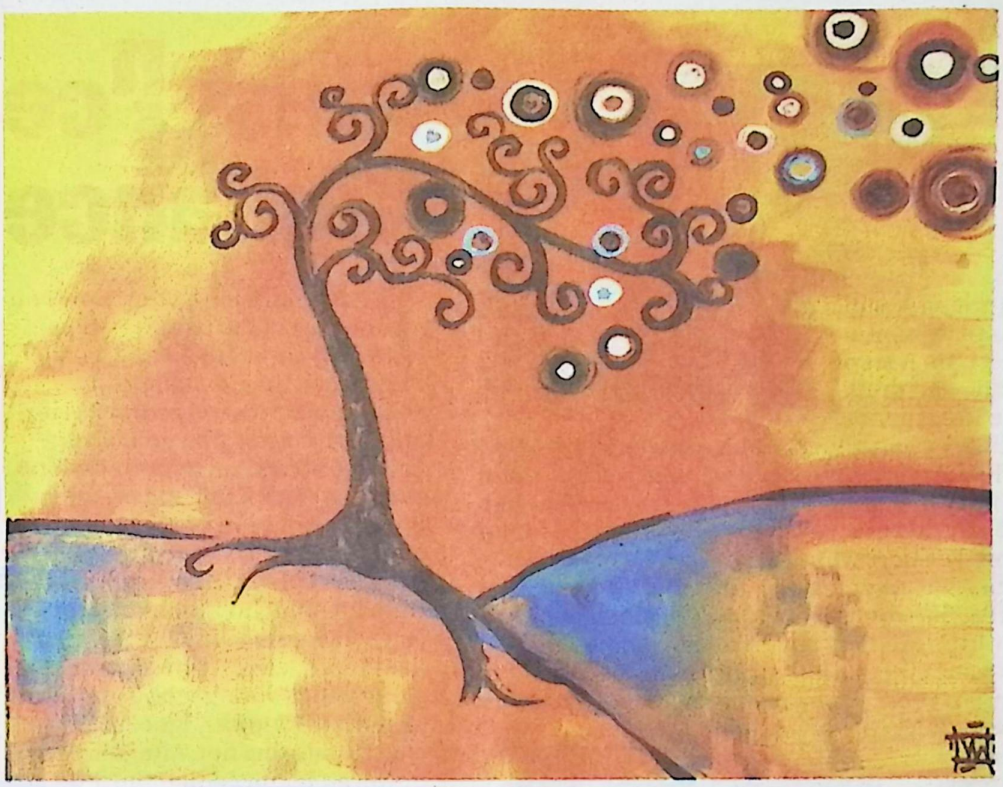


happiness as well. Positive psychologists believe giving makes you feel good about yourself, it gives you a sense of purpose, puts meaning into your life, you know that you matter to somebody else, you feel connected to others. One of the fundamental findings from the science of happiness is that almost everybody feels happier when they are with other people. One of the biggest recommendations for lasting happiness is to figure out your strengths and find new ways to deploy them.

Friends and family are a crucial part as well. According to happiness research, family and friends have, on average, a much bigger effect on happiness than a typical person's income itself. People frequently site their friends as their biggest source of delight. Strong ties to family and friends and commitment to spending time with them can give you the highest level of happiness and the fewest signs of depression. People who have several close, supportive friends with whom they freely share their lives ups and downs -- live with greater health and happiness. Experiments reveal that people relax as they confide painful experiences; confiding is good for the soul. Psychologists say it is important to work on social skills, close interpersonal ties and social support in order to be happy. Marriage also seems to be very important. According to research the effect of marriage adds an average of seven years to the life of a man and something like four for a woman.

Religious faith is said to lift the spirit too. Another element is having goals embedded in your long-term values that you work for and find enjoyable. Psychologists argue that we need to find fulfillment by having goals that are interesting to work on and which use our strengths and abilities. We need to believe in what we are doing and be totally engaged and engrossed.

Professor Rahman states "Happiness is a driving force, a kind of journey towards a certain goal and the urge to achieve that goal. Happiness is a continuous process." True and lasting happiness always comes from within. When you have positive thoughts, your brain secretes positive chemicals and increases the power of your brain and vice versa. This is a simple, but profound concept to realise. Your happiness depends on it.

Happiness, said Benjamin Franklin, "is produced not so much by great pieces of good fortune that seldom happen as by the little advantages that occur every day." Learn to live in the present, take delight in the day's magic moments; from morning tea and breakfast, to the day's last moment's right before you put off those lights and snuggle in the bed. Learn to master the use of time. According to an Oxford University psychologist happy people have their time filled and planned while for unhappy people time is unfilled, open and uncommitted; they postpone things and are usually inefficient. Experiments reveal people who feign high self-esteem begin feeling better about themselves; i.e if you carry yourself like a winner you will feel like a winner. Studies reveal that exercise is an antidote for mild depression and anxiety. Repeated surveys show that people are more self-confident, unstressed, and in better spirits, if physically fit. Happy people live active, vigorous lives making sure they have enough time for sleep and solitude.

Human psychologists epitomise individualism. They say that the only question that matters is if you are living in a way that is deeply satisfying and if it truly expresses you. "Joy is a serious business of heaven" said C.S. Lewis. So, be honest, be true to yourself, seek your own bliss and you will be happy. ■