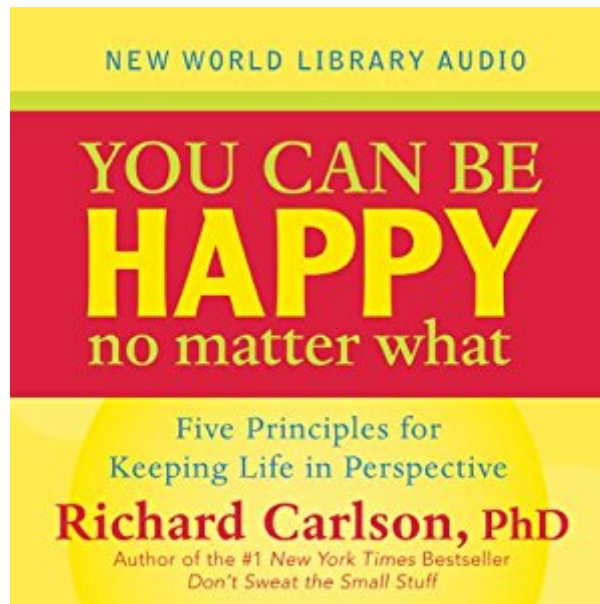


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# You Can Be Happy No Matter What: Five Principles Your Therapist Never Told You



## Synopsis

Many people believe they will be happy only when they solve their problems, improve their relationships, and achieve success. In this elegant gift edition, Richard Carlson shows that they can be happy now - no matter what the situation. His plan is based on the five principles of Thought, Mood, Separate Realities, Feelings, and the Present Moment, and will help readers discover how to focus on everyday joy and inner contentment. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Ever felt like depression and negativity were swamping all the happiness out of your life? Then read this book before you turn to Prozac. When I first found this book, back in 1997, I instantly recognized myself in Dr. Carlson's descriptions of the way thoughts can play through one's head and cause you to act in reactionary, emotional ways when one is experiencing what he calls a "low mood." He teaches readers, though, through a step by step process, how to return once again, to a state of "healthy psychological functioning." This book is NOT another "positive thinking" book. No, it is one of the most profound little books you'll ever pick up. It teaches you how to recognize "low moods" and to avoid action during low moods. It shows how to return to "normal functioning." After reading the book version several times a year for the last couple of years, I recently bought a two-tape audio version of this book, which is read by the author, and allows me to review the book's key principles whenever I feel a low mood setting in for too long. Not just a book. A great mental health tool.

I have to agree with all of the reviewers below: This book has some valuable insights. And because I am not unfamiliar with the concepts (see my review of "Napkin Notes on the Art of Living") I was interested to read a different presentation of similar material. Yes, we control our thoughts, our thoughts affect our moods, and feelings are a good indicator of when our thought process has derailed -- ie we're not living in the moment. And with a lot of patience and practice, we can navigate even the hardest things in life with more grace. But there were times while reading that my little voice said "This guy is making it sound way too easy... OR he's way too happy..." He insists that ignoring your low moods or negative feelings isn't "denial" but "deferral" of dealing with those feelings until you're in a better frame of mind, but often we aren't given that luxury. I worked really hard to maintain respect when, in two or three lines, he described how he was able to cope when a dear friend died in a car crash on the way to standing up to his wedding. Was it really as easy as he makes it sound? Human beings are complex, and often overwhelmed by feelings. So while this is good advice for many of life's ups and downs, I suspect the more complicated scenarios will require a bit more.

I can only add a few words to the mostly positive reviews already posted. The reader from Chicago unfortunately missed the point. Life does not have to be a self-improvement course. We do have the tools we need to live a happy life, but so often deny ourselves, out of a notion that life is only meaningful if we "struggle for clarity", and earn our well-being. Over the years I've taken myself to task for mistakes, choices, relationships, in order to consider myself "worthy" of a happy existence. The concepts in this book are simple, but not stupid. Carlson's metaphor for living in the moment; the image of a motor boat, and its wake, couldn't be easier to understand. We stand at the back of the boat, studying the wake, but it's the engine that moves us forward! As it is with our past, we can examine it, but like the wake, it's not going to get us anywhere.

This was the first of several books I read from Dr. Carlson, and I know it was a very instrumental part of my recovery process overcoming depression. I can't remember when I was so excited to read a book (except perhaps, when I read his book, "Shortcut Through Therapy"). I've read it three times, and bought four copies for other people who were also amazed at how much control they actually had over their own happiness! The beauty of this book is its simplicity. It combines principles and applications that are not difficult to understand and, with practice, almost effortless to implement. This book benefited me because I believed, that I had little or no control over my

thoughts, feelings, moods, circumstances or happiness. As I reflect after reading the book, I find that I have been feeling better longer. I still have low moods, but I don't sink as low, stay as long or hurt as bad as I used to. I'm still in therapy, and an end is in sight. My shrinks have substantially lengthened the time between visits, and reduced my meds considerably. Thank you Dr. Carlson, for your helping hand when it was needed most.

My bookshelf is full of self-help books, but when I lose perspective this is the book I reach for first. Unfortunately it is also the first book I lend out or give away, so I didn't really come here to write a review -- I'm buying another copy or two. This will probably be my 12th copy or so. The principles are simple, but simple in a way that time and again makes me say, "Oh yeah!" because out of habit I have slipped into very complicated ways of thinking that leave me feeling trapped and depressed and resisting my feelings themselves. My favorite principle (and most easily remembered in time of need) is the principle of moods, which reminds me that fighting my feelings will never work. I find this principle very freeing, because something cool happens when I give up that particular fight. The only problem is that I don't remember the other principles very well right now cause I haven't read it in a while, and I just lent my copy out last weekend to a friend who's going through a breakup. So here I am.

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