

# Tomorrow's Happiness Begins Today

*It is only possible to live happily  
ever after on a day-to-day basis.*

Margaret Bonanno

The door opened and two women entered The Bodhi Tree Café and looked around the quiet room before making their way over to an empty table. Behind the counter Buddy, an older, bald man with a pot belly, finished polishing an already spotless glass before making his way over to greet his customers.

“Welcome to The Bodhi Tree Café,” he said with a smile as he slid menus in front of the women. “Can I start you off with some drinks?”

“I think I’ll just go with a diet cola,” the first woman responded.

“Do you have tea?” asked the second.

“Of course,” Buddy answered with his ever-present smile. “I’ll be right back with your drinks, just take your time looking over the menu.”

When Buddy returned the two women were deep in conversation.

“Oh goodness, we got to talking and haven’t even opened the menus yet.”

“That’s okay,” Buddy said as he placed their drinks in front of them. “Take your time. People often find this a popular place for conversation.”

“It does have a friendly atmosphere,” the first woman said in response to Buddy’s infectious smile.

“I could use a little cheering up right now,” the second woman admitted. “We thought maybe a meal would help.”

“Then you’ve come to the right place,” Buddy assured them. “I’m the owner, Buddy, and I pride myself on running a cheerful

establishment. Why are you so down?”

“Oh, it’s a long story,” answered the second woman. “You don’t want to hear about my problems.”

“I’ve got plenty of time,” Buddy said as he waved his arms around the nearly empty café. “And I know a thing or two about being happy.”

“Well, if there’s a secret to being happy, I wish you’d share it with us,” prompted the second woman.

“I’d be happy to,” Buddy told her. “You have to make your own happiness.”

“That’s it?”

“Some people spend their lives waiting for happiness to arrive on it’s own and it never comes,” explained Buddy. “Others work hard at creating wealth but still aren’t happy, discovering that money only brings a new set of problems.”

“Well, I agree that money is probably not the route to happiness, but I’m not sure it’s actually possible to *create* happiness,” complained the second woman. “You’re either happy or your not. I’m afraid it takes more than just effort.”

“To find happiness you first have to understand where happiness comes from,” Buddy suggested. “Happiness is an emotion and not something physical.”

“Oh, I *know* that,” complained the second woman. “Believe me, I want to be happy. I’ve *tried* to be happy.”

“Memories are to the mind what a mirror is to the eyes – a reflection,” continued Buddy. “The mirror reflects the physical while our memories reflect the emotional. When you look in a mirror it reflects what we look like; when you look in your mind it reflects who you are. One big difference between the two is that you can change what you see in the mirror fairly easily, but you can’t change the memories reflected in your mind.”

“I’ve never thought of it that way before,” the first woman admitted. “You’re suggesting that happiness comes from our memories of the good times and not the good times themselves.”

“Exactly,” Buddy agreed. “There is a difference between having fun and being happy. We tend to spend a lot of time and effort trying to improve what we see in the mirror, but little or no effort trying to improve our memories.”

“Well, I don’t see how a person can improve their memories,” complained the second woman. “A memory is a memory. You just said they couldn’t be changed.”

“True,” agreed Buddy, “but every action creates a new memory. Do you really think that the person who is bitter and angry today was happy and cheerful yesterday? We can begin to improve our memories by changing how we react when someone says or does something which angers or upsets us. We can either add to the painful memory with our own negative response or we can replace them with positive words and actions and create positive memories for tomorrow.”

“I guess what you’re saying is true.” the second woman admitted. “It’s just not as easy as you make it sound. When someone angers me my first impulse is always to strike back.”

“If you really want to be happy tomorrow you must choose carefully what you do today,” Buddy told them. “Today’s actions will be reflected in tomorrow’s memories. Everything you do today will be in tomorrow’s reflection, and once there it can’t be removed.”

“So you’re saying when someone treats us badly we should ignore it?”

“If you don’t, you’re allowing the other person to control how you feel. I’m suggesting you not give up that control. His unhappiness is his problem, *don’t* let him make it yours. The next time a person angers you, instead of lashing out, try imagining you are holding up a mirror which bounces the reflection back at him, knowing that his words or actions are a reflection of him and not of you,” Buddy suggested.

“And you think this will bring us happiness?” asked the second woman doubtfully.

“It’s a start. We all want to like what we see in the mirror. To be truly happy we also have to like what we see reflected in our minds. What the mirror reflects is not nearly as powerful as what the mind reflects, for it reflects our words and actions. Will tomorrow’s memories be filled with goodness and joy or bitterness and anger? What have you done today that will bring you happiness tomorrow? ”

“So a big part of our happiness depends on our own actions,” the first woman realized. “That’s what you meant by creating our own happiness.”

“I’m afraid we still have some more work ahead of us,” Buddy said with a smile. “Now, can I start you ladies off with an appetizer?”

**- You make your own happiness.**

**- Happiness is emotional and not physical.**

**- Your thoughts are a reflection of who you are.**

**- Don't just work on the reflection in your mirror.**

Bodhi Tree Cafe'

