

Can't buy me happiness

[Experience](#), [Happiness](#)



The well-known American Dream results from the desire to work hard in order to gain prosperity, freedom, or even a better life than one lives. In *The Great Gatsby* (1925) by F. Scott Fitzgerald, set in the roaring twenties, a man named Jay Gatsby proves his rags to riches story as he strives for his American Dream. With determination and perseverance, he transforms from farm boy to new money, living in the Long Island Sound. Despite the wild parties he hosts and his luxurious mansion, his ultimate dream is to win back his past lover, Daisy Buchanan, married to the hypocritical and aggressive Tom Buchanan who is old money. However, the new materialistic life of Gatsby does not win Daisy's love in the end, and he is left with a broken heart. Can money buy happiness, or in Gatsby's case, love? What happens when the American dream becomes one's American nightmare?

In an attempt to achieve the American Dream, failure sets one up for unhappiness. Failure presents itself when Tom told Daisy about Gatsby's illegal business; Gatsby tried to deny accusations, but it drew Daisy "further and further [away]. . . and only the dead dream fought on" (Fitzgerald 134). The dead dream that Fitzgerald is referring to is Gatsby's. What Gatsby did for Daisy, all that he accomplished, was now thrown into the garbage and spit upon because of one man. His whole reason for his wealth and happiness was Daisy, and now that that he can't have her, nothing in his life can bring him happiness. Not only do the wealthy folk like Gatsby fail horrendously due to the dream, but also the Wilsons in the Valley of Ashes. After Myrtle Wilson's dead body joined the ashes, "Mr. Wilson was reduced to a man 'deranged by grief'" (Fitzgerald 164). Mr. Wilson planned to move west with Myrtle to prosper; however, once Myrtle was dragged and beaten

by the car of death, Wilson's reasons to attempt the American Dream vanished.

The thought that him and his wife could not obtain the dream together, led him to kill himself; agony and depression pulling the trigger. Similarly to Wilson and Gatsby, I have ultimately failed at my American Dream, which, in terms of high school, was being popular, pretty, thin and having the most expensive clothes. Although I am grateful for such an eye-opening experience, at the time of my approach, this dream took away all confidence and love I had for myself. I was the outgoing and confident Tula that everyone knew and adored, but once I tried to change that, I lost all those closest to me. When I realized people were distancing themselves from me, I blamed it on my looks, beating myself down everyday in the bathroom mirror. I thought clothes could fix everything, but it was hard finding what's "in" in my size. I believed my size determined whether or not I was beautiful. I never became this ideal person that everyone strives for, and I regret not loving myself for who I was deep down because of the years of disheartenment my dream created. Hence, sadness is a result of the American Dream because of potential failure.

On top of potential failure of the American Dream, even if achieved, one's life results in despair because of the emptiness the dream possesses. Many studies have proven this emptiness, and found "that life satisfaction... is correlated with having less materialistic values" (Warner 2). New cars, money, mansions, valuables much like the ones Jay Gatsby owns, leaves one wanting more because it will never be enough to satisfy his or her needs.

Once one accomplishes a goal, it is ideal to want to strive for more greatness because progression is possible for anyone with a growth-mindset. However, there is a limit to money, and once it's all acquired, then what? This dissatisfaction lives in the legacies of celebrities such as Robin Williams, a famous comedian who "committed suicide, as he [battled] severe depression" (Editors of biography. com). Williams won over 60 awards in his acting career and had a \$50 million dollar net worth. Besides the fact that he was famous, Williams was just like anyone else in this world trying to find their happiness. For some, happiness is getting married, getting a 100% on a test, or seeing their child taking his or her first steps. When people look at celebrities in awe, they are blinded by the fact that these A listers have sorrows behind the scenes of the media. One may have never gotten their happiness of having a father or getting an education. This "fulfilling" life, that people dream to live, leaves them with a soul of emptiness in the end, and in Williams case, a stab in the heart. Similarly to Williams, Daisy in *The Great Gatsby* is old money yet is "cynical about everything" (Fitzgerald 16). Daisy has a beautiful house, a wealthy husband, a little daughter, and is a social elite. However, her perfectly rich husband has a mistress, her daughter is of little worth to her, and because she is so uptight about her ego. if a piece of coal was shoved up her butt, a week later it would be a diamond. This gold digger proves how the American Dream is completely overrated and how unsatisfying this life is.

Though the American Dream proves to be a life of desolation, many believe it brings everlasting happiness. A man named Moawia Eldeeb, who came from Egypt in poverty, proved his happiness at 9 years old. Eldeeb moved to

the U. S. with his family and worked “ 12-hour shifts at a pizza shop in Queens, New York” (Blanco 1). He then went on to start his freshman year of high school to finish at the computer science program at Columbia University (Blanco 1). Eldeeb’s dream, being the American dream, to come to prosper and have freedom, is pure, and because of it, he gained something that he will always have: knowledge. He didn’t become overwhelmingly rich, and he didn’t seek after worldly objects. He only made a better life than he lived in Egypt, now living with necessities and an education. On top of Moawia Eldeeb’s story, one might argue that according to the Declaration of Independence, coming to America, the ultimate dream of freedom, guarantees “ life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. ” Though it promises these rights, many ethnic groups, who sought to be free through the American Dream, experienced devastation. For example, Native Americans, who were here even before the first settlers of America, did not reap the benefits for helping the colonists start this great nation. Instead, their “ savage” blood was shed. Also, African Americans went through constant discrimination and oppression to be able to get the right to vote, to get fair opportunities, and to be seen as equals rather than, as Billie Holiday would put it, a bunch of “ strange fruit... swinging in the southern trees. ” Therefore, behind the majestic American Dream is people suffering to get there.

The desired American Dream concludes in unhappiness and suffering because of the failure to pursue it, or in other cases, the never-ending emptiness that the dream is thought to fill. It is a concerning thought that the dream of many is becoming a dream of wealth rather than the dreams

like Moawia Eldeeb. The world is wasting much of their life on achieving temporary materialism. Of course, it is happiness to have freedom, it is happiness to be independent, and it is happiness to have an education; however, when money and the luxuries of life become more important than these rights, moral values decrease in importance. When values decrease, families fall apart, people turn to drugs and alcohol for relief, and they end up alone in the dark hole of depression, living their American nightmare. Perhaps, The Beatles hit "Can't Buy Me Love" was much more than four guys getting high on crack. They tell America that, like love, happiness simply can not be bought.