

Sacred Space

'Happiness' has been the subject of numerous books, surveys, analyses and interpretations in recent times. In fact, one media commentator suggests that 'Happiness' is the new industry. The general conclusion is that it is the relationships that we have with the people around us and not money that makes happy. Our quality of life has a direct link to the quality of the relationships in our lives.

I would suggest that the key to happiness is not the relationships we have with others rather it is the relationship we have with ourselves. This would have to be the most challenging relationship of all. If we pay attention to this relationship then the rest will follow.

Hamilton and Denniss, in their book *Affluenza* (Clive Hamilton & Richard Denniss, *Affluenza - When too much is never enough*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2005, pg 13) explore the concept of buying an identity. In our desire to bring our actual self into accord with our ideal self, that is who we wish to be, we derive our sense of identity from the things that we buy and own. A whole marketing infrastructure has been developed to manufacture the 'ideal self' and to supply the goods to fill the gap. Luxury Fever has been embraced by society at large and yet we feel more isolated than ever before.

It takes courage firstly, to recognize that we seek validation for who we are from external sources and then secondly, to look inward where we can begin to develop our own frame of reference for success. For many stopping and listening to your own voice is a journey into uncharted waters. There is no certainty.

Busyness offers both certainty and distraction. When we are doing we are achieving. Most personal development courses recognize the value of a balanced life. We are encouraged to devote attention equally to our relationships, our careers, our health, our finances and our spirituality to achieve self awareness. The greatest irony is that if we pay the greatest attention to our spirituality first the rest will follow.

Creating a sacred space is the first step in exploring our relationship with ourselves. We are all familiar with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. First and foremost we need to feel safe. Our physical space needs to afford us a sense of security and safety so that we can let go of the busyness and turn inwards to our heart.

When we close the door on the distractions of life and are alone with our thoughts we give ourselves permission to take a break from being responsible. This physical space gives us the emotional space to recharge, generate new ideas and receive answers to some of life's challenges. We begin the journey to reconnect with ourselves, our hearts and in the process discover our own happiness.

Altars to the God's at home and work have long been a tradition in Eastern cultures. Sacred spaces allow us to experience this construct in a Western context in our daily life.

A room, a corner, a shed, a garden room your sacred space is determined by you and your passions. Fundamental is that it is a place where you can express yourself freely without censure or judgment and are inspired to be your best.

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