



**3 Life-Altering  
Secrets to  
Happiness**

by Chuck Batson

# 3 Life-Altering Secrets to Happiness

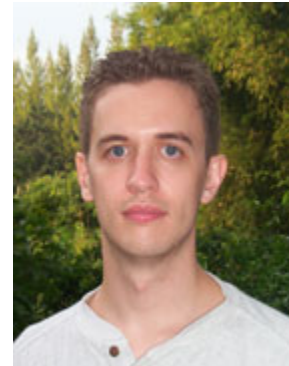
by Chuck Batson  
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**You have my permission (and my encouragement!) to pass this report along to anyone you think would benefit, provided that you do not alter it and that you give it away free.**

## About the author

Chuck is the author of the raw food diet blog [RawFoodDietNow.com](http://RawFoodDietNow.com). He specializes in helping people turn fresh, whole fruits and vegetables into health and happiness.



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### 3 Life-Altering Secrets to Happiness

If a close friend recommended a meditation course... where you take a vow of silence... wake up before dawn each day... and meditate 13 hours per day... for 10 days straight... what would you say?

This is precisely what happened to me about 10 years ago.

Those of you who know me well know I'm an ordinary guy, not a "new agey" type who would meditate. But, I do keep an open mind, am curious, and willing to try new things.

(Engaging in activities outside your "comfort zone" is an unbeatable way to achieve personal growth, but I digress.)

So I did it.

I went to the 10 day, vow of silence, wake up before dawn, 13 hours of meditating per day retreat.

And you know what?

**It was a life-altering experience.**

Not in the sense that there was a major epiphany where I woke up one day and suddenly everything was different.

Rather, I came away with 3 fundamental "secrets" that have since shaped my thinking significantly, helped me to "see" the world more clearly and realistically, and be a happier person.

These secrets are so profound and powerful, I intend to instill them in my offspring.

Because I'm convinced that the 3 secrets can help them – in fact everyone, including you – live happier lives.

Normally I write about the [raw food diet](#). So what exactly does this report have to do with raw foods? Okay, it's not directly related.

However, the raw food diet is about health, among other things. And **the happier you are, the**

**healthier you will be. And the healthier you are, the happier you will be.**

Plus, because I value our relationship, I want to share these with you. I sincerely wish for you to have a happier, more satisfying, more fulfilling life.

Just being aware of these secrets will get you 90% of the way... And you won't even have to endure 130+ hours of meditation to get started.

(Though if you're interested it is known as [Vipassana meditation](#) and I do recommend trying it.)

So let's get to it!

### **Life-Altering Secret #1: The Gap Between Stimulus and Response.**

If you step on a dog's tail, it will howl. For the dog, the stimulus and response are connected, and the dog does not consciously choose whether to howl or not.

For humans though, there is an opportunity between the stimulus and

response for a conscious choice to intervene. This means you can choose a conscious reaction to an event, and not be limited by instinctual reactions.

What's more, this gap can be widened with practice. With time, you will become more aware of stimulations and your responses to them. By observing yourself you will learn to intervene, break old patterns, and take advantage of the gap more and more.

Some examples will help.

A person who is called a derogatory name may become angry and punch the name caller. This person is not exercising their gap. The stimulus (being called a name) leads to a response (punching the caller) without much, if any, thought.

A different person who is called a derogatory name may become angry, and take no action. This person is taking some advantage of the gap. They have received the stimulus and feel angry, but have not taken action. It is not a given that be-

ing called a name needs to lead to a violent physical reaction.

A third person may be called a derogatory name and not even become angry. This person is using the gap to great advantage. This person realizes that upon receiving stimulus, they have a conscious choice how to react – not just in physical terms, but in emotional terms as well. It is NOT a given that being called a name needs to lead to a negative emotional response!

This idea is especially useful if you have small children. It can help you maintain calm and patience during the storms.

If you carry this thinking further, you realize that with practice you can choose how you feel. That's so important I'm going to say it again:

**You can choose how you feel.**

There are no hard-wired rules that determine how you should feel about anything.

Have you ever heard a joke that one person found humorous and another found offensive? The joke (the stimulus) is the same words, the same ideas for both people. Yet their responses are different.

In some societies, the death of a loved one and a funeral are occasions for sorrow and mourning. Yet in other societies the same event is viewed as cause for celebration! Again, the same stimulus yet two very different responses.

If a snotty coworker says something nasty to you, it's not a given that you have to take that personally. You have a choice.

If another vehicle cuts you off on the freeway, you don't *have* to get riled up. You have a choice.

Why internalize and absorb such negativity, and bring yourself down? Why waste your precious life's energy fretting about it? You have grander things to accomplish!

Through this life-altering secret, I have learned (and am still

learning) to ignore life's day-to-day "slights," and as a result live a happier, more content life with fewer moments of negative, unproductive emotions.

Here's another good reason for not letting the little things get to you. I'm sure that I have (and will) unknowingly and unintentionally cause others to feel slighted from time to time.

This realization helps me to be more tolerant of others. It is the idea behind the prayer, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us."

## **Life-Altering Secret #2: Cravings and Aversions are the Root of Misery.**

When you want something, that is a craving. And when you don't get it, you are miserable.

(For this discussion, "craving" refers to "wanting," such as desire or expectation – whether the object of wanting is physical or emotional. For example, seeking attention and want-

ing the latest popular gadget are types of cravings.)

When you don't want something, that is an aversion. And when you DO get it, you are miserable.

Examples could be failing to get the iPhone you wanted for Christmas (craving + unfulfillment = misery) or being called on to talk in front of the classroom (aversion + fulfillment = misery).

One way to help avoid misery, then, is to reduce cravings and aversions.

Now I'm not saying that cravings and aversions are easy to deal with. But, just being aware that these can lead to misery can help you to recognize sources of unhappiness in your life and deal with them appropriately.

Sure, it'd be nice to have that \_\_\_\_\_ (insert your own desire here), but is it really worth negative emotions and feelings weighing you down?

Life-altering secret #1 can help in two ways here.

First, you can use it to reduce your cravings and aversions. Just because you see a friend's shiny new iPhone (stimulus) doesn't necessarily mean you have to want one (response).

Second, when a craving goes unfulfilled or an aversion is fulfilled, you can use the stimulus-response gap to help you react in a way other than misery.

### **Life-Altering Secret #3: Everything Is Impermanent and Constantly Changing – Always.**

It has been said that “change is the only constant.”

Similarly, there is nothing permanent.

This is especially true for your emotions and sensations. They are always changing and never permanent.

Think back to a really joyful event in your life. Are you still feel-

ing the joy you felt at the time the event occurred? No. Even if reflecting back on that even brings forth a sense of joy now, it is not the exact same joy you felt at that earlier moment.

Now think back to one of the most physically painful experiences in your life. Are you still feeling that exact pain right now? No. Most likely that pain has long since subsided. But again, even if you are still in some pain from that experience today, it is not the exact same pain you felt during that experience.

So what, you ask? Well, you can use this realization to minimize unhappiness and discontent during life's inevitable periods of discomfort and pain. You will also better appreciate the moments of joy.

This secret is the basis of well-known phrases such as “You'll look back on this and laugh,” as well as,

**“This too shall pass.”**

Many years ago I was out on a bitterly cold night, the coldest night

of that winter in Illinois, in fact. My car ran out of gas, and I had to walk a long distance to a gas station. That was the coldest I have ever felt.

When I got to the gas station, I wasn't feeling well so I went into the bathroom. In there I lost consciousness for a moment, and when I awoke, was blind for 5 minutes. I had succumbed to mild hypothermia.

Although the sensation of coldness that night was incredibly intense, I did not feel that cold the next day. The feeling vanished as quickly as it had come. As miserable as it was at the time, it did not last forever.

I recently attended a special ceremony that went from 8pm to 11am the next day, and involved 15 hours of sitting in a cramped space with no food or sleep.

Afterwards, some people were irritable and openly complaining of being tired, hungry, and hot (it was also scorching hot that day).

I too was hungry, sleepy, achy, and hot – but I did not complain. In fact, I did not even mind. Why? Because I knew that the sensations were temporary. I knew that eventually, I would rest and eat, and those uncomfortable feelings would be nothing more than a mere fleeting memory.

What a powerful and liberating feeling it is, knowing that you do not have to let your emotions gain control over you! You do not have to let temporary sensations make you a less effective and happy person.

During the meditation course, the instructor said,

**“There is no such thing as an eternal itch.”**

That phrase exemplifies this life-altering secret and has stuck in my mind ever since.

While the instructor meant it metaphorically, it is also very literally true.

Try this little exercise: Next time you have an itch, don't scratch

it. Instead, simply focus and observe the sensations of the itch. You will want to scratch it, and it will be a bit uncomfortable. But eventually, the itch will go away on its own. You don't have to scratch the itch for it to stop – it isn't permanent!

## You Too Can Be Happier and More Content

You can start putting these 3 simple secrets of happiness into practice today!

1. **There is a gap between stimulus and response where conscious thought can intervene.** Use this gap to consciously react to situations. You are not controlled by involuntary programming. You can choose to ignore the negatives and cherish the positives.
2. **Cravings and aversions are the root causes of misery.** Simply being aware of this can help you discover, deal with, and reduce negative baggage in your life.
3. **The universe is always changing and nothing is permanent.** You will not be stuck with negative

emotions and uncomfortable sensations forever. Eventually they will subside or change. Fret not over life's inevitable downs. And be sure to celebrate the also inevitable ups when they come!

With some practice, you too can enjoy the life-altering benefits of these secrets. Just keep them in mind and you will begin to notice a difference almost immediately. You'll be on your way to more happiness and contentment in your life!



So what did you think? Did you find this report helpful? Which of the 3 secrets resonated with you most? What are YOUR personal secrets to happiness?

Join the discussion on my blog at <http://RawFoodDietNow.com>!