

# The relationship between money and happiness philosophy essay



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In today's world without exception everyone wants a happy and fulfilling life. The people around us, the society which we belong and even media tells us daily that the only way to reach a happy and fulfilling life is to have a higher income. But, is it true? Firstly we have to examine the meaning of happiness. Most commonly, happiness is known as a state of mind or feeling characterized by contentment, love, satisfaction, pleasure, or joy. For years, a great amount of researches have been done to answer this question. In this investigation, while some of researchers are supporting that attaining wealth and possessions is good for us, on the other hand some people are saying it is not. For example, In " The High Price Of Materialism" Tim Kasser says, No matter how many fancy designer clothes, cars, or jewels they might obtain, no matter how big their house or how up-to-date their electronic equipment, the lost opportunity to engage in pleasurable activities and enjoy each others' companionship will work against need satisfaction, and thus against their happiness. Annie Leonard also supports her idea through her video about consumerism and happiness. In this video the most important thing missed is people and their satisfaction. And again Juliet Schor claims that with statics " National income has been rising for the last 20 years, but measures of the quality of life and happiness have fallen". Although all of these statements prove that happiness doesn't come from wealth and possessions, according to Peter Saunder's " Why Capitalism is Good for The soul", In some companies when workers start to get more profit, it results in higher living standards for workers as well as cheaper and more plentiful goods and services. And this improvement leads to a good life for workers. " Although without money and wealth life seems difficult, too much focusing

on the possessions affects our mental health, self-control and satisfaction badly as well as damages our relationships and lead to unhappiness.

Happiness is the most valuable aim of human being. While the earth is getting complicated and changing day by day, almost all people are trying to have a happy and fulfilling life. During this pursuit of happiness, our relationships play a crucial role. In pace of life, when we have encountered with some stressful or disappointing situation or cases, in order to take a breath we always consult our families and fly into our family's arms. If we have our own families and their real support, it is the most reliable way to reach the happiness and relief. But sometimes people can be in a dilemma between possessions and relationships. This is the point of collapsing real happiness, because when the passion of money comes to a person, he starts to abandon his family. He thinks as if money will bring them happiness and good life. But it won't. As Tim Kasser says in the article of Mixed Messages " a focus on materialistic values detracts from well-being and happiness. For example when spouses spend most of their time working to make money, they neglect opportunities to be with each other and do what most interests them." And again in Downshifting in Britain

" Difficulties in managing work-life balance can have a detrimental impact on the quality of the relationships between parents and children and the parent's responsiveness to the child, with implications for child outcomes. This is particularly important for every young children, with evidence suggesting that it is best for children if they can receive intensive parental contact for the first months(HM Treasury & DTI 2003, p 13-14)."

As you can see in these sentences as long as people don't allocate enough time for their families, there is no way to make them happy.

The same situation is also acceptable for people's friends. Friends are known as a second family; even for some people they are the first. A friend can help us in every tough situation, they can back up us in everywhere. So always we want to have a good friend. If we select and take care of our friends carefully, as well as we have to be careful to maintain our relationships with them. The money, possessions, wealth shouldn't be our friends. While we are establishing a friendship, it mustn't be based on materialistic values or we mustn't let money to interfere our friendship. When money comes, it might hurt our friends and us. Furthermore, if we look at the richest people in the world, we see that the loneliest people are these rich people because of money. According to lots of people, money means high status, greedy and responsibility. With these prejudices, rich people cannot make friends easily, by this way they can't be happy. We associate this situation with food pyramid, if assume that there are richest people at the top of chain, and the chain is getting narrowed with the rate of friends, so if we are at the top of the pyramid we won't have friends who makes us more and more happy. To give an example, John Jacob Astor 3 bemoans, " money brings me nothing but a certain dull anxiety." So even if you have too much money to spend, as long as you don't have friends and family you can't be happy.

The other most important step to reach the happiness is our satisfaction.

Because actually the money doesn't make us happy, it can help us just by providing some satisfaction. When we lost our satisfaction, it means we lost our happiness and this is exactly what our possessions do. Lots of people in <https://assignbuster.com/the-relationship-between-money-and-happiness-philosophy-essay/>

consumer countries and societies think that they always need more money than they have now, even if they are wealthy and rich people. In the book of Clive Hamilton, this situation is stated with this sentence: "The trouble with the rat race is, even if you win, you are still a rat." Because of the society that they belong to, they are convinced that more money means always more happiness. So without exception all people are trying to have more possessions to be satisfied by being able to buy what they need. But there is an insidious fact they always forget, and it is that at the same time they are raising their threshold of sufficiency, and decreasing their rate of happiness. The answer of how they can raise their threshold is meanwhile their needs change as incomes rise. While this is being happened, usually most of people are unaware of this situation. So no matter how they are wealthy, unconsciously it is working against their satisfaction and happiness. According to the Affluenza, studies shows that most people would prefer an income of \$50 000 if the average is \$40 000 to an income of \$70 000 if the average is \$100 000, that is, most people would rather be poorer, provided others are poorer still. Moreover, in late 2002 when a newspoll survey asked Australian people (richest) whether they can afford to buy everything they need, the answer investigators got is that sixty-two per cent of Australians believe they cannot afford to buy everything they need. If we consider Australia is one of the richest countries, it is a really good example of dissatisfaction and rat race.

Self-control is the ability to control one's emotions, behaviors and desires or is the capacity of efficient management to the future, in this process without any control mechanism is it possible to have a good life or live peaceful. Of

course NO, because the failure of self-control can cause immense personal and societal repercussions on people. So in this world everyone has to have self-control to handle with obstacles and bad effects of our environment but our possessions are such a dreadful nightmare for self-control that when we look at the whole world suffering of lack of self-control results from more money people have. Because as long as you have more money your ability to prevent yourself from doing something false is getting weaken. For example, using of drugs are known as a way of escaping from stress and most of people don't use it thanks to their self-control because they can see the results of this addiction after usage, but if there is a person who is rich and cannot be happy no longer with his possessions, due to dissatisfaction his/her self-control couldn't work. And at this point he/she lose themselves in drugs and also their happiness lose in it. Beside their happiness their physical health also can be harmed like the brain, heart, and other important organs. We can give more general examples to this case like consumption and credit card debts. If you don't have more money, by fear of debts and overconsumption while you are buying something or spending your money you try to be careful because you can imagine the results of overconsumption thanks to your self-control, but when you lose it, you plunge into debts immediately. So without the self-control we cannot be happy because it is most effective way to be careful about the harmful things. And money is the main enemy of the self-control.

On the contrary there is some people claim that money can buy happiness with its benefits in terms of providing higher living standards. Peter Saunders stated that

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when workers start to get more profit, it results in higher living standards for workers as well as cheaper and more plentiful goods and services. And this improvement leads to a good life for workers.

Yes until a certain limit it is true because this world which has capitalist system is not suitable for living without money. Because money provides you necessities like shelter, education, health etc. Furthermore if you have a family, without a good income you can't imagine a good life while you are trying to be alive in this world. But when you have enough money and you are able to supply what you need, after this point money's importance suddenly decrease and remains only one way to be happy which is not money, just our relationships and our health. According to the Journal of Happiness Studies by Fischer, Claude S. Although Americans' wealth increased substantially over the last few decades, their happiness did not. Because as I said before this is not the case of money after a certain point. So no matter without enough money we cannot be happy, it doesn't mean happy comes from wealth and possessions.

To conclude, if you have enough money for your basic necessities, after that happiness doesn't come from money. On the contrary, as long as you have a great amount of money or try to have more money than you have, in the pursuit of wealth and possessions you can lose your most important relationships with your friends and family which make you really happy, furthermore your mental and physical health can be affected very badly because of dissatisfaction and lack of self control. Briefly attaining wealth is not essential for our fulfillment even it is against.

## **Work Cited**

(HM Treasury & DTI 2003, p 13-14).

The high price of materialism / Mixed Messages By Tim Kasser

Why Capitalism is good for the soul By Peter Saunders

Journal of Happiness Studies by Fischer,