

## DID YOU HAVE A HAPPY LIFE?

GIVEN THE HEARTACHE recounted in the previous chapter, it is somewhat surprising that when asked if they had a happy life only three percent said no, seventeen percent said fifty-fifty, and an overwhelming eighty percent said yes. Some positive responses were a simple 'yes' with no comment while others were qualified with a vocal inflection or perhaps a comment on what they endured. Nevertheless, the responses were both genuine and encouraging. For every response to whether someone had a happy life I asked for reasons why in order to gain insights into what made people consider their life happy, unhappy or somewhere in between.

Three percent answered no and said that they didn't have a happy life. For most it was life circumstances that were so overwhelming they weren't able to control them or overcome them to the point where they could say life was good, or even satisfying. The trauma and heartache was such that no matter how things settled down later in life, they could never describe their life as happy.

One man shared that his youth was very tough and because of WWII didn't get properly set up in life. But more difficult for him was what he described as his lack of guts and the sadness he has felt his entire life from always being alone. For at least two people a lifetime of hard work, many and various jobs and lack of money has made life unhappy. One man cited the breakup of his marriage while one lady's life was made unhappy inside her marriage saying that she was bossed around all her life and never able to do the things she wanted to do.

For one lady the combination of a difficult childhood, marriage to an abusive and alcoholic husband then the heartache of seeing her kids mistreated prompted her to say she didn't have a happy life. This sentiment was echoed by a number of people who had suffered terribly through circum-