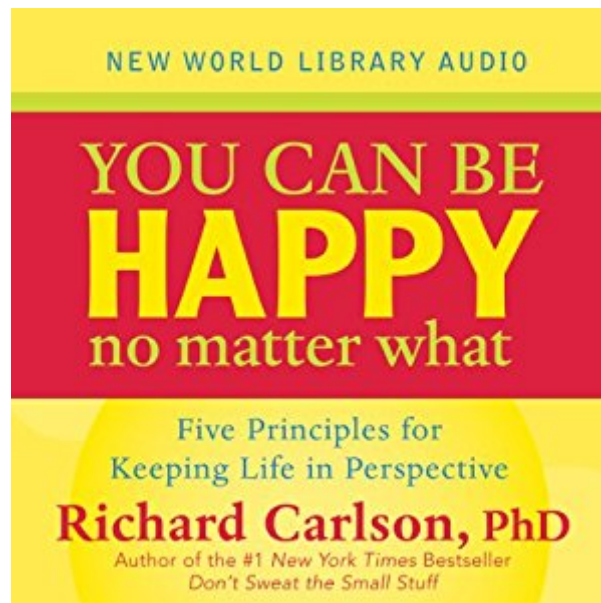




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# You Can Be Happy No Matter What: Five Principles Your Therapist Never Told You



## Synopsis

Many people believe they can only be happy when their problems are solved, relationships improve, and goals are achieved. In this simple guide, Dr. Richard Carlson shows readers how to be happy right now "no matter the situation. His plan, based on the principles of Thought (thoughts are voluntary, not involuntary); Mood (thinking is a voluntary function that varies from moment to moment and these variances are called moods); Separate Realities (everyone thinks in a unique way and lives in separate psychological realities); Feelings (feelings and emotions serve as a barometer for when one is "off-track" and headed for unhappiness); and the Present Moment (the only time for genuine contentment, satisfaction, and happiness). This timeless book guides readers through life's challenges and restores the joy of living along the way. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"You Can Be Happy No Matter What" is a distillation of wise and liberating advice. It is exactly the book you're looking for if you are distressed or confused. This is the book for you if you're thinking, "I don't need a pep talk or a complicated theory -- just some simple, reliable advice!" I am amazed and grateful that the late Richard Carlson -- mere slip of a young man that he was -- understood human happiness so well. In this book, Carlson synthesizes so many powerful truths of the world's wisdom traditions. Sorry, I'm getting carried away. Let me get to the point: According to Carlson, happiness is our natural state. Painful emotions are not natural and inevitable reactions to inherently painful circumstances. Painful emotions are actually reactions to painful and distressing thoughts.

They form a pattern of emotional reactivity: they feed on their own fire. And if we "follow" these reactions -- if we try to solve the problems that seem so urgent in their light -- we will not find happiness. We will simply dig ourselves into a pattern of emotional reactivity, convincing ourselves all the while that our occasional glimpses of relief are the result of our frantic problem-solving. As radical as Carlson's view may sound, there is much scientific evidence to support it. Recent brain research verifies that people who regularly produce and rely on feelings of love and well-being are indeed very happy, and suffer from no reduction in their ability to think or solve problems.

Long-term, happy meditators, (such as the Buddhist teacher Mingyur Rinpoche), were exposed to loud noises and cries of distress in the lab. Their heart-rates immediately increased to facilitate rigorous physical activity. However, they did not experience psychological distress. The startle-response was notably absent in these monks, and the sound of women screaming and children crying triggered a feeling of compassion, rather than feelings of distress or fear. Dr. Martin Seligman frequently refers to studies which show that happy people act in more compassionate ways than sad people, and happy doctors make more accurate diagnoses. This research suggests we do not need to rely on fear and distress to recognize danger and help other people. In fact we do a better job of helping others and dealing with complicated situations when we are feeling peaceful.

One reviewer brought up an interesting concern: if we follow Richard Carlson's advice and avoid solving problems while in a bad mood, will this stunt our psychological growth? Don't we need to develop tolerance to emotional distress? Richard Carlson does indeed advise us to have less tolerance to emotional distress. His advice is to acknowledge we are feeling bad, and try not to analyze our feelings or take them too seriously. Although I appreciate this reader's point, I believe Carlson's approach is consistent with classical definitions of emotional tolerance. When we tolerate strong emotion, we allow for its presence in our body and mind without feeling compelled to believe there is a terribly urgent problem in our lives which we must immediately solve. I also believe there is a slightly different model of growth here: in Carlson's approach, growth is not accomplished by analyzing our habits or psychological problems. It is accomplished by having a more peaceful attitude, characterized by a calm demeanor and loving interactions. Loving and peaceful adults tend to form deep emotional bonds with others and become deeply invested in their communities. By contrast, adults who have spent years in introspective self-analysis may be highly skilled at articulating their emotional patterns, but they may still be depressed, isolated, and cut-off from their communities.

In summary, "You Can Be Happy No Matter What" is an excellent book of time-tested wisdom, whose conclusions, I believe, are supported by recent scientific research. This book changed my life for the better. I hope it will do the same for you!

Jennifer Matthews, author of

## "Radically Condensed Instructions for Being Just as You Are"

Excellent book. This changed how I see my life for the better. I highly recommend it for anyone who ever feels overwhelmed by worry, fear, discontent, or any other negative feelings. It will help you easily recognize and gain control over any negative thoughts that pop up suddenly. I experienced a dramatic, positive shift in my own attitude from the moment I started this book and I quickly got really good at recognizing and dismissing negative thoughts as they popped up - the same thoughts that used to run on autopilot in my mind and eventually overwhelm me. He shows you how to easily master this. It's a quick tweak that once mastered can become a new way of life by the time you finish the book.

If you've ever wanted to be inspired to take that first difficult, but necessary step to happiness, in all aspects of living instead of just existing, then THIS book is for you. I believe this is one of the best books I've read 'to see' and understand the why and how we think, feel, and act each day that keeps us all 'tied-up' and continuously stressed. Richard Carlson has written a wonderful, and enlightening frame of reference we need to understand the 'how and way' to take that first difficult step out of gray-land, and into the sunshine. After reading this book, the way I look at myself and the world around me has literally shifted in a paradoxical way, and I pleasingly feel and exude joyfulness. It is amazing to me to realize that my 'present' feeling of well-being and happiness are due to reading and digesting 'You Can Be Happy No Matter What: Five Principles Your Therapist Never Told You'. If you're grappling in the dim light of shadows, and just functioning to get through the day ... and you want to be freed from that existence ... you need to read this book. You will be amazed, as you start reading, of how your perception of your world will change by the turn of each page, and you realize it is possible FOR YOU to step into and breathe in sunshine, and smile, and 'feel' happy.

I have to agree with all of the reviewers below: This book has some valuable insights. And because I am not unfamiliar with the concepts (see my review of "Napkin Notes on the Art of Living") I was interested to read a different presentation of similar material. Yes, we control our thoughts, our thoughts affect our moods, and feelings are a good indicator of when our thought process has derailed -- ie we're not living in the moment. And with a lot of patience and practice, we can navigate even the hardest things in life with more grace. But there were times while reading that my little voice said "This guy is making it sound way too easy... OR he's way too happy..." He insists that

ignoring your low moods or negative feelings isn't "denial" but "deferral" of dealing with those feelings until you're in a better frame of mind, but often we aren't given that luxury. I worked really hard to maintain respect when, in two or three lines, he described how he was able to cope when a dear friend died in a car crash on the way to standing up to his wedding. Was it really as easy as he makes it sound? Human beings are complex, and often overwhelmed by feelings. So while this is good advice for many of life's ups and downs, I suspect the more complicated scenarios will require a bit more.

As a public speaker, hypnotherapist, trainer, and author, I've read HUNDREDS of self-help, psychology, motivational, and counseling books over the past 30+ years. From the earliest NLP books to Napoleon Hill, the whole Gamut. Dr. Richard Carlson boils solutions to the challenges of humans into an easy to understand, well-organized system. It is written (and on Audible.com, spoken) in such a way it can be implemented by both the individual struggling to be Happy and Content, or to the Professional trying to help others. **DONATE MOST OF YOUR BOOKS TO CHARITY AFTER READING AND IMPLEMENTING THIS SIMPLE BOOK. A Life-Changer !**

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