

BQ – Bliss Quotient

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Every person has a baseline requirement for bliss, which is your Bliss Quotient (BQ). When you're not meeting your BQ, you go looking for something to create bliss. Unfortunately, the places you look have side effects.. If the side effects damage your health, your mind, or your life, it is called "addiction". Drugs and alcohol have been fairly easy to identify as addictions. Now food, work and exercise are also identifiable addictions.

Yet all of these things can be catalysts to the experience of bliss and are being used to meet your basic BQ. A famous writer once described how he decided to live in bliss by staying high on LSD all the time. He discovered after several days that it was impossible, because he couldn't handle basic life needs (like eating), and because the side effects were damaging his body. So he decided to go to the bliss experts, the yogis in India.

The teachings of the ancient sages describe that your desire for bliss is a desire to know your own nature, but you're currently cut off from yourself. Yoga or "union" is the resolving of this inner split so that you experience the natural bliss of your own Being. This internal split shows up in the endless conversations you have with yourself inside your head. It shows in your posture and habitual facial expression, in your relationships (which often have a disturbingly repetitive quality), in your Freudian slips and more. It is easier to point out others' internal splits than to see your own. Yet the split is there, or you would be living in constant bliss, and you wouldn't need anything external to trigger it.

Bliss that is triggered by externals is temporary bliss. If your bliss comes from skiing, you'll only be in bliss while you're skiing, or while you're talking about skiing, or planning to go skiing, or buying skiing supplies and magazines, etc. Your focus on skiing will be complete, because skiing is your catalyst to bliss. All your friends will take up skiing, or you'll make new friends with the people you meet on skis.

Yoga says there's nothing wrong with skiing. The problem is that your bliss is temporary; it only happens when you're skiing. You have a low BQ. Where's your bliss when you're eating or sleeping? What about your work and relationships, or when you're stuck in a traffic jam? You're stuck with "dependent bliss", meaning your bliss depends on something outside of you and is only temporary. Also, your skiing bliss is only partial. You're not a "perfect" skier. You may fall down, or your form is imperfect. Or perhaps you're really good at it but your mind is running the litany of all your problems. Where's your bliss?

Yoga is the science of bliss. Every technique of *Svaroopā*[®] yoga is for the purpose of increasing your bliss. The first stage of bliss is relaxation, which progresses to a tingling aliveness throughout your whole body. Then it becomes a contagious joy that arises from inside, without any external cause. This bliss is more than merely physical and is accessed by a variety of yoga practices including yoga poses, breathing, chanting, meditation, contemplation and study of the ancient texts, etc.

How does yoga work? Each of the practices is for the purpose of stilling the relentless activity of your mind. That mental activity distracts you from the bliss already there. Yoga's practices quiet your mind so you can discover the bliss that is inside you and has always been there. Bliss is what you experience when you're not worrying, ruminating or analyzing your life, and arises naturally when you quit looking for something outside of you to create your bliss. Yoga shows you how.

You have to actively do something to get out of the normal rut that you live in, and you can't do it with the tools you already have at hand. All the tools you've been taught, or been given by example, produce what you now experience. Would you describe yourself as truly healthy and completely happy? The

emphasis on rational-logical mind and the techniques of the West are excellent for business and competition, but not very useful for bliss. The question is, "Can an old dog (you) learn new tricks?" Try a *Svaroopā*[®] yoga class!