take a look at reality. You're floating in empty space in a universe that goes on forever. If you have to be here, at least be happy and enjoy the experience. You're going to die anyway. Things are going to happen anyway. Why shouldn't you be happy? You gain nothing by being bothered by life's events. It doesn't change the world; you just suffer. There's always going to be something that can bother you, if you let it.

This choice to enjoy life will lead you through your spiritual journey. In truth, it is itself a spiritual teacher. Committing yourself to unconditional happiness will teach you every single thing there is to learn about yourself, about others, and about the nature of life. You will learn all about your mind, your heart, and your will. But you have to mean it when you say that you'll be happy for the rest of your life. Every time a part of you begins to get unhappy, let it go. Work with it. Use affirmations, or do whatever you need to do to stay open. If you

are committed, nothing can stop you. No matter what happens, you can choose to enjoy the experience. If they starve you and put you in solitary confinement, just have fun being like Gandhi. No matter what happens, just enjoy the life that comes to you.

As difficult as that sounds, what's the benefit of not doing it? If you're totally innocent and they lock you up, you might as well have fun. What good does it do to not have fun? It doesn't change anything. In the end, if you stay happy, you win. Make that your game, and just stay happy no matter what.