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Book Review 13 The Art of Happiness: A Handbook for Living by The Dalai Lama and Howard C. Cutler, M.D.

William C. McPeck
Happiness - Combining East-West Perspectives, June 16, 2008, Rating: 5 Stars

Happiness is a core state we all seek to achieve. Thanks, in part, to the Positive Psychology movement, happiness has taken center stage and is now the focus of a significant amount of attention. On a recent visit to a large, chain bookstore, I noticed one whole table devoted to books related to happiness. It appears that a happiness movement is underway.

It is said that happiness can be achieved through external and internal means. Happiness achieved through external means is, unfortunately, short-lived. Life long happiness is derived from internal sources - positive states such as kindness, compassion and tolerance.

The value of this book lies in its presentation of a framework the reader can use to attain these positive states - a framework based on the integration of scientific psychological research and Buddhist philosophical principles. In addition to the framework, each of the chapters contains exercises the reader can use to reinforce the learnings presented in the chapter.

Due to our survival instinct, negative states of mind often predominate our thinking. Negative states impede or dilute our happiness. To increase your level of happiness, the authors argue that these negative states need to be combated through the greater cultivation of positive mental states. The content of this book will help guide you towards developing these positive mental states.

Seeking greater happiness? This book represents a good starting point from which to start your journey.