

Q. What is the Toltec Secret to Happiness?

Like most secrets, it's not much of a secret at all. It's out there for all to see yet invisible to all except those who are ready hear it. The Secret is simply this: Limiting beliefs result in drama and sadness, and positive beliefs support a life filled with happiness and possibility. To eliminate self-doubt, unhappiness, conflict, and regret, you must discover the beliefs you have that are rooted in baseless fear and learn to change them.

Q. It says in your bio that you completed a six-year apprenticeship with don Miguel Ruiz, MD, author of the best-selling book, *The Four Agreements*. What is the Toltec Wisdom Path that don Miguel speaks about?

There have been a series of writers in the last 40 years (Carlos Castaneda, don Miguel Ruiz and many others) who have popularized and created a lot of interest in the mythology of the Toltec's.

The Toltec were an ancient culture chiefly located in what is now the pyramid ruins of Teotihuacán in the high midlands of Mexico. In a tradition that dates back thousands of years and continues today, the Toltec were known throughout Mexico as men and women of knowledge. One interpretation of the word "Toltec" is "artist." They considered the manner in which you lived your life as your art; thus the Toltec path was not a religion but more accurately a way of life.

The lineage of Toltec's that exist today still consider that no matter what shape your life is in, it is your masterpiece – your creation. So it follows that if you want to change that creation there is no way for you to do it unless you have an understanding of how you "dream" reality, and how that reality is significantly altered by your beliefs about everything. With that awareness it's much easier to make the changes you want, be free from base-less fear, and be happier.

Q How did your time with don Miguel Ruiz impact your own process of change?

When I met don Miguel I was struggling with my own issues despite the fact that I had read mountains of self-help books, and tried numerous spiritual traditions. I had collected a lot of great knowledge but it wasn't producing the changes I was looking to make. Through my association with don Miguel I learned that I had created a filter I viewed the world through comprised of all my experiences, agreements, and beliefs. It was significantly impacting my attempts to change the behaviors I had that were making me unhappy.

Q. How is this book different from other books that promise change?

There are many books out there that promise change and offer a lots of wonderful suggestions on how to do it. However, most focus on changing what you do – changing your behavior. Many

people are frustrated because they spend a lot of money, energy, and time, but the changes they make don't last. They fall back into the same old patterns despite their best efforts. In order to effect lasting and positive change you need to change what you believe, not just what you do. The book focuses on how to identify and change self-limiting beliefs.

Q. What is the biggest mistake people make when trying to make significant changes to their behavior so they'll be happier?

They decide to act differently, which is an important step, but it doesn't address what drives their actions. It's like New Year's Resolutions – have you ever noticed that the local gym is full in January and back to normal by March? Despite our best intentions changing our minds about what we are going to do is often not enough. If you don't address what is driving the behavior you want to change then the changes you are trying to make will only be temporary.

Q. Are you saying that if I try to make changes like: losing weight, having better relationships, improving my finances, or getting healthier – just doing something different is the wrong approach?

Not at all. Resolving to change your behavior is an important step. But, if you want the changes to last...you need to examine and change any limiting beliefs you have that are impacting your behavior. The book focuses on that process.

Q. Can you give us an example of how your beliefs might affect your happiness?

Sure. One of my clients always goes the extra mile at work and with her family. She works harder and longer than anyone else. And, anytime there is a suggestion on how something can be improved she overreacts emotionally to what is suggested. Why? Because deep down she believes she can never get it right. That belief, often unseen, is making her unhappy and is an obstacle to deepening the important relationships she treasures.

Q If I read Toltec Path to Happiness will I be happier?

I hope so! What I have discovered working with hundreds of people who have asked me to assist them in creating positive change in their lives, is that when they make changes to what they believe and not just their behavior, those changes last. And so they are happier! If they want a better marriage, then happiness is going to be making lasting changes that create a deeper relationship. If they want to lose weight then happiness is going to be making lasting changes in their lifestyle that culminate in a lower weight.