

DESTINATION HAPPINESS 53 Steps Ahead!

Unlocking The Secrets To A
Fulfilling Life

Questioning Thought Patterns With
The Work of Byron Katie Method

FEZA KARAKAŞ



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The inner journey and awakening of Feza Karakaş, which started by reading the works of masters such as Rumi, Omar Khayyam and Hafez during her juvenescence, began to spread their seeds in the early 1990's just to bloom shortly after with the books of Louise Hay, Wayne Dyer and the trainings of Landmark Education.

Karakaş fell in love with The Work method in 2004 when she met Byron Katie in Amsterdam. She completed her first The Work training in 2005 and became an internationally certified The Work Facilitator in 2011. She and her husband Metin Karakas, who is also a facilitator of The Work, founded FMK Wisdom School (Mindfulness, Meditation and Acceptance Wisdom School) in 2019. She has been teaching there since then, and she currently gives seminars to individuals and corporations, conducts online workshops for groups, designs courses and writes books.

The author, who was born in Kastamonu Turkey, completed her middle and high school education as well as the initial years of her college education in Ankara. She got married in 1979 and moved to the USA with her husband. She graduated from the Department of Finance at Houston University. Then she attended the Psychology department at the Western Connecticut University and the master's program in Social Services at Connecticut University. She lived in the USA, Middle East, South America, and Europe for long years due to her husband's profession. Feza Karakas the mother of two children and the grandmother of five grandchildren, currently divides her time between the USA and Turkey. She is also engaged in e-trade and exports home textile goods to the USA.

Mindfulness and experiencing her true identity are important to Feza who has been fond of her freedom since childhood. Sharing her level of awareness with others, which she has reached by using the thought inquiry method of Byron Katie's The Work, is one of her most favorite

services.

Feza draws near to herself by helping you realize the stories that cause pain and sorrow and alienate you from your essence, and by enabling you to get closer to your essence through questioning them. She does this job very lovingly and wholeheartedly.

She invites you to follow your heart to the field where loving hearts meet.

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*This book is dedicated to my late mother and
greathearted teacher Fahriye Üçok Küreli, who always
embraced me with her unconditional love, guided me as
a role model of wisdom, dignity, justice, maturity, and
profoundness, and provided me with the utmost support and
connection while writing this book.
My beloved, rest in the beauty of Light...*

INTRODUCTION

This book is all about happiness... Before we discuss happiness, we first need to answer the question of “How do we become unhappy?” Who creates the so-called unhappiness? Do you believe that the reason of your unhappiness is the outside world and its factors? Or do you think that you will remain unhappy as long as your outside world and others do not change? What if this were not the case? What if the source of your unhappiness were not the external world but yourself? Wouldn't our reality be different then?

Unhappiness is a state of mind. The meaning that we attribute to “what is”, more specifically the reality, makes us unhappy, in other words, our perspective about the matter. The attachment to the warrior mind that fights the reality is the sole reason of our unhappiness.

Every single person is born with the capacity to be happy and satisfied as well as with joy and enthusiasm. But what happens later that causes us to lose this attribute and become unhappy? What initiates unhappiness and creates a state of addiction to it? And when does this happen?

Which thoughts alienate us from ourselves, namely our essence, and lead to the pain, sorrow, and unhappiness we experience?

Thoughts are not harmful by themselves. Thousands of them cross our minds every single day. If we watch them just like the clouds by merely witnessing them, they will not harm us. However, our lives and relationships will be affected negatively if we believe these thoughts imprudently, without questioning or testing them.

In this book, which emerged and flourished as a result of the valuable contributions of the participants during my Happiness Seminar, I am going to talk about thoughts and stories that harm us. I wrote about the fifty-three thinking errors which we frequently make dragging ourselves to unhappiness. By every single item, we are going to realize that it is in

fact us who create our unhappiness. If it is us who creates unhappiness, then it is also us who will put an end to it. We are going to discern the beliefs and thought patterns that make us unhappy. Then we are going to see who we are and how we act when we do not believe these thoughts.

We are going to be aware of the rules and conditions that we determine for ourselves to become happy. We are going to discover our expectations from others, how much our happiness depends on these people's change, and how we force them to change. We are going to learn about the distinction between the conditional happiness and the unconditional happiness which is intrinsic and needs to be liberated.

Through The Work method, we are going to share with you the possibility of unlocking the gates of the mental prison where we lock ourselves and embracing the liberty of flying like a bird.

Have a pleasant reading...

Feza Karakaş

CHAPTER I

WHAT IS HAPPINESS?

No doubt that happiness is one of the most common subjects on which books were written all over the world. This plentiful supply of writings is so diverse that even hundreds of lifetimes may not be sufficient to read all of them. It is obvious that this matter of happiness has become the common goal of the entire humanity. Well, why is this so important to people? Why do people chase happiness? Why do we need this feeling? What kind of a life would we lead without it? Last but not least, what exactly is happiness?

The definition of happiness is the state of feeling joy due to having complete and continuous fulfillments of one's longings and wants. There is a phrase that I would like to highlight in this definition, for I find it particularly important: "having complete and continuous fulfillments of one's longings and wants" Is this even possible? Can our wants and longings be fulfilled in a complete manner and on continuous basis? What if they cannot be fulfilled or we cannot have them? Will we be unhappy?

Let us start with the principle of limited supply for unlimited needs and wants. In a sense, this is the basic description of economy, and having all your needs and wants met is not even a possibility. Accordingly, being happy is not possible based on the aforementioned description of happiness. Perhaps there is an error, or something is missing in this definition. Let us look into another definition of the word. This time we will look it up in the Dictionary of Philosophy:

"The state which is the ultimate and highest objective of all human actions and efforts, the state of reaching the highest value or objective in life. The absence of pain or the state of pleasure; the state of harmony in

the entirety of humanity; the state of competence when a person fulfills his own potential, fulfills his duties, acts with virtue, lives in accordance with the laws of nature, leads a prudent life, determines his own fate freely.”¹

This definition is more comprehensive. Besides, it renders happiness more attainable in an instant. It also specifies the obstacle ahead of us as simply ourselves. This definition does not relate the requirements of happiness to external factors, but it rather specifies happiness as an internal and mental state. For instance, Socrates argues that a person can attain happiness through self-actualization and by dint of his soul’s good health and well-being. In Stoic philosophy, on the other hand, happiness is identified with virtue. The happiness attained through pleasures is momentary and fleeting. It is not an august source of happiness because pleasure is a kind of affect. Such affects are inferior and should be defeated, for they can enslave people. In that case, happiness is a sort of wisdom and a person’s ability to predominate himself.

Thus, according to many philosophers, real happiness is not dependent on external conditions. It comes internally from ourselves and our experiences. If we think that happiness depends on outside circumstances, events, finances, a good job, having obedient children, a stable relationship; in other words, on extraordinary circumstances or a circumstance that is different than ours, then we end up looking for things that we do not have. These are hedonistic satisfaction types the momentary happiness of which lasts for a short time. We do not even notice the fact that happiness has nothing to do with these. Understanding that happiness depends on who we are rather than what we have really matters. In other words, we need to learn how to know, accept and love ourselves. When I say “ourselves”, I refer to the whole which is beyond the self and described from the perspective of the ego. More explicitly, I refer to accepting the reality and even being able to love it. Loving

1 Ahmet Cevizci, *Felsefe Sözlüğü (Philosophical Dictionary)*, Paradigma Yayınları (Paradigma Publications), 1999, p. 611

the whole. By doing so, we can create a more harmonious life and be in charge of our happiness. What really matters is not living more positive experiences than negative experiences but learning to combine them into a life lesson, for they are all necessary and beneficial for us.

Happiness does not depend on any condition. It is in us and in the moment. Then why aren't we happy? If happiness is in the moment and it is inside us waiting to be reached, why can't we attain it? Because we do not stay in the present moment but keep visiting our stories. The stories that we have written in our minds, the stories that we believe to have experienced, the stories that have been coded in our brains by the society. The list of things that are needed for happiness keeps getting longer. According to our conditioned mind, finding happiness depends on the fulfillment of our expectations. For this reason, we cannot experience unconditional happiness.

Unconditional Happiness

It is the intrinsic state of happiness. Pleasure and happiness are not the same. The former depends on an external factor, so it is conditional. However, a person's happiness should not be affected by anything but his own power. For example, Diogenes did not care much even about slavery. He refused the help of his friend who wanted to save him during the time he was being sold as a slave. With this behavior, he substantiated his belief that only virtue could make a person happy and laid bare that the rest was unimportant and meaningless. Outside circumstances are not that important for us; a wise person is free and happy even when he is a slave.

Happiness is intrinsic; it is inside you!

Unconditional happiness is inherent, it comes from the essence...
The essence of happiness comes from understanding one's essence.
And unconditional happiness is the state of absolute freedom...

Conditional Happiness

It is the kind of happiness the source of which depends on the pleasure of possessing something. In other words, it involves the satisfaction of a feeling and is dependent on a condition no matter what. For example, believing that having a love affair or good family relations will make us happy. This is transient and creates short-term happiness (satisfaction) the moment it comes true. Then it is either forgotten or not recognized because the person becomes accustomed to it. Let me explain this with an *Example*:

Think about a group of kids playing soccer and try to visualize their happiness during the game. They are happy because they are in the moment and are connected to their selves, or essences. The challenge of competition and their ambition of winning become a source of pleasure for them. Now imagine that they lose the ball. Their happiness melts away. The loss of the ball creates a short-term unhappiness just like the game itself, until the time they focus on another source of pleasure. If we do not think that happiness merely depends on a soccer ball, we will also agree on the fact that the feeling created by momentary pleasures could not be considered happiness. Because happiness is not dependent on an external factor and exists regardless of the presence of the soccer ball. If you think of your essence as a factory, happiness is the emotion created by your essence. However, if you associate happiness with owning a house, having a better job, having more clothes or a deposit in the bank, their presence will create a temporary satisfaction for you while their loss will hurt you, just like the soccer ball in the example.

***Happiness is a feeling which is created by your essence.
The source is within!***

Antisthenes, the Greek philosopher who argued that moral virtue was simply sufficient for attaining happiness, described it as the absence of desires and being independent of yearnings. He advocated that humans

did not need anything but virtue to be happy, and they needed to disdain the rest to be self-sufficient. He defended that wealth, beauty, reputation, fame, and honor were all empty illusions while describing pleasure as the vilest thing. He even said, "I'd rather be mad than feel pleasure!" According to him, wisdom involved nothing except for getting rid of these illusions.

The pursuit of happiness outside of ourselves alienates us from our essence and our intrinsic nature. Those who find happiness in their possessions and accomplishments end up losing themselves. The more we possess, the more we need.

He who possesses less is richer than the one who possesses more. The dependence on external factors means treating ourselves as slaves. If we think of happiness as having nothing to do with pleasure, more money, more power, or a better job will not make us happy. All of these satisfy us temporarily and create a shallow life, representing the sleeping human who lives in the quantitative world. Buddha says: "There is pleasure and there is happiness. One needs to forgo the former to possess the latter."

The essence of happiness is understanding yourself.

"When I was 5 years old, my mother always told me that happiness was the key to life. When I went to school, they asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up. I wrote down 'happy'. They told me I didn't understand the assignment, and I told them they didn't understand life." This is a beautiful statement by John Lennon.

The question comes down to why we cannot put all these into real practice even though we know them. Being wise entails putting knowledge into practice in real life. So, now is the time to use this knowledge and transitioning from knowing to being...

What is The Work and How does It Work?

Byron Katie's The Work is a way of defining and questioning the thoughts which form the reason of all the suffering in the world. It is a

way of making peace with yourself and the world. Any open-minded person can use this method. In this book, *The Work* will be our guide as we will pursue the happiness that is always inside us but not liberated. The only time we suffer is when we believe a thought that argues with ‘what is’.

A thought is harmless as long as we do not believe it.

A thought is harmless as long as we do not believe it. It is not our thoughts that harm us, but our attachment to our thoughts. We can get rid of our beliefs and reach a free form of happiness by means of a four-step inquiry method. We need mental clarity to accomplish this; to question thoughts and to process the answers...

The ultimate purpose of this book is to reach mental clarity. A clear mind already knows what it needs to do. For this reason, it will serve as our compass, help us become free of our burdens and make us closer to our goal. It will be much easier to reach our real goal when we get rid of our burdens. Yet how are we going to do this? Our rules are quite simple; we are going to question every single thought that makes us unhappy. Our inquiry consists of four questions and turnarounds.

1. Is this true?
2. Can you absolutely know it is true?
3. How do you react—what happens—when you believe that thought?
4. Who would you be without the thought?
5. Turnarounds

Turnarounds provide us with the opportunity to consider other perspectives when we get attached to stressful thoughts and beliefs which we accept as true. You can create various possibilities by turning your original thought around and each of these can provide you with an insight and understanding which you have never considered or realized. Here is an ***Example***: Let our original sentence be “Simon should not

yell at me.” Now let us turn this sentence around.

- a. To yourself:
I should not yell at myself.
- b. To the other person:
I should not yell at Simon.
- c. To the opposite:
Simon should yell at me.

Inquiry with The Work – An Example of Questions and Turnarounds:

Now let us test the truth of a belief through a complete inquiry. By seeing how a belief is questioned, how questions are asked and where the answers take us, you will also be able to question your own beliefs.

Belief: He should not yell at me.

1. Is this true? Yes.
2. Can I absolutely know it is true?
No. (My mind responded as “No!” by realizing that I cannot know what is inside this person or what is best for me.)

3. How do I react - what happens - when I believe this thought?

My body feels cramped. My face blushes. My heart pounds. I get angry and feel shocked. My throat feels blocked. My face crinkles up. I despise my friend. I do not listen to him. I become estranged from my friend. My body Language and expressions indicate that I do not listen to him. I yell at him, “Do not yell at me!” I remember the way my teacher yelled at me at school, I remember feeling scared and shy. I see those images in which other people are looking at us, and I am doing something wrong. I panic.

I see myself as a victim. I find myself weak, and then feel angry with myself for not standing against him. I also feel guilty for setting him aback.

What do I gain when I stick with this thought? I do not want to

listen to or embrace what he says. I am right about this matter. In a sense, I am keeping things under control. I feel like he will constantly yell at me if I do not believe this thought. Otherwise, yelling at someone will become an acceptable situation and anyone will be able to yell at me. I cannot listen to my friend when I am attached to this thought. I do not feel myself close to him. I do not look him in the eye. I cannot stay in the moment, nor can I absorb what he wants to say. I cannot be peaceful.

4. Who would I be without the thought “He should not yell at me”?

My body would be more relaxed and calmer. I would be more curious and look him in the eye, see that he was angry and notice the innocence in his eyes. I would realize that I cared about him. I would hear what he said. I would be able to hear that he hated me when I did not respond to him openly and would realize when I did that. I would be able to think and talk to him without yelling at him.

Turnarounds:

Belief: He should not yell at me.

Complete Turnaround: He should yell at me.

Examples:

- I am still doing this even though he yelled at me multiple times.
- I understand that he is angry and requests a clear answer from me to know what to do as the next step; and I cannot provide him with this answer. I know this will annoy him.
- Because this is an honest request on his part. In my mind, this is better than overbearing him or not being in communication with him at all.
- ***Turnaround:*** I should not yell at him.

Examples:

- I yell at him and this does not resolve the conflict.
- I feel horrible after I yell at him.
- When I yell at him, he is estranged from me, and then I cannot

communicate with him. I love him and can see how stressed he is when I yell at him.

- To myself: I should not yell at myself.

Examples:

- When he yells at me, I yell at myself (I blame myself for having angered him). Then I cannot think clearly, nor can I hear what he really says.
- I yell at myself because of not being able to think faster. This makes the situation worse.
- I yell at myself due to having yelled at him. Then I feel myself even angrier and more nervous. I cannot communicate with or hear him.

All these questions and turnarounds reveal all of your thoughts and experiences and indicate where you are at war with reality. For that reason, it is so important to embrace them. If you resist a thought in anyway, this reveals the fact your work is incomplete.

Do not fight against the reality, instead question your stressful thinking about the reality.

Question your thoughts and see if they are right or wrong.

There is nothing left to fear in life when you honestly look forward to the repetition of an experience that once bothered you. View everything as a gift that gives you the opportunity to get to know yourself.

It is time to question...

Exercise:

Your thoughts that are related to conditional happiness.

Now I want you to form two lists, namely the lists of happiness and unhappiness. Write what makes you happy in the former and what makes you unhappy in the latter.

Example: I am happy because I have money. I am happy because I have a house, a car, a spouse, a job, children, and friends...

I am unhappy because I do not have money. I do not have a house, a car, etc.

Now make your lists:

I am happy because

I am unhappy because

Now I would like you to prepare three more lists. Answer the following questions as you answer these questions.

1. What do you need and who do you need to be in order to be happy?
2. You are happy, but you would like to be happier. What do you need and who do you need to be in order to be happier?
3. What do you need to leave behind in order to be happy?
(Examples: quit smoking, quit overeating, lose weight.)

The Work: Stories of Conditional Happiness

Examples of Stories:

Our mind continuously looks for reasons for happiness and unhappiness. It also creates stories that suit these reasons. Now, let us analyze these stories based on some examples. But first of all, I would like you to see that each sentence below specifies a condition for happiness:

“I am unhappy because I got flu. I need my body to be healthy in order to be happy.”

“I am happy because I am healthy, I can breathe, I am alive and so are my children.”

“I am unhappy because I do not have a family.”

“I am unhappy because I am in a hustle and bustle all the time.”

“I am unhappy because I am overweight.”

“I have wrinkles on my face.”

“Money is not enough regardless of how much I earn it.”

“I am unhappy because I get very stressed before I do something.”

“I am unhappy because my parents are separated.”

“I am unhappy because I do not have a partner.”

“I am unhappy because I cannot share my happiness or unhappiness with my spouse.”

*Any story, which has not been questioned,
can be a lie that is being told by your mind.
Do not turn a thought into a belief!*

After questioning our thoughts, our relationship with the reality can change, and other perspectives and possibilities may arise. We may realize that the stories we believe imprudently are, in fact, the lies we tell ourselves. This can cause us to get out of the mind prison, lead a life that is more consistent with our essence, and therefore enjoy life more.

Inquiry with The Work – An Example of Questions and Turnarounds:

Four Questions:

Feza: We have identified some of the stories about being happy and unhappy. Now let us test their truth.

Participant: I am not happy because I am overweight.

Feza: Can you specify the timing of this thought?

Participant: Yes, two weeks ago I was in front of the mirror staring at my body. What I saw was bulges of fat all over it. At that moment, I thought I was obese.

Feza: You say, “I am not happy because I am overweight.” Is this true?

Participant: Yes.

Feza: All right. How do you live your life when you believe this thought? How do you treat yourself?

Participant: I feel stressed and restless. I put pressure on myself. I am embarrassed because of my weight. I am fighting with my body.

Feza: What are you deprived of when you believe the thought “I am overweight.” What can’t you do? Who can’t you be?

Participant: I can’t be peaceful. I think about my body and weight all the time. I just can’t help it.

Feza: Do you see any past or future images about this matter?

Participant: Yes, I do. I am at high school. I am walking with my friend in the school yard. I think that I look like a pig when I look at myself.

Feza: How old are you back then?

Participant: About sixteen or seventeen. I am disgusted by myself.

Feza: We can work on it separately. Now let’s go back to two weeks ago. You are in front of the mirror. You look at yourself. What do you do and who do you become when you believe the thought “I am overweight.”?

Participant: First of all, I feel bad. My self-confidence decreases. I judge myself; I am angry with myself and I feel regret. I want to hide. I do not like any kind of clothing on myself. I compare myself with others. I find them beautiful while I find myself ugly. I attack my body. I do not enjoy life. I cannot accept my body as is. I feel stressed and snack on junk food to relax.

Feza: Once again, I invite you to go back to the same situation. Who would you be if you did not believe the thought “I am overweight”?

Participant: I would be a relaxed person if did not believe the thought “I am overweight.” I would not check myself or my body all the time. I would not think about how much I weighed if I stepped on a scale. I would not feel guilty while eating something. I would not treat my body and myself badly. I would be a free person who is cheerful and very serene.

Feza: All right, what is it like being a free person? Can you feel this?

Participant: Yes, she is on cloud nine. Her feet are not on the ground. She is joyful and doesn’t have judgements or stories. She is at peace with and thankful for her body.

Turnarounds:

Feza: Shall we move on to the turnarounds?

Participant: Sure.

Feza: Your thought was “I am unhappy because I am overweight.” Can you turn this around? If you want, you can initially turn around the second part of the statement, which is “I am overweight”.

Participant: I am not overweight.

Feza: Could this be true? Which one sounds truer to you? The statement that you are overweight or that you are not overweight?

Participant: As a matter of fact, the statement that I am not overweight is also true.

Feza: Can you share with me three proofs that you are not overweight?

Participant: Yes, I can.

1. My height is 5 feet 4 inches and I weigh 141 pounds. In fact, I am not that overweight.
2. Whoever I ask, they all say, “You are fine.”
3. Indeed, I looked at myself in the mirror recently and I said to myself, “After all, my body is not that bad, I am chubby.”

Feza: Can you see another turnaround?

Participant: My thoughts are overweight. Yes, this sounds much more accurate to me. My thoughts about my body are terribly negative. My thoughts are overweight. My mind is overweight, full of judgements and heavy.

Feza: Can you give me three examples of overweight thoughts?

Participant: Yes, I can.

1. The thought “I resemble a pig” is very heavy and full of lies.
2. The thought “I am ugly” is also the same way.
3. The thought “I am fat” is also very heavy. How can I be fat? I am a form energy. Can energy ever be fat? My body cannot be fat, either. Everyone weighs as heavy as they should at that particular moment. Neither less nor more than what is necessary.