

I'll be happy when...

We spend a lot of our time being in the past or future. We are very rarely right here, right now.

We reflect on the past, turning over what really happened (in our perception) and what was meant by it, we think about how we might have done things differently or reacted differently, and this can either turn into positive memory or a negative one.

We imagine what the future will look like, and this may be based on sound unpredictable information, if all goes to plan, or we may catastrophise and worry ourselves sick about what we think may happen, leading to anxiety.

So what happens when we are truly present without these past or future distractions? Find out in your tranquil moments in meditation.

But what is the root of all this thinking and what is its purpose?

The root of it is a background dissatisfaction, a lack of contentment, wanting something that you don't have, or wanting to get rid of something you do have. We are always adjusting between these poles, trying to get comfortable.

We are always looking for answers, trying to make sense of the world and what happens to us. But for the most part we don't look very deeply, we just rely on old ways of thinking that we have learned, and that we keep repeating - habitual thoughts leading to habitual answers, reactions and responses.

The only way to look more deeply at the root cause of dissatisfaction itself, is through the practice of meditation, opening the attention up to the energy around us, and widening our awareness.

When we widen our awareness, we feel more connected with the world around us in all its amazing complexity. Just as it is, now. When we feel more connected, we feel nourished. When we feel nourished at the core of our being, and we take the time to get in contact with our inherent tranquillity, guess what - the mind begins to quieten.

We need to listen to our heart, not our mind; we need to feel it, not to use words. Then we may begin to realise that satisfaction and contentment are already here, just waiting to be discovered.

True happiness does not depend on anything else, we just need to get in touch with our inherent tranquillity, feel more connected and nourished, with the sense of simple contentment. True, lasting contentment is unconditional.

With insight, we begin to realise that we've been looking for happiness in the wrong place. We've been seeking happiness, contentment, the feeling that everything is okay, in the wrong way. We have come to believe that feeling okay is conditional on things being okay

externally – having the right house, the right partner, the right job, the right money, the right music, the right food etc., or having a healthy, beautiful body.

True contentment is not conditional on anything. At some point in your meditation practice, this will appear as an incontrovertible truth. It is already here, just hidden.

Realising this is elusive and it's not a quick fix. It requires us, in meditation, to keep practising and to let go of preconceptions, of past and future, of wanting to achieve something or create something, letting go of judgement, and letting go of those tricky habits of mind. It requires us to step back into awareness, just observing what's going on in the mind and body, with compassion for the suffering that may be present.

Ultimately we have to let go of the sticky attachment we have to our own identity. Just being, aware and alive. Knowing that all is well in this moment.