

## Happy

*To be happy is to feel that the world is on your side, and is conspiring with you to satisfy your desires. Because happiness is a volatile feeling, it can take lightening fast turns into its opposite, unhappiness. The same volatility explains why we cannot feign happiness. It has a life of its own and cannot be coerced. When it is in possession of us, happiness is irresistible and motivating.*

### Examples

1

All my life I have been susceptible to sudden happiness, 'surprised by joy' as C.S. Lewis puts it. It is as though a light goes on inside and is radiant. My thoughts are clear, my feelings transparent. I felt this kind of happiness in Tuebingen, in 1957. My wife and I had driven into the city and slept at an old hotel on the Marktplatz. When we woke, early the following morning, we looked out onto a brilliant sun-riveted scene. Everywhere were flowers and fruits on display for market day. The panorama of busy sellers and produce enthralled me. I have never been happier. Why was this sight such a source of joy? It has been many years. Still, though, I remember a sense, that morning, that the world had just been created.

2

I am happy when I hear my wife's voice on the telephone. The familiar speech patterns and tones seep into me, and though I may be at some distance, say from the taiga of Northern Quebec to the cornfields of Iowa, I feel warm and at home in myself. What is this mystery of the voice? Plato said that the eyes are the windows of the soul, but the voice seems the very presence of the soul. You hear, before and within you, the whole vibration of a life, brought to the burning point of each single word. And interestingly enough, you seem in this process, which puts you wholly in the other person, to have become newly your own self.