

Mystical Optimism - How to Glow with the Flow

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I've heard it said that optimists live longer and enjoy life more fully than pessimists. And you know what they say about pessimism: it wouldn't work anyway.

Of course I whole-heartily encourage a positive, cheerful attitude since it immediately creates a more enjoyable experience of the moment, and yet in this essay, I'll talk about an attitude that goes even deeper than just ordinary optimism. I call it "mystical optimism." Let's see what I mean by that.

A Positive Attitude Is Instantly Rewarding

In 2008, I read the book [Pollyanna](#) by Eleanor Porter, which was published way back in 1913 and quickly became an enduring sensation. In it, we learn how eleven-year-old Pollyanna truly cares about all the people that she meets and how she teaches them to find joy in unappreciated aspects of their lives.

Yet many critics misunderstood Pollyanna's approach towards life and dismissed her attitude as completely superficial and totally without any merit. In fact, this misunderstanding was so prevalent that the word "Pollyannaish" was introduced into the lexicon as a silly attitude that is unreasonably optimistic. The name "Pollyanna" itself was defined as a naive and annoying person who blindly lives in a dream world.

Yet in the book we see that Pollyanna knows how to dig into the circumstances of the moment in a way that often finds something to be genuinely happy about. Slowly but surely, other people around her learn that they can do this too.

Notice that she finds something about the situation to be glad about, which is quite a bit different from choosing to be happy about every aspect of everything. In fact, Porter herself pointed out this difference when she said, "I have been placed often in a false light. People have thought that Pollyanna chirped that she was 'glad' about everything. [...] I have never believed we ought to deny discomfort and pain and evil; I have merely thought it is far better to '*greet the unknown with a cheer.*'" Ah, yes, *this* is a positive attitude!

Pollyanna's kindness, compassion and wisdom are the main reasons why I strongly recommend this book, which you can read for free on the Internet. Pollyanna's attitude has tremendous power and it is available to everyone at every moment. It is a delight to watch Pollyanna's love shine brightly on everyone she meets, and you may even shed tears of joy when you see people release their stubborn grip on their unhappiness and move into their natural state of joy and kindness. Yes, of course, *this* is our natural state. Our human nature is not fundamentally unhappy or selfish.

Give It a Try Yourself

You can test the power of your own thoughts and attitude for yourself at any time. As many teachers have discussed before, when you emotionally accept the present moment, you will immediately create a more comfortable experience. Your inner turmoil will be reduced as you lessen your emotional “pushback” against “what is.”

And here is a very important point:

You are not saying that everything is perfect or that you love everything. You are just flowing along in your life without any hatred; that's all.

When you emotionally reject some aspect of the present, you will immediately experience frustration, anger or some other emotional discomfort. This is what hatred does. But you can just hold every aspect of the moment gently and honestly so that you can truly know what it really is, and then simply accept it with emotional neutrality.

Do this without adding an extra layer of thought about what society says your experience should or should not be. While the outer circumstances of your life can sometimes seem difficult to accept, they do not hold the power to determine your state of being. So always ask yourself, “Am I pushing away with a harsh, judgmental attitude, or am I pulling in with needy desperation?” When you gently hold all that life offers without any urgent pushing or pulling, your life will be completely transformed.

Similar things can be said about the past. While it seems natural to believe that no one can change the actual events of the past, you can indeed change how you presently feel about those events by choosing to accept them or reject them in each new moment.

Some pessimists view the past and the present wrapped together in a way that creates for them the illusion of an inescapable prison. They might think “Disastrous events have ruined my life beyond repair and here are the reasons why this is undeniably true.” Certainly there are some events that can present great challenge, such as parents losing a child or someone acquiring a serious health issue that will be with them for the rest of their life. In this way, many people conclude that the past has been so bad that it does indeed ruin the present, and all of this can make the future also seem inescapably bad. They literally put themselves into this trap, which is filled with what might be called unnecessary suffering. Only they can free themselves from this prison by adopting a new attitude and opening themselves up to the real opportunities that lie before them.

An optimistic or pessimistic attitude about the future immediately creates a corresponding emotional state. No matter if you are thinking of the past, the present or the future, you instantly create an emotional state of being in the present. If you think that the future will be bright, you will feel good in the moments that you hold that thought. If you think that the future will be unpleasant, you will immediately experience frustration, sadness or worry.

Surprisingly, this is true even though no one really knows for sure what outer circumstances the future will bring. But, as I've already mentioned, the most important point is that the outer conditions

do not hold the power to determine your emotional state of being. This is up to you via the thoughts and beliefs that you choose to hold.

But obviously, people do not adopt an optimistic attitude simply to feel good in the moment. People want to act now to build a better tomorrow and they want to do so joyfully with hope in their hearts. When joyful optimism is combined with good planning and correct action, we create the best opportunity to bring forth a better world. While I strongly encourage everyone to do this, I must again point out that there is no guarantee of how things will turn out.

The exact "form of the future" is never really known for sure.

This brings up the tricky subject of creation. I do believe that most people would benefit greatly by learning "conscious creation" rather than using the habitual, reactive "unconscious creation" seen all throughout society.

Conscious Creation - Inner Creation and Outer Creation

The first step in conscious creation is to make a distinction between "inner creation" and "outer creation." Inner creation is the immediate creation of your emotions, which are one of the most important aspects of your personal subjective experience of the present moment. The significance of this cannot be overstated since these are the actual experiences that make up your entire life! (Think about that for a few minutes!)

Inner creation instantly creates any human emotion from pure agony to total ecstasy. Each and every human being can experience all of these emotions. And while we all can create these emotions consciously by choosing our thoughts and attitude, most people unconsciously create them with habitual thoughts and reactions.

Outer creation is a process that unfolds through time. It's the attraction of people, things and events into your life. I don't believe that all outer conditions are available to everyone. In other words, we all have different menus, so to speak. Nevertheless, we all have numerous choices before us and thankfully, all of them will be in harmony with our personal growth. I say this because no one can really "make a mistake" and you are always right on time. What might appear to be a misstep or a misadventure is yet another valid way of learning about ourselves and life itself.

The outer reflects the inner; the seeds we plant on the inside with our thoughts and attitude coupled with our plans and actions create the outer conditions that come about as time unfolds. It is a reflection. This is not something that is proven with logic; it is observed, but in order to see it, you need to learn to look deeper into the outer world, beyond its first layer of skin. In fact, the specific form of what actually arises will rarely match the picture that you were holding in your mind. This is a very important point that is not understood by very many people. A quick example will help explain what I mean. I call this the curve ball because what shows up is different from what you expect.

Suppose you can see that you have not always been as kind as you would like to be. Perhaps you have been a bit short or somewhat argumentative with your sweetheart. So you decide to become kinder

and more loving in the context of a romantic relationship. The specific picture that you are holding in your mind is one of a loving couple. But this picture is just a symbol and as such, it will actually be interpreted in a more general sense. It will be understood as a declaration that you are now open to being more loving in every way possible. You are actually redefining yourself as a more loving person. This becomes a new core belief.

Now suppose that what arises in your world is a very challenging situation. Perhaps you lose your job or perhaps you even lose a loved one. What is being presented to you is the opportunity to emotionally accept something that in the past might have been unacceptable. You are now being asked: Can you love even this? Here I am using the word “love” to mean “accept without resistance, to greet without frustration, fear, anger or hatred.” Are you now accepting enough that you can embrace whatever shows up? Here I am using the word “embrace” to mean “hold gently in order to learn what is being offered.” And it is perfectly okay if you are not yet ready to accept everything. Polishing up the self so that it can embrace everything does indeed take time. This is one of the most important aspects of enlightenment and we are all doing our best as we travel along our own unique path.

In this example, we see how the world around us can reflect our core beliefs in ways that we might not expect. You were expecting a simple step up in your romantic relationship and yet you were offered a larger step up in love in general. It’s a beautiful reflection. *And it is very important to point out that not knowing the specific physical form that will arise is very different from doubting that the core aspects of your goal will be achieved.*

To What Degree Do We Control Our Own Life?

So this leads to a very interesting question: To what degree do we control our own life? How much do you do and how much just happens to you? Is it wise for us to work with the understanding that we have some control but not total control? Many of you know the simple but profound Serenity Prayer, “God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.” I think that this is both a very wise and practical approach to life.

Working in that framework, let's suppose I want to increase my material abundance. One part of my creative process might include an affirmation such as, “I, Thomas, give and receive in the material world at my full potential in harmony with all.” This contains several significant points.

The first is that you are directly involved in a process that includes both giving and receiving. In other words, you are in the flow of this energy, experiencing it fully but not clinging to it. Also, the amount of power that this energy brings is unknown but well matched to you. The third point is that you honor all beings and work in peace. I recommend that all affirmations be broad in scope and always include a phrase about harmony. This approach has an adventurous feel to it and a sense of mystery. “I wonder what will arise!” Yet there is still the sense of participation, which is your creative input.

I call this approach surfing the cosmic wave. When you surf, the wave is always changing in its size, shape and speed so you must constantly adjust your plans, thoughts, actions and possibly your attitude. It is all very dynamic and you are being very spontaneous. You are alive and choosing wisely

in each and every moment. You cannot be stuck on just one idea of what will happen and what you will do. If your goal is to enjoy surfing the waves that show up at a level that matches your skill, you will frequently have a fabulous time.

By the way, when it comes to abundance, I like what [Bashar](#), as channeled by Darryl Anka, has to say about it. His definition of abundance is this: the ability to do what you need to do when you need to do it. Right up front you see that he defines it as an ability! He does not define it as having enough money to buy whatever you want and similarly, he does not define it as owning enough of the right things so that you can do whatever you want. I think that it is very significant that he focuses on need rather than desire. While much more can be said about Bashar and his teachings, for right now, I simply want to inspire you to live with the belief that you will have available whatever resources are required at the time you need them. Certainly you deserve that, right?

Now let's consider a person taking a more rigid approach towards material abundance. They might use the following affirmation: "I double my income this year without working any overtime." I often hear people state that you must clearly visualize a very specific goal and be completely free from doubt in order to achieve it. You can always tell when people are thinking in this way since they will "jump" if you use the word "if" rather than "when." You know what I mean: "if you get that particular job," rather than "when you get that particular job."

If you are drawn to this approach, feel free to give it a genuine try and see how well it works for you. But this approach seems too stubborn for my tastes and I have never felt comfortable with it. I like to flow with the "if." Using the word "when" makes me feel like I'm forcing my way onto life and perhaps even boxing myself in. I feel that I should be open to the creative contributions of my higher self or God and cooperate in a loving way with them because this is where my most valuable inspirations come from. What if my personal self doesn't know what's best for me and I pursue unfulfilling or harmful distractions? I might act like a small child who wants candy instead of a healthy dinner. So in my opinion it is important to be open to receiving the gifts of inspiration without knowing ahead of time what that inspiration will be or where it will lead. And what if God has a big surprise in store for me and my rigid view closes me off from that opportunity? Certainly we want to be open to an exciting life, full of mystery, adventure and surprise! What would life be like without surprises?

(Note: In the ultimate spiritual framework, which I call "the mystic's view," there is only God - the One Self that creates the illusion of multiple selves - so there can only be creation, not co-creation or cooperation. But for our purposes here, I will use language based in the framework of the common day-to-day perspective where there appears to be a functional self, a personal self.)

Another interesting aspect of this firm approach is that since the goal is precisely stated, you can see how successful you were. If the goal is not met, you might have to re-examine everything. Was it me? Did I doubt the goal was possible? Did I doubt that I deserved it? Does this approach even work? I personally think that this approach tries to control the river you are swimming in and should simply be forgotten.

The first approach is a flowing adventure and as such, it can never fail. It might be described as dancing with the divine, never knowing what is coming next. Will you be spun around, held close or

tossed through the air? The aliveness that comes from not knowing cannot be matched, especially if you feel safe in the experience, if you feel safe in the hands of God.

And yet sometimes very difficult situations arise, such as the passing of a loved one. I think that the idea is to respond to what arises in a natural, genuine way as free from judgmental thought as possible. In other words, I don't necessarily think that the goal is to be happy all the time. I think that the "goalless goal" is to be fully alive in the moment!

When you find yourself feeling deep sorrow, don't be afraid of it or judge it, dive into it head first! Be fully alive! You may surprise yourself by discovering that while it can be a very uncomfortable emotion, after it passes, your true essence, your awareness, is not damaged at all.

By the way, one of my favorite affirmations is, "I, Thomas, open to and receive the love of God on all levels and live in harmony with everyone."

Is The Glass Half Empty Or Is It Half Full?

Now I would like to talk about something that some people call reframing. We have all heard the classic question: Is the glass half empty or is it half full? Are these phrases really equivalent or does it actually make a real difference to see the glass as half full? *And is there even another step up?*

Of course we are metaphorically talking about your life so reframing the glass as half full puts the focus on what you have rather than what you lack and this can be helpful since it allows you to joyfully appreciate what you already have. And this grateful attitude creates a state of openness that allows you to receive even more as time unfolds.

While this understanding is quite helpful, I think that there is yet another perspective that is even more rewarding. I am referring to the all-accepting perspective of the mystic's view, which sees that God *arises as* creation. It's like water and ice. In their essence, water and ice are exactly the same atoms. Ice does not just come *from* the water, it *is* the water but in a different state. Because water and ice have different forms, they also have completely different characteristics, completely different properties. Could it also be true that the Creator and creation are the same reality, just like water and ice? The mystic says, "Yes!" and the implications are mind blowing.

Since I have spoken about the mystic's view at other times, I will not go into it now but I offer the perspective of seeing everything as divine as the most profound reframing available to us.

With this mystical understanding, you will perceive every act as a divine act, every thought as a divine thought, every emotion as a divine emotion and every thing as the divine in physical form. You are not simply connected to God; every aspect of your being is divine! God is not just deep within you at a special place; you are divine at every level!

*With this mystical understanding, you can joyously embrace an optimistic attitude like never before! You can glow with the flow and dance with the divine in a way that fills your life with a deep richness no matter what shows up! Yes, you **are** safe in the hands of God!*

So I encourage you to give mystical optimism a try and experience for yourself the profound divine power that is always flowing within you at every moment!

Thanks for reading my essay! In truth, I honor your divine nature.

All my best, Thomas Razzeto

Written February 2008 with some edits February 2013