

Aspiration

What is aspiration?
What types of aspirations lead to happiness?
How do we keep aspiration alive?
Aspiration is a call to action.

Aspiration is the profound longing for purpose and fulfillment, joy and happiness, which lies deep – and sometimes buried – in our hearts, and in the heart of every living being. It is the voice inside that urges us to use our life well and to make the best of whatever gifts and passions we possess. The way we choose to respond to that voice will determine all the other choices we make in our lives. The happiest and most contented people are usually those who have found a way to put their aspirations for self and others into practice, and have thereby played an active part in creating a better world.

There is nothing wrong with eating, sleeping, going to work, shopping, and seeing movies. But will you find satisfaction if your entire life is taken up with the pursuit of pleasure and personal comfort? It can become like salty water that never quenches your thirst, and the result may be nothing more than quiet desperation. The happiest human beings seem to be those who have created some meaning to their existence beyond simply taking care of themselves. Even if we are scared, aspiration makes our blood sing and our eyes shine. These are the moments when we sense that anything is possible – that human beings can create great beauty, resolve intractable problems, show vast compassion and develop enduring wisdom.

How often do you reflect on what really fires you up? Can you give a day, an hour or even five minutes to honestly ask this question? Where is the resistance? Is it a risk of admitting that you may not be satisfied? Does part of you long for change while another part is anxious and afraid? Are you willing to acknowledge your power and potential to share your life in the way that you long for?

Aspiration is the fuel of change. It feeds on our hope that life could be better or more meaningful, and our willingness to do something differently to make this happen. It is a call to action. When it is not followed through, it can turn sour. The heart grieves for what has been tasted but lost. Yet when aspiration leads us into action, we feel a transformation.

The happiest and most contented people are usually those who have found a way to put their aspirations for self and others into practice, and have thereby played an active part in creating a better world. What can we do to turn our aspirations into reality? How can we taste and realize our unique potential as human beings?

(Excerpted and adapted by E. Weber from, The 16 Guidelines for Life, 2006-2012)



His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama - An Aspiration Prayer -

May I become at all times, both now and forever,

A protector for those without protection,

A guide for those who have lost their way,

A ship for those with oceans to cross,

A bridge for those with rivers to cross,

A sanctuary for those in danger,

A lamp for those without light,

A place of refuge for those who lack shelter,

And a servant to all in need.