

## Don't Try to Be Happier What We Are Taught About Happiness and What Happiness Is

I'm going to start with this: don't try to be happier. Don't sacrifice yourself searching for some grand idea of happiness. It's not worth it.

We are taught that happiness is a state of being, that it is this well-contoured end goal that we need to strive for: get into a good university and you'll be happy, get a stable job and you'll be happy, get married and you'll be happy, have children and you'll be happy. Fit into this narrow pathway that was carved for you: this is happiness.

I'm fed up with this idea that happiness comes through hardship, that you need to pay some price to be continuously happy – it turns you into Sisyphus pushing his rock up the hill just to see it fall again. It makes every person who doesn't fit it feel broken.

Happiness is shapeless and fickle. It's an emotion that hides in the most surprising and simple things. It's dull and it's colourful, and *it is not there all of the time*. I think this is the part that we desperately need to understand. You cannot always be happy. A glass of water will not magically cure depression. A self-help book will not instantly turn you into the best version of yourself.

Emotions are like weather. There are thunderstorms and quiet cloudy days and summer warmth. You cannot catch sunlight and keep it in a jar on a shelf, and even if you would, you would burn your fingers and the light will wither in time. What you can do is learn to love both the storm and the heat, to savour every little thing in-between. Because happiness lies in the process, in putting one foot in front of the other, in making the choice to take care of yourself, to pick yourself up and drag yourself into the shower, into clean clothes. It is in the monotony of a slow routine. It belongs to small moments and it passes. Happiness ebbs and flows, and it cannot be defined. So instead of trying to do that, look for balance, for peacefulness. Learn how to feel every emotion and be grateful for it.

Don't try to be happier. Don't run after the cliché idea of happiness that has been ingrained into you. Find your peacefulness and your balance, feel all of your emotions and learn how to navigate them.