

Paths to Happiness



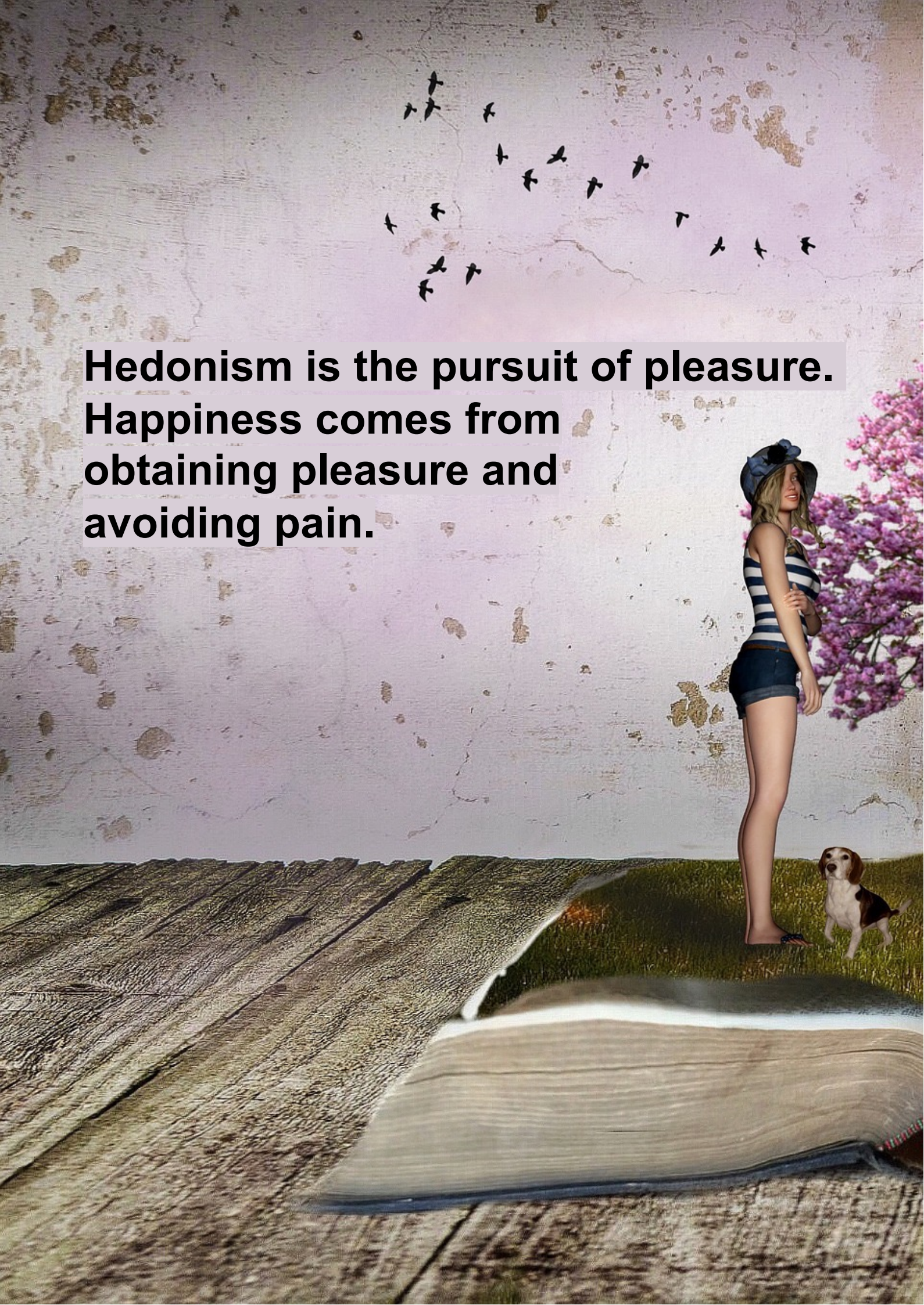
Four Paths to Happiness and their pitfalls



- Hedonism
- Eudaimonia
- Chaironic
- Flow



**Hedonism is the pursuit of pleasure.
Happiness comes from
obtaining pleasure and
avoiding pain.**




When you pursue hedonic happiness, you may get pleasure from eating, drinking, sex as well as pleasure of the mind, spiritual, moral and ethical acts, worship or other pursuits.





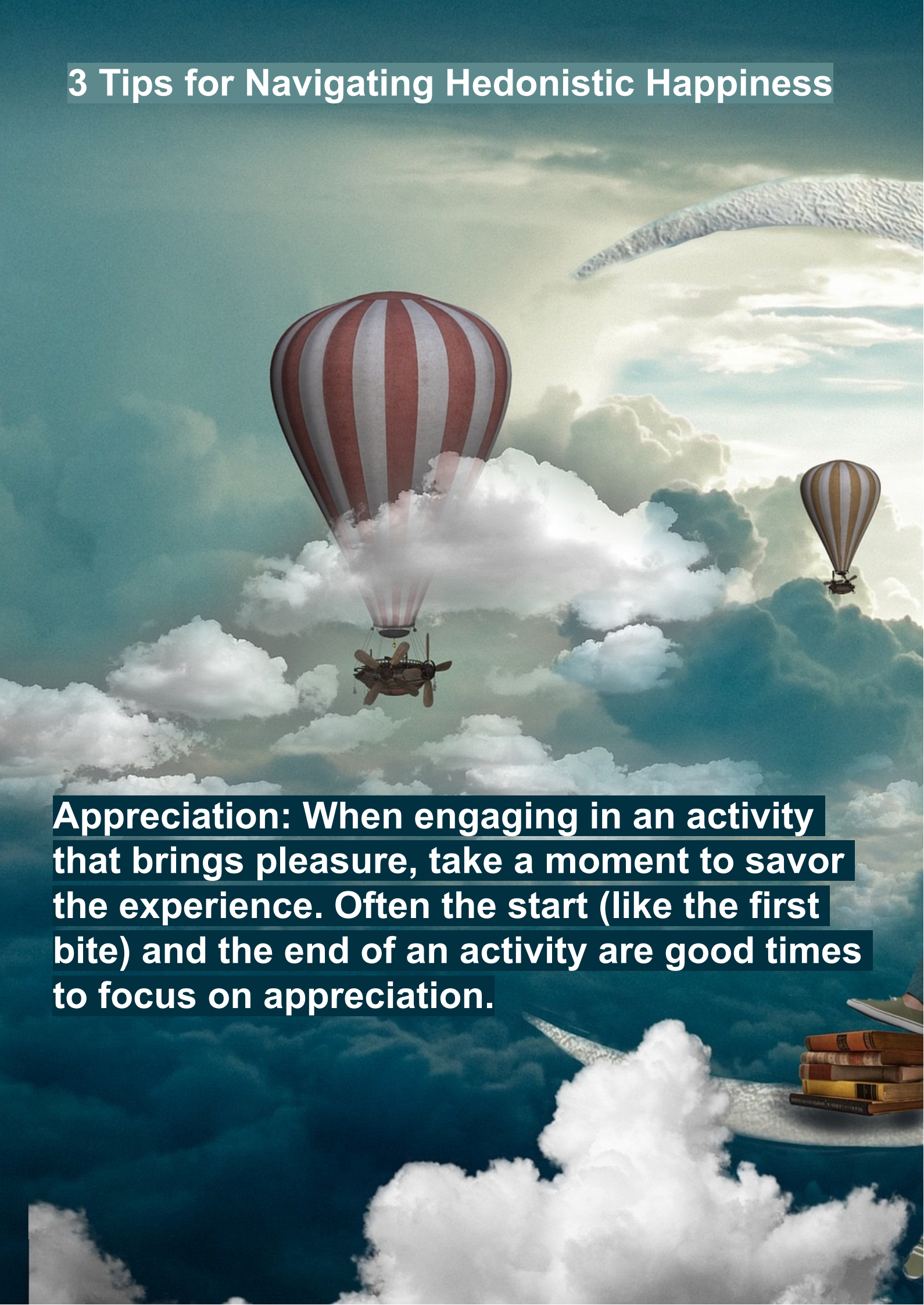
A pitfall to hedonism is called the hedonic treadmill. The hedonic treadmill is the thrill wears off when we become used to something that gave pleasure, such as a new cellphone or a great vacation. To compensate, the intensity of the stimulation must be increased until it becomes unhealthy and unsustainable – an even better cell phone or more lavish vacation. Pleasure seeking may easily become addictive or self-destructive.



Pleasure seeking can lead to unrealistic goals or mistaken goals that you may pursue even if it ruins your health or is destructive to others, the community or the planet.

Examples of unrealistic goals are perfection, control over everything, or trying to be so good or so clever that nothing bad could ever happen to you.

3 Tips for Navigating Hedonistic Happiness

A surreal sky scene with two hot air balloons, a large white wing-like structure, and a stack of books on a flying saucer. The background is a deep teal color with white and light blue clouds. A large, white, curved, wing-like structure is visible in the upper right. Two hot air balloons are floating in the sky; one is large with red and white vertical stripes, and the other is smaller with brown and white vertical stripes. In the bottom right corner, a stack of four books is resting on a white, saucer-like object that appears to be flying through the clouds.

Appreciation: When engaging in an activity that brings pleasure, take a moment to savor the experience. Often the start (like the first bite) and the end of an activity are good times to focus on appreciation.


Gratitude: Take time to count your blessings and think about the good things in your life.



Mindfulness: Take five minutes or more a day to sit in silence and watch your thoughts without judgment, allowing thoughts, feelings and observations (such as sounds) to arise and disappear, merging into the next. Mindfulness helps bring greater pleasure in the moment.

Eudaimonia happiness comes from a life that actively expresses virtue and excellence, with a sense of meaning and purpose and with a concern for others.

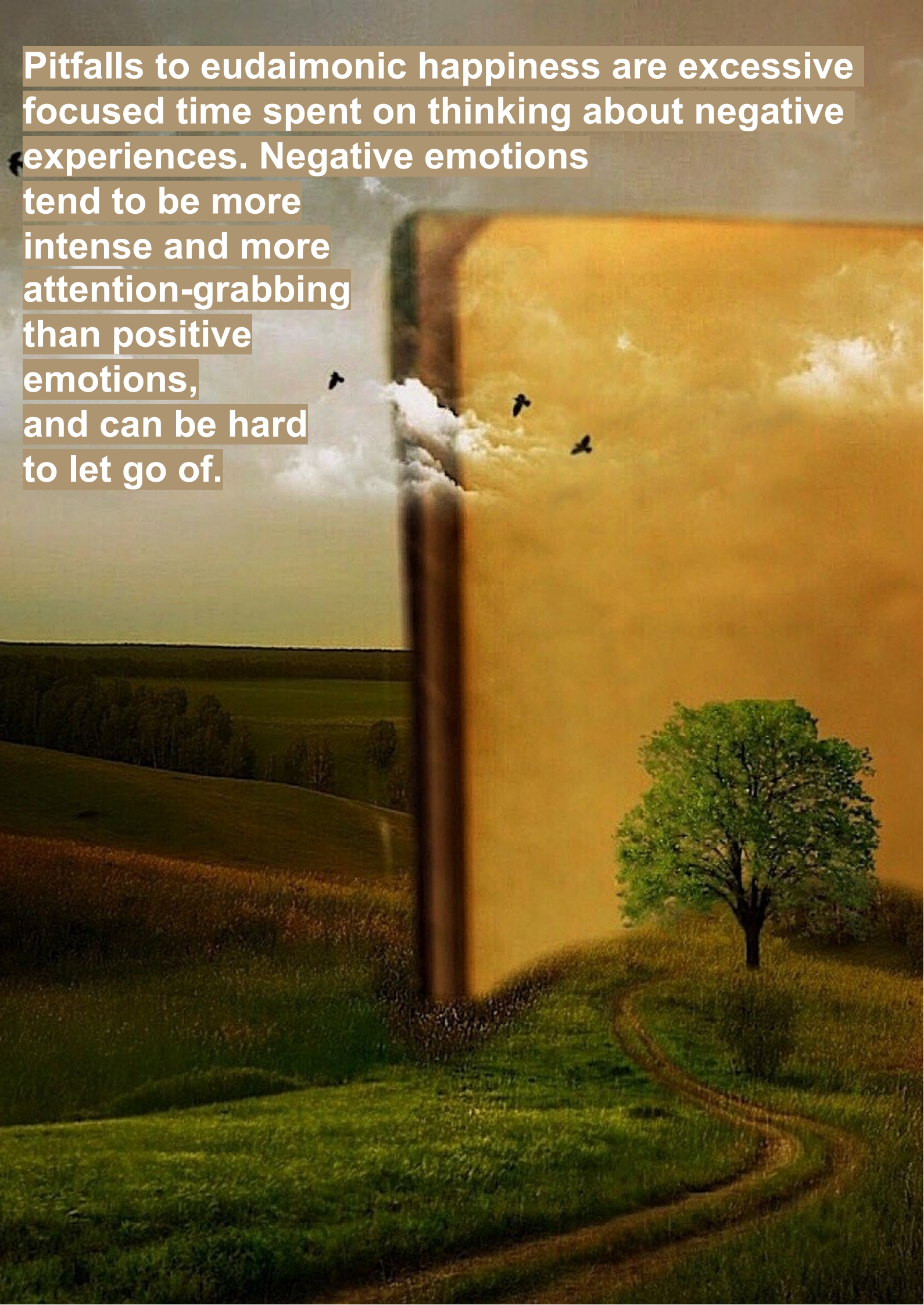


A surreal illustration of a stone castle built on a cliffside. The castle features multiple towers, a central spire, and a large arched entrance. Two large, detailed owls are shown in flight, one in the foreground and one further up the cliff. The sky is filled with soft, ethereal clouds, and a large, textured moon is visible in the upper right corner. The overall style is painterly and dreamlike.

When you pursue eudemonic happiness, you aspire to do good and make a difference. The result is a sense of fulfillment or flourishing.

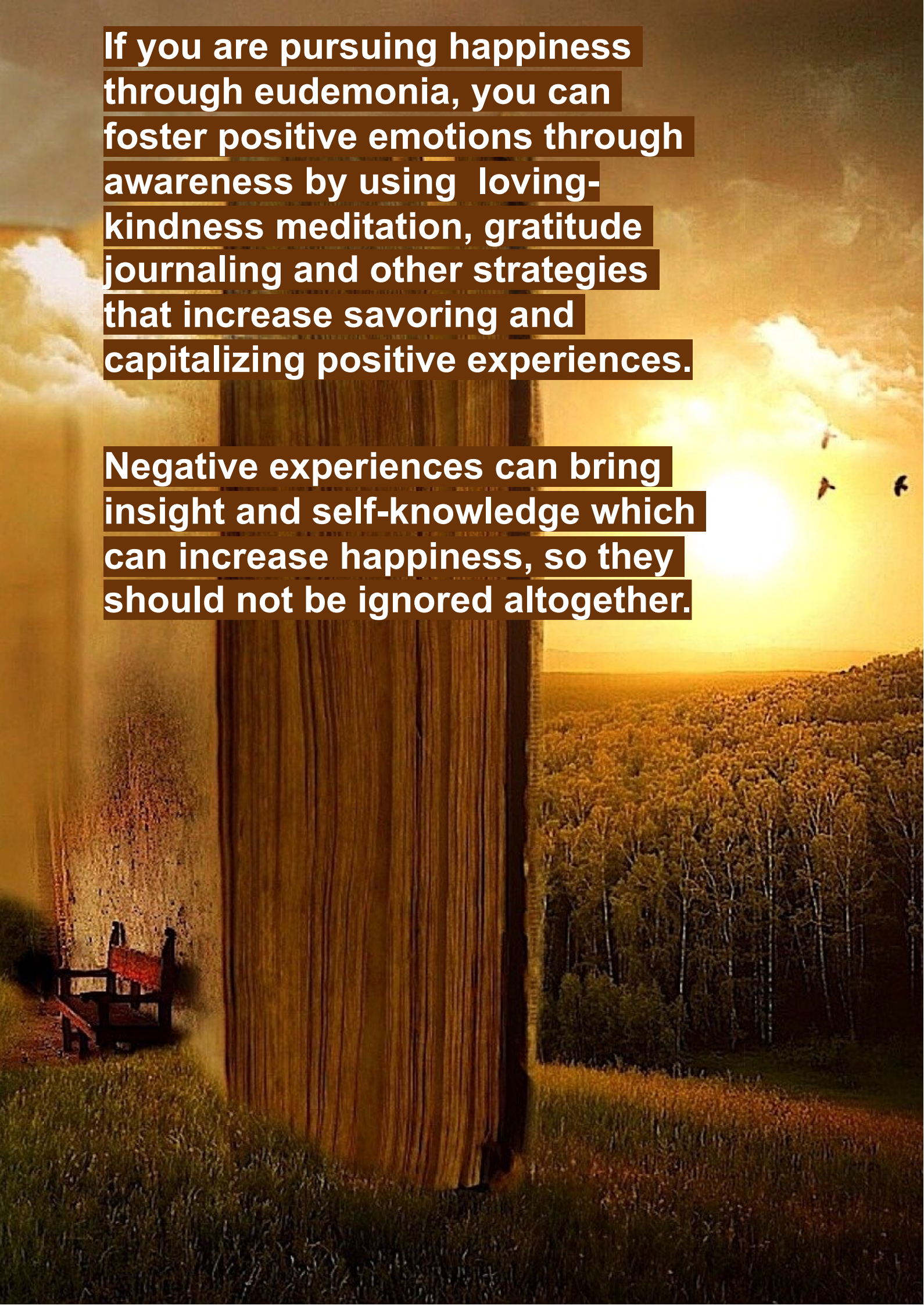


Pitfalls to eudaimonic happiness are excessive focused time spent on thinking about negative experiences. Negative emotions tend to be more intense and more attention-grabbing than positive emotions, and can be hard to let go of.



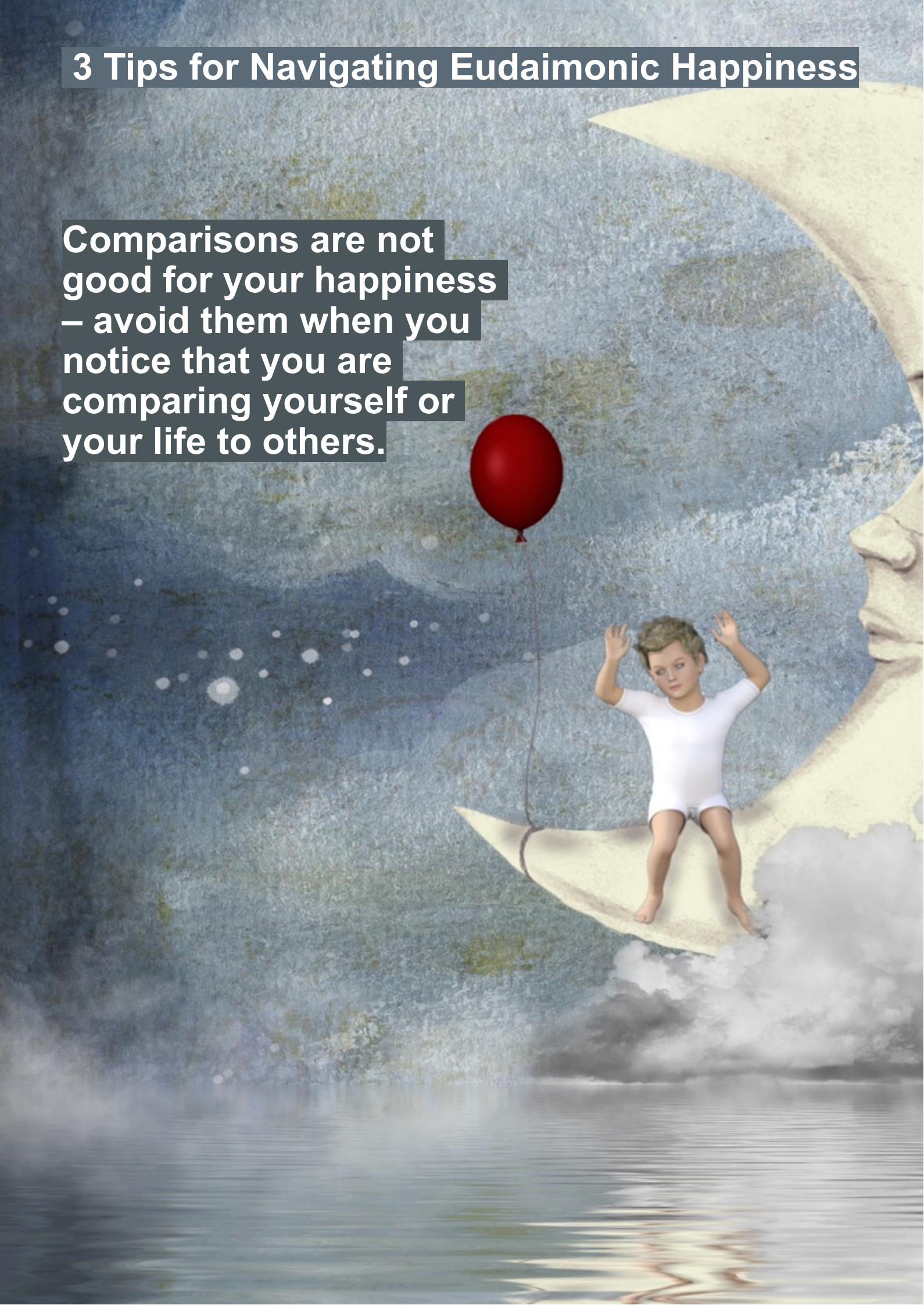
If you are pursuing happiness through eudemonia, you can foster positive emotions through awareness by using loving-kindness meditation, gratitude journaling and other strategies that increase savoring and capitalizing positive experiences.

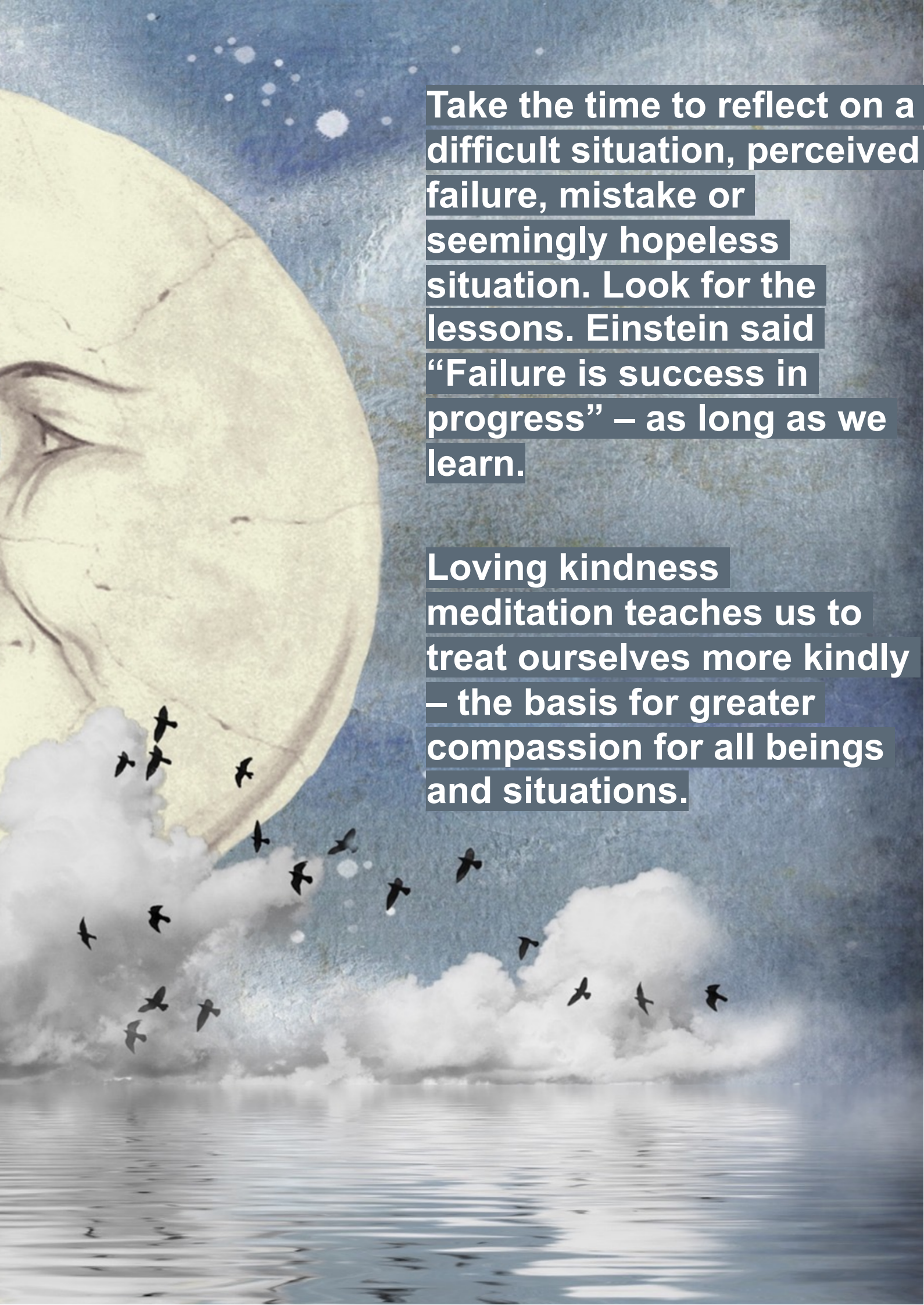
Negative experiences can bring insight and self-knowledge which can increase happiness, so they should not be ignored altogether.



3 Tips for Navigating Eudaimonic Happiness

Comparisons are not good for your happiness – avoid them when you notice that you are comparing yourself or your life to others.



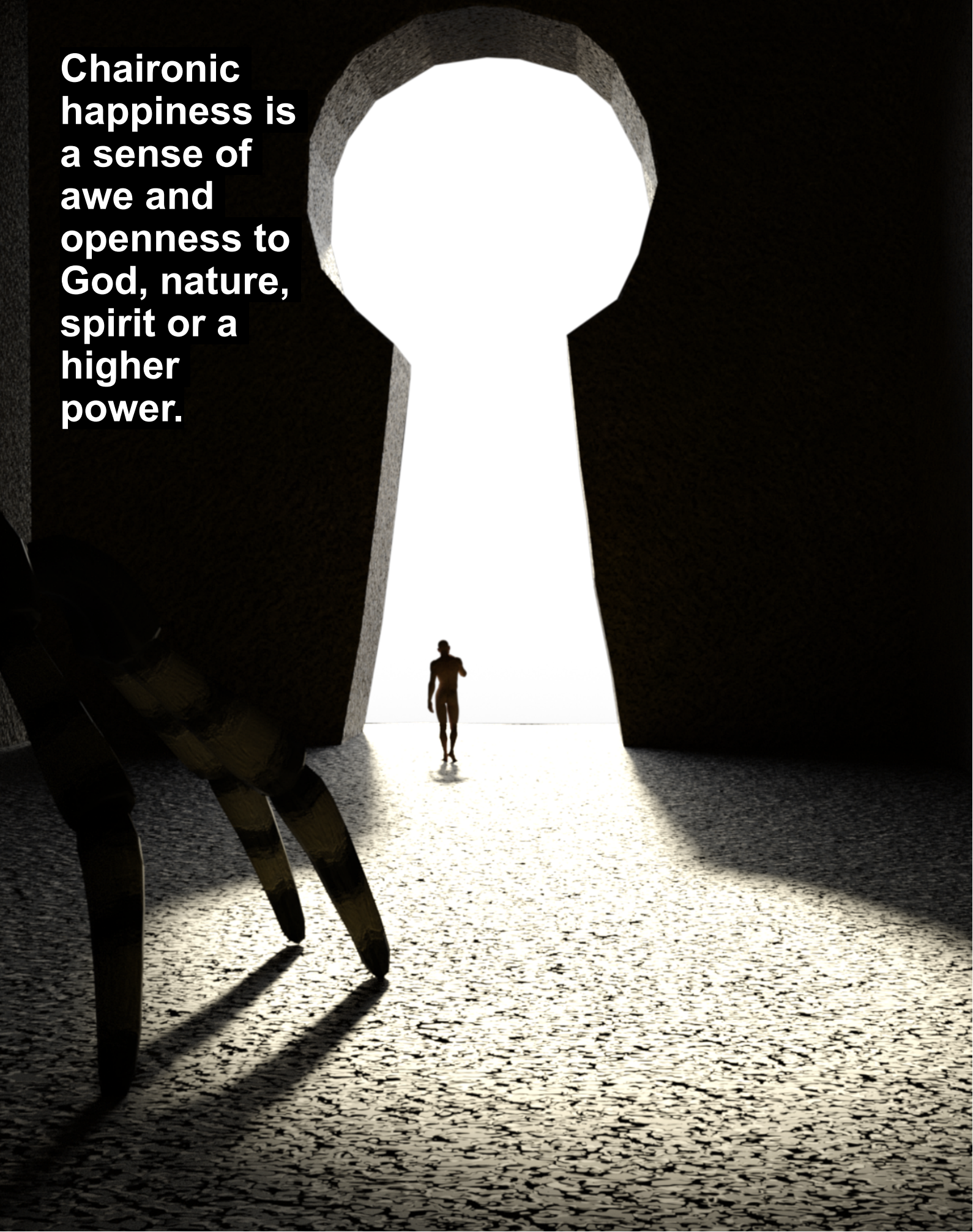


Take the time to reflect on a difficult situation, perceived failure, mistake or seemingly hopeless situation. Look for the lessons. Einstein said “Failure is success in progress” – as long as we learn.

Loving kindness meditation teaches us to treat ourselves more kindly – the basis for greater compassion for all beings and situations.

Chaironic happiness comes from a sense of being blessed and feeling grateful.

Chaironic happiness is a sense of awe and openness to God, nature, spirit or a higher power.





When you pursue chaironic happiness, you have an attitude of opennes, are mindful and attuned to transcendental encounters. People who describe themselves as highly committed to their spiritual or religious practice or a sense of connection to a higher power are twice as likely to assess themselves are “very happy” as those with low sense of commitment.



For people experiencing chaironic happiness, wavering commitment or doubt can decrease happiness. People can become ridged and dogmatic.

**When pursuing chaironic happiness,
strengthen your relationship with a place of
worship, organization or like-minded people.**



3 Tips for Navigating Chaironic Happiness


Know your strengths and find ways to use them in your life, including work, play and other aspects of your life.

Do things you have never done and you always wanted to do.




When in doubt, spend time with people you trust who are willing to take the time to talk with you. Share your thoughts and doubts without shame.





Flow happiness comes from living a fully engaged life.

When you pursue flow happiness, you are deeply involved in valued activities and have access to the resources you need.



**Flow happiness needs
just the right amount of
challenge for one's skill
when doing what you do
best.**

Flow is achieved through a clear focused attention.



Not having goals or not making progress towards goals interferes with the required focus. Excessive purposeless activity or too much unstructured time can frustrate happiness flow. Conflicts among goals, goals that do not meet your needs, or goals set by someone else can be obstacles to happiness. Engaging in an activity with the sole purpose of achieving a goal can also be an obstacle to flow. It's a balance.



2 Tips for Navigating Flow Happiness

A scenic landscape featuring a dirt path that curves through a grassy hillside. The sky is a mix of soft orange and blue, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. Several birds are seen in flight against the sky. The overall mood is peaceful and inspiring.

Take the time away from your flow activity to socialize with the people you engage with during the activity, or if they are not accessible, with people interested in your success.

Build up your own resources to support your flow activities. Investing in strong relationships can help increase your access to resources.



If your activity is taking over your life, even if it is still making you happy, reconsider how you are using your time. Take a balanced approach to all of life for long lasting happiness, spending time with family and friends, on work, in your community and on alone-time, take the time to do nothing and get enough rest.

We take all of these paths through our lives.



Sometimes we take one path more than another.



**Happiness
comes
from a
balanced
approach**



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