

How to Live When You're in Pain

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Arthur C. Brooks: When you teach happiness, like I do, one of the biggest questions that people have initially: What is it? I mean, we all think we know what happiness is until you think about it. A lot of people, they assume that happiness is a feeling. A better definition of happiness is: It's like a meal with three macronutrients. Just as a meal has macronutrients—or protein, carbohydrates, and fat—happiness is a feast with three macronutrients, and they are: enjoyment, satisfaction, and purpose.

I want to focus right now on that third macronutrient, on purpose. I probably don't have to convince you that [finding purpose or meaning](#) in your life is required for you to be a happy person. You may have spent certain times in your life really having a great old time. Lots of pleasure, lots of enjoyment, but kind of aimlessly. And you most likely didn't find that you were really, really happy.

Almost everybody, it turns out, when they're asked what actually helped them understand their life's purpose—which is part of happiness—paradoxically, they talk about periods of unhappiness. Here's the conundrum within all of these ideas: To be happy, you need purpose. To have purpose, you need unhappiness. You need some pain. You need some sacrifice. You need some difficulty. And that's what we're going to talk about today. Because we need it to get the purpose and thus the happiness that we seek.

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