

## Cultural Beliefs About Life to Consider Adjusting

How do we find a healthy direction for ourselves and our families? I think we need to examine and adjust our priorities for how we guide our lives.

Young people today are discouraged, depressed, anxious, and finding life has no meaning. Suicide rates are spiking and we are wondering what is going on? We've created a culture based on false beliefs.

Here are some cultural beliefs to examine and suggestions to guide us:

### **You will be fulfilled by career success.**

We tell our youth that achievement and status should be at the center of their lives. However, experience with success shows us this is a false belief. Career success will ultimately not bring fulfillment to our heart. Of course we should aim for success. However, a successful career alone will not give us a sense of fulfillment or peace of mind.

### **You can make your own happiness.**

This is a misleading assumption that we alone can bring happiness to our lives. This falsely implies that our foundation should be based upon being self-sufficient.

However, the reality is we need others to truly find joy in our hearts and be content with our lives. It's a different mindset to consider that investing in relationships will bring happiness into our lives. Our deepest desire is to be loved and to love others. The adjustment needed is to live a life of shared experiences instead of our individualistic fun.

### **It's others opinions that are most important.**

We are told that the opinions of others regarding our looks, our talents, our followers and their views are what we are to guide our lives by. If we live to seek approval from others, we will ultimately feel empty inside because it won't add meaning to our lives.

### **It's all about me.**

The message from our culture is that we should be seeking to satisfy ourselves constantly. Products and activities are all about our individualistic joys. However, our greatest joy and meaning comes from being of service to someone else. This is a mind boggling conclusion; that the greatest joy we will ever experiences in life is not from what we will get, or achieve, or have but it is from giving to another person. We are wired to care for others. However, that is not a message we hear from our self-centered society.

### **Always be 100% happy (or act like you are).**

We hear that our experiences are to be thrilling, insane, crazy, sick, and ridiculous. Socially we only post a misrepresentation of a fun, perfect life.

Why are we so afraid of down feelings? Of being sad, disappointed, rejected, unwanted, not liked? That we might not have it all together. That we might not be perfect. Is not being perfect that awful? It seems like we can't acknowledge the reality that life also has down feelings. This denial leads to depression, anxiety, and a loss of meaning to life. It would be better to find ways to cope with the struggles in life. Experience tells us that we only grow and find enrichment by dealing with all the ups and downs of life with each other.

For a young person who has been told to live by these false cultural beliefs, we can see how the natural outcome would be discouragement, anxiety and a sense of emptiness.

Our cultural needs a shift to a deeper understanding of shared life experiences.

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