

What make us happy initially may eventually

[Art & Culture](#), [Music](#)



What do you think makes us happy? A question for everyone to determine at some point in their life. As defined in Merriam-Webster (2017), happiness is a state of well-being and contentment; a pleasurable or satisfying experience. However, happiness is hard to achieve like water or smoke, it is there but it is impossible to hold in our hands. It can be as simple as being content with doing what you love, and living the life you want or by being who you want to be.

Some individuals even go as far as to follow steps on how to achieve happiness. Happiness is a sensation that people desire to have, and sometimes desperately wishes for. Everyone has a completely different view of happiness and how to attain it. Some individuals require money, material things, solitude and for others it is companionship or helping someone, but the list can go on. People sometimes tend to judge their happiness based on what their career field is, what kind of car they drive, how many square footages their home has and the area where their home is located. I believe that individuals can be happy within unhappiness when we have an absolute knowledge and understanding of what our purpose is, we stop at nothing to attain and achieve what our hearts desire; true happiness. Happiness plays an important and necessary role in the lives of individuals all over the world. Happiness has been firmly fixed in our consciousness since Thomas Jefferson wrote these famous words in the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness" (Jefferson).

Since then, Americans have been trying to seek the notion of pursuing happiness. The problem is however, as Lindsay Van Thoen demonstrates in her article, the happiness paradox: wanting to be happy may make you unhappy, studies find, is that the very same things which make us happy initially may eventually lead to our unhappiness. By examining Theon article more we learn that when trying to find happiness, we sometimes end up not pursuing happiness in the right way. Growing up I always thought that being happy meant migrating to America, owning a big house with nice cars, a boat maybe, a dog or two, making lots of money, having a couple kids and marry the man of my dreams. Seems amazing, right? Being younger, I based my happiness on how many nice things I would get for my birthday, or how many times I get to eat ice-cream in a week.

Like what Darren Hardy recounts in the pursuit of happiness, our beliefs on what makes us happy is majorly influenced by other people and other people's things. Pathetic to think that I gauged my happiness on the material things I received as a child. It seems like these days, society and social media seem to define happiness as having either a lot of money, or having a lot of extravagant things.

Individuals label happiness as a goal to achieve instead of a feeling. Instead of trying to attain "the pursuit of happiness"; we should entertain the idea of pursuing fulfillment within one's self to find the significance of what our purpose is, stated by Hardy. This is where many people experience unhappiness within happiness. The Declaration of Independence states that one of our unalienable rights is to be happy in life. Which is true, yes, we all

strive to be happy in our life but do we really think about what happiness really means to us in a realistic way? With Society now and social media, has a twisted definition of what it means to be truly happy. In our endless struggle for more money, more love and more security, we have forgotten the most fundamental fact: happiness is not caused by possessions or social positions, and can in fact be experienced in any daily activity. We have made happiness a utopia: which is high priced, complexed, and unreachable. In the film, *Modern Times* 1936, it showed the devastation that the Great Depression made during this time; unemployment, poverty and hunger.

Little Tramp (Charlie Chaplin) employed at a state-of-the-art factory where the inescapable machinery totally overwhelms him, and where various mishaps keep landing him in prison. In between his numerous jail stints, he meets and befriends an orphan girl (Paulette Goddard). Both together and apart, they try to be content with the difficulties of modern life, with the Tramp working as a waiter and eventually a performer.

Their desire to change their life heightened the need to pursue their happiness even greater. Living during the depression and seeing everyone's face will manifest unhappiness but with the help and strength from a friend will make the task of finding happiness easier according to Kennedy in *A Point of View: The pursuit of happiness*. In the film, *It's a Wonderful Life*, George Bailey was a young man, living in a small town, but with big dreams. He wanted to travel the world and get away from his small town and accomplish these dreams he sets for himself.

However, he inherited the loan business from his father and he gave up traveling the world and going to a University. As he ages, his youth, dreams and opportunities passed him by. He married his beloved Mary Hatch Bailey and had four children with her and his life was anything but easy.

When a financial discrepancy puts George in a difficult position, he believes he worth more dead than alive, decides to commit suicide. An angel who has not earned his wings comes to show him what life would have been like if he had never been born. Things change immediately, Everyone around him was not the same anymore, without him, George realized that everyone's happiness somehow depends on him. In that moment, he realized that he does not want to be gone from the world and that whatever awaited him, he is strong enough and will overcome anything he will be faced with. Hardy also stated that, one way to feel happy is think about what you must be grateful for and sometimes making someone else happy, you can be happy as well. He had the love from his wife and children, family and especially all his neighbors. With them he could transform his unhappiness into happiness. In the film *The Pursuit of Happiness*, Chris Gardner a salesman from San Francisco, California had great dreams for his family but his plans did not work out as he intended.

However, Christopher Gardner continued to strive and take a chance to chase his happiness even if it took losing his wife, his home and everything he held dear to him. The more difficult it got for Chris and his son, the more he fought harder, Chris tried and tried until he could achieve everything he hoped for amid misery. In one scene when Chris is playing basketball with

hisson, he says he never made it as a basketball player and his son wouldn't makeit either. And just immediately after, he tells the kid, " Don't ever letsomeone tell you, you can't do something. Not even me." People can't dosomething themselves, they wanna tell you that you can't do it. You wantsomething? Go get it. That is what Chris does, he goes out every day, until he was able to land a stop that took him to the top.

Not only does thisscene showed people that they should focus on the strength of trying despitetheir failures but it also depicts the love that parents have for theirchildren can directly make an impact. This scene especially shows that whatparents say and do can have a direct effect on the children. Amajor escape for everyone through and difficult times are songs, films and literary works.

During the depression singers like Jay Gorney, Ray Henderson and Harry Warrenkept hope alive through their lyrics, according to Songs of the GreatDepression. In the article, How Pharrell Williams captured the essence ofhappiness by Gibsone, describe that listening to music is inviting, it remindsthem of a different era, that they can relate to which were happier times. Shirley temple was also beaconof happiness to everyone during the Great Depression. She brought happiness topeople homes and lives, gave them some hope and brought them out of despair ifonly for a bit. Through the film from unit 5, I havelearned that with the help or others, your spirits can lift tremendously. Inthe pursuit of happyness, what gave Chris Gardner the strength to carry on andto accomplish his dreams, was his son.

He made sure everything he did, his son would benefit, gain and learn from him. Gender issues impacted the happiness levels of men and women in both similar and different ways. According to the Choice Reading CMT, both men and women suffered during the depression with unemployment which led to unhappiness in their household. With the start of World War 2, women's role took a major turn for the better, but to men the worse. Women were now forced to seek jobs to care for their family, while their men went off to war. In the article Changing Gender Roles, by the 1940's, women filled the jobs of men and majorly became the breadwinners. Men believed that women should return to their proper place but at the same time, they relied, could not and did not help their wives. However, during the holocaust, both men and women suffered severely.

Gender issues were not a propriety, stated in Choice Reading CMT, women were treated just as harshly, whether they were pregnant or not. Man's ability to achieve happiness during difficulties has not changed much over the years as shown in the films which span over seventy years (Modern Times-1936, It's a Wonderful Life-1946, The Pursuit of Happiness-2006). The films show how everyone approaches their happiness through their own experiences and trials. Everyone is different and how we approach everything will be different. In all the films, we see the characters go through extreme situations trying to be happy but never giving up hope that their lives will change for the better. Throughout my 28 years, I have learned that happiness is not such an unreachable dream. Thought varies from one person to another, happiness is often only an arm's length away. From the characters, we will learn how physical, emotional, and spiritual happiness can drastically affect our lives.

Some individuals will experience happiness in the pursuit of it. Some will find it in sacrificing themselves for better goals. Others will find it in people's companion, in lust, in drugs/alcohol and material possessions. There is no technique to achieve happiness, and it is only up to us to define what we want from life, and how we want to attain it. The only certain thing is that it is never too late for anybody to achieve their dreams, be who you are, buy all your hearts desires and ultimately, be truly happy.