

Pursuit of happiness (siddhartha essay)

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



Throughout Herman Hesse's novel, *Siddhartha*, Siddhartha defines his own happiness and Siddhartha does not let anything beside himself dictate his happiness. Throughout his journeys, Siddhartha becomes enlightened because of the way he can so easily find happiness. Siddhartha proves this through his life decisions that go against the grain of "normal" decision making. Siddhartha throws ideas of money out the window if it is not what is going to make him happy.

After a long journey, Siddhartha is finally able to find his happiness.

Everybody is always scrambling for happiness; however, there are only few who can actually obtain happiness. The story begins with the background of Siddhartha: son of a Brahmin, lots of friends, plenty of money and advantages in life. Yet, Siddhartha decides he wants to become a Samana.

At this point in the story, Siddhartha is willing to do anything to get his father's permission to become a Samana. Once he earns his father's blessing, Siddhartha becomes a Samana and leaves behind all the advantages he had in life. This shows that Siddhartha is not ruled by material things.

Siddhartha shows that making decisions solely on what will make him happy is the true way to find happiness. With no regard for money or pleasing others, many would call Siddhartha selfish; however, any happy person must be selfish because if a person is not fulfilling his or her needs then he or she is not truly happy. On the other side, if someone is fulfilling his or her needs, he or she is, in some ways, selfish. In chapter eight, Siddhartha raves and is elated over a simple night's sleep: "What a wonderful sleep it had been! Never had sleep so refreshed him, so renewed him, so rejuvenated him!

Perhaps he had really died, perhaps he had been drowned and was reborn in another form. No, he recognized himself, he recognized his hands and feet, the place where he lay and the Self in his breast, Siddhartha, self-willed, individualistic. But this Siddhartha was somewhat changed, renewed. He had slept wonderfully. He was remarkably awake, happy and curious” (91). This shows that Siddhartha enjoys the simple things in life and he is happy. By the end of his life, Siddhartha is happy and enlightened; however, he is not unwaveringly happy throughout his life. Siddhartha goes through depression and even thoughts of suicide.

After leaving his wife and child –Who once were what made him happy– Siddhartha contemplates suicide but after being found by the river, Siddhartha realizes that life is worth living. He later discovers the beauty of depression: “‘Things are going downhill with you!’ he said to himself, and laughed about it, and as he was saying it, he happened to glance at the river, and he also saw the river going downhill, always moving on downhill, and singing and being happy through it all. He liked this well, kindly he smiled at the river.

Was this not the river in which he had intended to drown himself, in past times, a hundred years ago, or had he dreamed this?” (96). Siddhartha goes from rich to poor to rich again to poor again, yet through almost every change in his life, Siddhartha remains happy. An unknowingly eerie real life comparison to Siddhartha is former NFL running back: Ricky Williams. Like Siddhartha, Ricky Williams went through life and did whatever made him happy and did not let outside influences make decisions for him since he

simply did whatever made him the happiest. Williams, like Siddhartha, started his journey as a young man with many advantages.

Being a superstar athlete, Williams received a full ridescholarship to the University of Texas. After three years of being the big man on campus, Williams entered the NFL draft in 1999 and was selected fifth overall by the New Orleans Saints. After three successful seasons with the Saints, Williams was traded to the Miami Dolphins. After testing positive for a couple of drug tests, Williams was faced with a short suspension. However, Ricky Williams shocked the world by announcing his retirement from football in the prime of his career, similar to Siddhartha's choice to embark on Samana life. Williams was finding himself lost in superstardom and was no longer enjoying the game he so dearly loved.

The Miami Dolphins demanded money back off of Williams' contract claiming that he had not held up his end of the bargain. Williams did not care about the money though. In the next year Williams downgraded to a modest house and lived with his long time girlfriend. Williams even spent time living off the grid in Australia and struggled with diagnosed clinical depression problems. After a one-year sabbatical from the game, Williams returned to his homeland of happiness and played organized football for the next six years and made more money but only because he could; Williams could have played football for free because it was his true passion. This part in Williams' life is similar to Siddhartha's time spent with Kamala in the way that Siddhartha did become a wealthy business man but only because that was what made him happy.

Siddhartha makes a similar decision as Williams when he says, “ He could have remained much longer with Kamaswami, made and squandered money, fed his body and neglected his soul; he could have dwelt for a long time yet in that soft, well upholstered hell, if this had not happened: the moment of complete hopelessness and despair and the tense moment when he had bent over the flowing water, ready to commit suicide. This despair, this extreme nausea which he had experienced had not overpowered him. The bird, the clear spring and voice within him was still alive –that was why he rejoiced, that was why he laughed, that was why his face was radiant under his gray hair” (98).

The point of the comparison is that even people who seem to have it all may be lacking happiness, which to Siddhartha and Ricky Williams is the most important aspect of life. Williams’ life took him all sorts of ways and through years of trying to find inner peace he was able to be a happy man just like Siddhartha. As Siddhartha says in chapter nine, “ my path had once led me from his hut to a new life which is now old and dead” (101). Siddhartha’s happiness is a vital theme throughout Hermann Hesse’s novel.

Rightfully so, Hesse shows happiness as one of the main goals of life. Similarly to Siddhartha, Ricky Williams also displays happiness through almost all walks of life and they both prove that one must suffer and do some searching before finding his or her true happiness. Through disregard of others’ opinions and society’s view of happiness is the only way to find oneself and the only way that Siddhartha could find himself and reach enlightenment.