

Think of What You Have Instead of What You Want

In over a dozen years as a stress consultant¹⁾, one of the most pervasive²⁾ and destructive³⁾ mental tendencies⁴⁾ I've seen is that of focusing on what we want instead of what we have. It doesn't seem to make any difference how much we have; we just keep expanding our list of desires, which guarantees we will remain dissatisfied. The mind—set that says “I'll be happy when this desire is fulfilled” is the same mind—set that will repeat itself once that desire is met.

A friend of ours closed escrow⁵⁾ on his new home on a Sunday. The very next time we saw him he was talking about his next house that was going to be even bigger. He isn't alone. Most of us do the very same thing. We want this or that. If we don't get what we want we keep thinking about all that we don't have— and we remain dissatisfied. If we do get what we want, we simply recreate the same thinking in our new circumstances. So, despite getting what we want, we still remain unhappy. Happiness can't be found when we are yearning for new desires⁶⁾.

Luckily, there is a way to be happy. It involves changing the emphasis of our thinking from what we want to what we have. Rather than wishing your spouse was different, try thinking about her wonderful qualities. Instead of complaining about your salary, be grateful that you have a job. Rather than wishing you were able to take a vacation to Hawaii, think of how much fun you have had close to home. The list of possibilities is endless. Each time you notice yourself falling into the “I wish life were different” trap, back off and start over. Take a breath and remember all that you have to be grateful. When you focus not on what you want, but on what you have, you end up getting more of what you want anyway. If you focus on the good qualities of your spouse, she'll be more loving. If you are grateful for your job rather than complaining about it, you'll do a better job, be more productive, and probably end up getting a raise any way. If you focus on ways to enjoy yourself around home rather than waiting to enjoy yourself in Hawaii, you'll end up having more fun. If you ever do get to Hawaii, you'll be in the habit of enjoying yourself. And, if by some chance you don't, you'll have a great life anyway.

Make a note to yourself to start thinking more about what you have than what you want. If you do, your life will start appearing much better than before. For perhaps the first time in your life, you'll know what it means to feel satisfied.

□ by Richard Carlson

想想你所拥有的而非你所想得到的

在作压力咨询顾问这十几年期间，我所见到的最为普遍最具毁灭性的心理趋向，就是专注于我们想要得到的而非我们所拥有的。我们到底拥有多少似乎并不重要；我们只是一味地扩展我们的欲望单，而这就注定我们永远不会满足。“这一欲望得到满足后我就会幸福”——这种心态在该欲望真的满足后又会有。

我们的一位朋友于某个星期天履行完他新房子的契约。就在我们再次见到他时，他大谈

他下一栋更大的房子。他这样的人并不罕见。我们大多数人做着类似的事情。我们要这要那，如果我们没有得到自己想要的，便不住地想我们没有的——于是我们就老是不满。可如果我们真地得到了自己想要的，又会在新的情况下抱同样的想法。于是，尽管我们得到了自己想要的，我们依然不快活。当我们不断渴求新的欲望时，幸福无法驻留我们的心间。

幸运的是，有一种办法能让我们幸福，这便是把我们考虑的重点从我们想要得到的转到我们所拥有的。与其希望你的配偶应该怎样怎样，不妨想想她可爱的品质。与其抱怨你的薪水，不妨感激你有一份工作。与其希望你能够去夏威夷度假，不妨想想你在家门口已找到了多少乐趣。这种可能性的单子是列不完的。每当你发现自己陷入“我多么希望生活是另一番景象”这一陷阱时，赶紧抽身重新想一想，吸一口气，记住你所拥有的，这样心里就会感激。你如果注重你所拥有的而非你想要得到的，你最终得到的比你想要的要多。如果你注重的是你配偶的良好品质，她会更加温柔体贴。如果你对你的工作心存感激而非一味抱怨，你会做得更好，更有成果，或许最终也会加薪。如果你琢磨的是如何在家门口玩得开心，而非等着去夏威夷玩儿，你最终会得到更多的乐趣。如果你真能去成夏威夷，那么你就已经很会玩几个痛快了。即使由于某些原因你没能去成，你的生活依然是丰富多彩的。

记住要开始多想想自己拥有的而不是自己渴求的。如果你做到的话，你的生活就会显得比以往要美好得多。也许这是生平第一次，但你会领悟到心满意足的意义。

NOTE 注释：

stress consultant 压力咨询

pervasive [pə:'veisiv] adj. 普遍深入的

destructive [dis'trʌktiv] adj. 破坏(性)的

mental tendency 心理趋势

escrow [es'krəu] n. 由第三者保存附带条件委付盖印的契约

desire [di'zaiə] n. 愿望，心愿，要求