

Happiness and fulfillment essay sample



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The idea of happiness and fulfillment rising from generosity is a message present in Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. Dickens encourages and inspires his Victorian readers to change their views and support those around them, through generosity. Dickens emphasizes how generosity can lead to fulfillment and happiness through the construction of his novel. The prevalent concerns of life and death, isolation and togetherness and change allows Dickens to demonstrate to his readers the importance of generosity and seeing its effects on those around you.

Dickens creates contrasts in his characters to emphasise the importance of generosity and its effects. The Scrooge readers meet in stave one, a man "solitary as an oyster" and so cold "a chill does not affect him" leads readers to feel pessimistic towards Scrooge. His ill-treatment of Bob Cratchit and his cold, dark nature is then juxtaposed to that of the warm "lively" Fezziwig, Scrooge's old employer. Fezziwig with his "Christmas party" and the generosity toward Scrooge and his other apprentice presents readers with the happiness brought about by magnanimous giving. Scrooge is longing to be a part of his memory once more with "his heart and soul in the scene." The contrast of employee treatment allows Scrooge to see his skewed ways and allows readers to view how their generosity could lead to the happiness of others and a fulfillment of duty as an employer. The largest and most obvious character contrast is between the initial Scrooge and the final Scrooge. "Wheezing..." and almost machine-like Ebenezer Scrooge is loathed and on the outskirts of society, even the blind are seen as lucky for not having to "set eyes on evil himself".

However, Scrooge's transformation and journey allows him to recognise his duty to others and how helping those around him such as the Cratchits and becoming "a second father to Tiny Tim" gives him joy and pleasure. This change demonstrates to readers the importance of their change and the importance of the effects their generosity could bring about. Metaphorical contrasts endorse Dickens' view on the importance of generosity.

Throughout the novel Dickens' use of warmth and coldness to depict characters, scenes or settings add to his emphasis of generosity. The cold 'bare, melancholy' life of Scrooge with his cold house and 'small fires' adds to the idea of isolation and how much change is needed. This is contrasted with the warmth of Fezziwig's ball with 'fires heaped with fuel' representing the happiness in the lives linked to Fezziwig. Dickens, with the metaphors of light and dark addresses a somewhat Christian value of generosity and fulfilment. The darkness and the 'grim' outlook of Scrooge's death in Stave four highlights how not changing skewed priorities can lead to 'pain' and 'incessant torture'.

The light, given off by the fires or general weather endorses the idea that light represents a change, a 'good man' who understands the importance of generosity. Fred, the nephew of Scrooge, has 'red cheeks' and a 'glowing' appearance, representative of his charity, his care for the welfare and well being of others, such as the Cratchits, and his views on how people, like Scrooge, should understand giving is a way of helping, not only others, but oneself. The finality death brings allows Dickens to emphasise the need for change and generosity in life. The notion is clearly represented in the living Scrooge and the 'dead as a door-nail' Marley. Dickens' description of Marley

with ‘ cashboxes...ledgers’ weighing him down and a heavy ‘ chain [he] forged in life’ creates an image readers should fear.

Living with ‘ no peace...no rest’ and suffering with ‘ incessant torture’ Marley realises his business was ‘ mankind’ and ‘ charity, welfare, wellbeing’ were his business too. He warns Scrooge of the chain he has forged so far and the importance of others while one is still alive Marley is incapable of helping others and frightens Scrooge into change at first. However, witnessing how he could inhibit the death of Tiny Tim, an “ innocent child”. Scrooge understands that generosity is not just philanthropy to be done and forget, it is a responsibility that concerns those in his life that he can save. This highlights to readers why Scrooge is so overjoyed at the end – he has found happiness and fulfilment in finding a purpose that saves and cares for the welfare and wellbeing of another. Dickens emphasises that this is a path more of his readers should take.

Ultimately Dickens does suggest and places importance of his concern of generosity to others gives way to the happiness and fulfilment of oneself. His construction of the novel and characterisation leads readers to recognise the power and influence and importance they have in another life.