

# The pursuit of happiness movie review movie review examples

[Sociology](#), [Communication](#)



Movie Title: The Pursuit of Happ(y)ness

Released Date : 2006

Director: Gabrielle Muccino

Written by : Steven Conrad

Cinematography : Phedon Papamichael

Produced by : David Alper, Todd Black, Jason Blumenthal, Mark Clayman, Louis D'Esposito, Chris Gardner, James Lessiter, Will Smith, Steve Tisch and Teddy Zee.

Genre: Drama

Story : Bibliographical, based on the true-to-life story of Christopher Gardner

Main Cast : 1. Will Smith as Chris Gardner, 2. Jaden Smith as Christopher 3.

Thandie Newton as Linda

## **Plot Summary**

The movie is based from the true events on the life of a man named Christopher Gardner, currently an American stockbroker, philanthropist, investor and entrepreneur. The story begins at the Gardner's apartment set in 1981 San Francisco California, living the life of a normal family man. His main source of living comes from selling Osteo National bone density scanners, which is twice as expensive than a regular X-ray machine , but only provides marginal small difference in terms of image resolution. Gardner spent his entire life savings on the purchasing the scanners, which resulted in the spiral downturn of his life, career and marriage. The scanners were perceived as an unnecessary luxury by the doctors and selling them

became a difficult task. With his family in deep financial trouble, unpaid taxes, parking tickets and rent overdue, his relationship with his wife suddenly fell apart. Troubled by several financial troubles Gardner went out to seek better opportunity for him and his family and ended up as stockbroker intern. Gardner's marriage eventually ended when his wife Linda decided to move to New York leaving Gardner with the responsibility of their son Chris. Being a stock broker didn't come easy as he has to undergo a six-month training without pay and the only means for survival is his remaining bone density scanners. The bad situation became worse as he and his son was evicted twice from their home that forced him and his son to live in the streets, spending the evening at train station comfort room and if they are lucky they would be able to get an overnight stay at a homeless shelter. The pursuit of happiness was not an easy journey for Gardner and his son. They both have to endure the harsh reality of a homeless life and survive its adversities. The time in which the story happened was during an economic situation where more and more people are becoming homeless and the scarcity of opportunities is felt by several people including Gardner. Their triumph came when Gardner finally graduated from training and officially accepted in the brokerage company as a licensed stockbroker. It was the turning point in the life of Gardner and his son because a few years later, Gardner was able to sell a multi-million dollar stake, which was the defining moment of his career. The following years of Gardners life came to their favor as he was able to establish his own financial firm.

The film indicates the communication pattern of both verbal and non-verbal types. In terms of patterns in culture, the characters in the movie did show indications of cross-cultural differences in communication because all of them speaks the same familiar language. Since culture is detrimental to communication and language. It would become a barrier for the characters in the film to communicate with one another, but cultural communication barriers were not observed in the film because the characters speak the same mother tongue. Although Gardner is a black American he still uses the same local language in interacting with the other characters in the film. The only noticeable part in communication became an issue is with the Chinese daycare owners that does not seem to spell the word " happiness" correctly. Gardner on the other hand made several objections with the spelling corrections, but the daycare owner does not seem to care. The reason behind that is because for the daycare owners, " y" and " l" in happiness sounds the same and, therefore, does not make any difference.

Interpersonal communication is defined as the process that is being used to communicate thoughts , ideas and feelings towards another person. It is a learned behavior that can be developed by the use of knowledge, feedback, practice and reflection. It is affected by communication patterns in terms of disrupting the communication cycle due to the elements of influence present during a conversation. Communication pattern such as non-verbal for example affects interpersonal communication because when the speaker conveyed his message through a non-verbal gesture. The receiver of the message may not be able to decipher the meaning of the message being

conveyed right away because of the lack of common understanding of the non-verbal gestures. Listening along is communication pattern, but affects the communication cycle in such a way that the elements of feedback are missing in the process.

Instances of non-verbal communication can be observed in the film on several occasions. For example, Gardner was being interviewed by in the panel for the stockbroker internship, he showed up in the interview inappropriately dressed. However, he was given the chance by the interviewers to show his ability provided he dress up appropriately during work. Gardner expressed his understanding of the message when he nods to show his understanding. On another occasion while he and Mr. Twissle shared a ride in a cab, Gardner wants to impress Mr. Twissle by stating his competence for the job. However, Mr. Twissle seems uninterested to hear about what Gardner has to say and almost ignored his predicaments. Gardner was able to catch Mr. Twissle's attention when he offered to solve the Rubik's puzzle cube that Mr. Twissle is holding. Mr. Twissle did not believe that Gardner could finish it in record time. However, Gardner was able to show his great deal of analytical intelligence when he was able to complete the puzzle just in time before Mr. Twissle gets off the cab. In that particular scene, verbal communication did not suffice to bring the message of the conversation. Mr. Twissle came to realize Gardner's abilities not because of his persuasive speech in the cab, but because of the non-verbal communication or by solving a complicated piece of the puzzle.

Special verbal communication features were used by the characters in the film such as transferring information, emotion, beliefs, attitudes, hopes and desires (Ferenčík 1). There are several scenes in the film where these special features were used by the characters. One example is when Gardner is talking about his interest to apply in the stockbroker training program to Linda. The conversation demonstrates features of hopes, desire and attitudes because Gardner is basically stating his reasons for applying to the program, which constitutes his hope of getting a better career opportunity. The element of desire was demonstrated when Gardner told Linda " I saw this ad about a job training program", this statement expresses desire and interest in joining the training program. However, Linda replied with sarcasm saying " what job? stockbroker, not an astronaut?," This statement represents an element of attitude, perhaps a negative sort of attitude, but such feedback demonstrates the unique features of verbal communication. Another example is when Gardner is telling his wife the story how he was able to retrieve the stolen bones density scanner from the hippies. He was excited at first to tell Linda about his bravery, but Linda replied with an attitude saying " whatever," the following conversation did not end up well as Linda kept on replying " Whatever, I don't care" to Gardner. It was not a healthy conversation, but the elements of verbal features were also expressed during the conversation.

The film also demonstrates distinct social interaction that is governed by specific rules. The certain rules of social interaction are repulsion, attraction and the actions of a close neighbor (Sydney. edu. au). There are specific

moments in the film where social interaction was governed by certain rules. For example, Gardner was given an instruction by his trainer to call prospective clients from the bottom all the way to the top of the list. Gardner expressed repulsion to that rule when he decided to skip everyone the list and called the CEO instead to set an appointment. The next rule emerged in the process because the CEO expressed interest to meet with Gardner, an element of attraction was present when he rushed to the CEO's office. Gardner was governed by another rule on his way to his appointment because he was given only 20 minutes to arrive at the CEO's office , unfortunately he didn't make it on time. This scene demonstrates repulsion due to the non adherence to the time set by the other person. Another sequence in the film demonstrates all the rules of social interaction together. Gardner together with his son went to the CEO's residence to personally apologize for not making it on time for their appointment. The rules regarding acts of close neighbors and attraction can be seen in the following scenes where Gardner and his son was invited by the CEO to watch the baseball games together.

Evaluating how interpersonal communication was used in the film, it can be observed that it was not different in the way interpersonal communication were used in real life situations. The nature of conversations made in the film can be perceived as very realistic in such a way that Gardner's interaction with the panel of interviewers during the job interview constitutes the same ideal conversation that a person may have when in the same situation. The interview scene also shows an element of self-disclosure theory of

communication interaction particularly when Gardner was stating his reason for showing up inappropriately dressed for the interview. Self-disclosure have close association to cost and rewards for disclosing information about themselves. In the interview scene Gardner's introduction to the panel is "while I was sitting back there, I was thinking of a story to explain me showing up like this (in jeans with paint all over his clothes and skin)". However, Gardner chose to show honesty and, therefore, exercised self-disclosure by telling the truth that he was arrested for not paying parking tickets the day prior to his job interview. He was rewarded for his honesty and accepted in the program provided that he would come to work in a more appropriate attire.

Another instance is when the panel disclosed the rules of the program having no salary for six months. It cost Gardner to almost quit before even starting and that particular moment demonstrates communication interaction and self-disclosure. Such communication interaction was every effective between the characters in the film because it provides a clear expectation for both communicating individuals. Overall, the film was a piece of favorable inspiration for the people watching it. It does not only provide a picture of reality, but also a good example of a film that shows the different levels of communication interaction. Chris Gardner, the film's main character demonstrated several verbal and non-verbal ways of communicating from selling his scanners to the way he interacts with people, which gained him the confidence to succeed.



## **Works Cited**

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The Pursuit of Happyness. Dir. Gabrielle Muccino. Prod. David Alper. Perf. Will Smith, Jaden Smith and Thandie Newton. Columbia Pictures, 2006. Film.