

## **Am I Happy?**

**January 31, 2016**

I want to tell you about a client I had last week. Her name is Maria and she told me she's 76 years old. First I was aware of her mother in spirit, who gave plenty of evidence about herself, more than enough for Maria to identify her. Her mother acknowledged her own critical nature and asked Maria for understanding about that. We had a nice visit with her mother, and despite their rocky relationship Maria wanted to make sure her mother was happy in Heaven.

A little later her father came through, whom Maria adored. She cared for him before he died and missed him greatly and hoped that he was happy in Heaven too, because he and her mother had a hard marriage. Then the uncles and friends, and a couple of grandparents dropped in.

Maria wanted to keep the focus on her parents so I asked them to stay foremost in my mind with more evidence of their lives and meaningful insight for her.

As we got near the end of our hour together I asked Maria if she had any final questions for me, and she burst into tears and with a kind of desperation she asked, "Are my parents happy?"

This always takes me by surprise, though it's happened probably hundreds of times in the years I've been working as a medium. The question surprises me because the answer seems obvious, in part because of the information I translate. The content of the evidence and message seems almost like a no-brainer. I'm also surprised by the question because we're not physical human beings in the Afterlife, in the same broken bodies or broken relationships or broken hearts.

Usually people who come for a mediumship reading already have some sort of belief in the Afterlife. Makes sense right? Many are Christians, or were raised Christian. Not all, but most have a least a passing familiarity with Heaven. And a large part of traditional religious belief is that Heaven is a reward. A client comes to me with some belief in place that their loved ones can appear and communicate through a medium, and that place is probably not Hell, and yet...

Are they happy? Is she happy?

I get that question far more than other questions like:

are they proud of me?

do they know my children?

is it okay that I got divorced?

Those questions arise, but predominantly I hear, "Are they happy?"

After finishing up with Maria I started to think more about the subject of happiness, and why it seems so pressing a question for our loved ones in the spirit world. In some readings this comes up because the person was indeed unhappy before dying, but the majority seemed centered on

the living person's profound wish that the experience in the afterlife is one of unquestionable happiness.

My client Maria's eyes were brimming with tears when she begged me -- more than once -- to check if her mother and father were happy in the spirit world. It was then that I heard her, and every client, a little bit differently. And that was, "Does happiness await *me* when I get to Heaven?"

Why is happiness so elusive? Or, maybe more importantly, why are we okay with struggling now, as long as we get some on the other side? Three answers come to mind as I asked myself these questions:

First, happiness difficult to measure. I think that's because most of us don't check in with our own happiness, *except in hindsight or in comparison*. I just did this myself; I thought back to a time when my dad was alive and our family was all still in one place and we had the habit of sitting around after dinner playing board games. I thought to myself exactly these words: "Those were happy times. I was so happy then." I'm happy now, too, but in hindsight, I was *truly* happy then. So we either look back at a time when we were happy (and didn't know it) or compare ourselves to others we know who seem happier than we do.

Happiness is difficult to measure except in hindsight or comparison.

What if you checked in with yourself more frequently, not in hindsight or comparison, but asked yourself on your morning walk, "Am I happy?" Even if you don't have an answer right away, or your answer is, "Of course," -- or even if your answer is "No, I'm not," just asking the question regularly sets your subconscious mind on the task of discovery and healing. The more you make this question a part of your regular self-inventory, the more likely you are to spontaneously recognize and enjoy happiness.

The second reason happiness may be elusive is that some of us expect suffering. We come to expect -- through previous experience, religious traditions, or general pessimism -- that life is supposed to be a struggle, and that only in death will we find rest.

I dated a guy for a long time who always used to say, "Relationships are *hard*. They are hard, hard work and you can just never give up." So we worked hard on our relationship and stayed on in it much longer than either of us should have. It was exhausting, boring, and instead of being inviting in its safety and security, I found myself avoiding him and our time together as much as I could. Who said relationships are supposed to be hard, and that happiness in relationships only comes amid ongoing struggle? I never felt that love was supposed to be such hard work, but I bought into his viewpoint and doubted my own intuition which was practically screaming at me: "You guys don't belong together!"

We also frequently expect suffering at work. “Just be lucky you have a job!” we hear. Who cares if you hate it. I have a client who hates her job as a public school teacher so much she has anxiety attacks that cause her to black out. Her response? “I’ve got good benefits and a good pension, and I get to be home with the kids in the summer. Besides, it’s a job. I’m not supposed to like it.”

If the regular answer is “No” when you ask yourself, “Am I happy?” follow that question up with another one: “What do I expect in my job or relationship?” Even if you don’t have the answer, keep asking it. Pose it to your higher mind, to God, to the Wise Mind of your Soul. “Am I unhappy because I expect to be?”

Don’t analyze or search for the answer, just ask and wait in patient silence. See what comes up. Your intellectual rational mind may want to fill in the blanks ASAP. The rational mind hates unanswered questions. If you hear your own response as one of rationalization, comparison, or judgment -- that’s a signal that your conscious mind wants to tidy up the incomplete mess of your question. Ask it again anyway.

Because happiness is not created in the conscious mind. It’s a feeling flowing through the subconscious mind that is there, waiting to be rediscovered.

The third reason happiness may be elusive is that we believe we don’t deserve it. We have guilt, regret, or grief instead. How dare you be happy if someone you love has died? How dare you laugh and enjoy life if you broke someone’s heart. If you didn’t reconcile with your parent before he died, if you made a grave mistake in your past, if you’re addicted to something or fat or poor or still single because you *still* haven’t found your soul mate or childless because you didn’t want children -- or because you did and you couldn’t have them.

We worry that if we don’t deserve happiness here, how could we possibly be rewarded with it in Heaven?

Listen: You deserve happiness, right now. Spirit people tell us over and over again, please let go of all that stuff that stands in your way. Maria’s parents in spirit were -- I think -- as speechless as I was when she asked that. *Of course* they’re happy. We will be too when we get there. And furthermore, we can enjoy that happiness, bliss, peace, serenity right now while we’re still in physical form. We’re supposed to be joyful, to feel whole and healed.

That’s the comprehensive, entire message, I feel, -- the whole point -- that comes from the field of mediumship, not just the individual messages but the overarching message that comes through from the very evidence of the spirits themselves: This is what life is all about -- this spirit, this unity with God, this compassionate and precious love for one another. That’s it.

God is everything. God, desiring to experience Him/Herself created everything -- that includes you. And God, because He or She is *All That Is*, created out of His own unspeakably beautiful

Self. He made everything with the stuff of Himself. He is perfect, His creations are perfect, you are hHis creation made of Him and therefore your spirit is also perfect.

Let's not measure it with the conscious mind, which rationalizes, analyzes, compares and contrasts. We often make that mistake: when I get a raise I'll be happy; when I'm thinner I'll be happy; when I get my teeth fixed I'll be happy; when I get married I'll be happy. If the measurement is a state of less than or more than... that's not happiness you're measuring.

It's not rocket science. When you feel even momentary peace, when you can't keep from smiling or laughing, when you feel like you did your best -- no matter how insignificant -- that's happiness.

Take a walk in the morning and ask yourself, "Am I happy?" Remind yourself that you can expect happiness and you deserve happiness. Yes, you'll find it when you die, but it's here for you right now, too. You were made for it. It feels good to be happy because we're supposed to feel that way.

Joy is your birthright. An aquifer of happiness sits in your spirit or your subconscious mind, waiting to be drawn from. Every time you ask yourself, "Am I happy?" you're tapping that inexhaustible source. God has provided you with life-affirming, creative joy. Dig down past the rational mind, the expectations, the self-judgment. It's possible to enjoy happiness even when you're working out a financial crisis. It's possible to feel joy even as your conscious mind is occupied with getting a new job, buying a house, or counting calories.

When you ask, "Can I have happiness?" you are giving yourself permission to touch the divine part of your own precious self. And the answer can only be "Of course!"

Amen.