

# Happiness is a Choice

## The Gift of Happiness

If one were to ask what the ultimate goal of everybody in this forum, outside this forum and anywhere in the world is, you may find that the answer is 'happiness'. A student wishes to do well his studies, why? So that better grades help to provide him with contentment. We could extend this analogy to everyone, parents, teachers, schools, colleges, businesses and even nations. Moreover, happiness is now one of the priority agendas of the UAE.

Our entire lives are spent chasing this elusive state of mind called "Happiness". Some seem to never find themselves there while others appear to be there for a short period of time and it is then gone. So how are we to be happy forever?

To give a direction to our subject of discussion, let me narrate a short story to you. There was a boy, whose family was very wealthy. One day his father took him on a trip to the country, where he aimed to show his son, how poor people live. So they arrived to a farm of a very poor family, as he considered. They spent there several days. On their return, the father asked his son whether he liked the trip.

*"Oh, it was great, Dad" the boy replied. "Did you notice how poor people live?" "Yeah, I did" said the boy. The father asked his son to describe his impressions of their trip.*

*"Well, we have only one dog, and they have four of them. In our garden there is a pool, while they have a river that has no end. We've got expensive lanterns, but they have stars above their heads at night. We have the patio, and they have the whole horizon. We have only a small piece of land, while they have the endless fields. We buy food, but they grow it. We have high fence for protection of our property, and they don't need it, as their friends protect them."*

*The father was stunned. He could not say a word.*

*Then the boy added: "Thank you, dad, for letting me see how poor we are."*

Now there are 2 ways of interpreting the boy's reaction. One is that he genuinely feels that they are poorer. Second is that he understands what true happiness is. I'm sure, we know the correct interpretation.

There is a noted psychoanalyst called Martin Seligman who has given us a formula of happiness:



JUNE 2019



## EXCITING EVENTS SCHEDULED FOR THE MONTH OF JUNE:

- Upcoming blog by the H&M club
- Play on social media awareness
- Workshop on "Coping Skills"

there are  
so many  
beautiful  
reasons to  
be happy

$$H = p + e + m$$

According to Prof Seligman,

**P stands for pleasure.** It is the happiness we derive through pleasure.

**E stands for engagement.** It is the happiness we derive through engaging in enjoyable activities.

**M stands for meaning.** This is happiness derived when there is very high ideal.

Though it is true that  $H = p+e+m$ , the pleasure component contributes relatively less, engagement would be a little more, but the highest degree of happiness comes from meaningful activities.

Knowing well that students would not develop conviction without a concrete prof, Prof Seligman conducted an experiment. One afternoon, he asked his students to put their studies aside and go for a movie say a hilarious movie. Students were asked to fill up a questionnaire at the end of the movie and rank their happiness on a scale of 1 to 5.

After a couple of months, he asked his students to visit a children's orphanage. Students were asked to share some toys, chocolates, goodies with the children and spend time with them narrating stories, playing games etc. After the visit, the students were asked to rank their happiness on a scale of 1 to 5 again.

After another 2 months, Prof Seligman asked these students to again rank the happiness they had derived watching the movie and the orphanage visit as of the present day. Some students did not find much happiness thinking about the movie, some even forgot the name of the movie. However, all of them had vivid fond memories of the orphanage visit. This demonstrates how meaning is more superior to pleasure.

Therefore friends let us establish goals that have a true meaning. Let us resolve to pitch a "meaningful goal" and then work towards it. For this would give true happiness. Never let any setback or failure in achievement of your meaningful goals cause disillusionment in you.

The mantra here is **Work for works sake. Forsake the fruit.**

*A smile is happiness which is right under  
your nose*

*-Tim Wilson*



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