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In November, I attended the annual International Coach Federation conference. There were three keynote speakers one of which was [Matthieu Ricard](#), often described as “the happiest man on earth”.

His main message was: “The way we experience things overrides our outer circumstances”. While we really have little control over our outer circumstances, we have much more control over our inner ones.

Let’s consider this. In our current times of turbulence, need we be unhappy? Does happiness have anything to do with outward circumstances? It would sometimes appear that way. However, as Matthieu has communicated it, happiness is a result of inner peace rather than our interpretation, internally, of external circumstances.

There was a study done in the US looking at the correlation between the increase in income in the US from 1945 to 2000 and the increase in factors of happiness. There was very little correlation at all.

So, what then affects happiness? Matthieu, a cellular geneticist prior to becoming a monk, and French translator and right hand person to the Dalai Lama, is involved in scientific research of the affects of training the mind (meditation). Those that consistently train their mind for three months or more, have decreased anxiety, better immune systems, reduced cortisol, decreased mood disturbances, and decreased depression. Experienced meditators can also activate the centres of their brain that they choose – eg, areas of compassion and kindness. Their brains are activated as if they were physically performing the actions.

... food for “thought”!

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