

# Happiness

Business



In an essay in *The Atlantic*, Lori Gottlieb explores happiness and how the American dream has created a mindset of happiness being a goal. Gottlieb goes on to quote Barry Schwartz saying, “but happiness as a goal is a recipe for a disaster.” Many people in America strive for happiness in relationships and possession.

However, the examination of pop culture and modern literature shows the ideal for happiness as a goal can have detrimental effects. The novel *Jeremy Fink and the Meaning of Life* shows that happiness isn't dependent on the goal, but on the journey to the goal. Jeremy sets out to find a present from his dad that contains the meaning of life which he thinks will bring him happiness. After being out on what felt like a wild goose hunt, Jeremy realizes he doesn't need the gift to be happy, but strong friendships. If Jeremy had reached his goal before realizing he can find happiness in those around him, he may have experienced the detrimental effects of his original mindset.

In this novel, the author is aiming to display the point that in life people's happiness can be found in the people around them, not in goals. Happiness isn't found in the end goal, but in the journey. Unlike Jeremy, Nathan Scott in the TV show *One Tree Hill* lets his failed journey define him. After celebrating a deal with a NBA team, Nathan gets into a bar fight that paralyzed him from the waist down. He became an angry alcoholic, and almost ruins his family. Because Nathan believed success would bring him happiness, he forgot the people around him could bring him joy when he fails at achieving his goals.

If one sets a goal to bring them happiness and they fail to reach it, they will not gain the joy of enjoying the things around them. Both Jeremy and Nathan never fully reached their goals, however, even if one reaches their goal, they may still not be happy. For example, Michael Jackson had it all: money, fame, and success, but he felt as though these things weren't enough because he continued to change his appearance. This act shows his fame and money didn't fulfil his joy, and reaching goals of fame and success can be truly detrimental to one's quality of life. Overall, happiness as a goal can cause detrimental effects in one's life if they fail, but if they do succeed, one most likely will not be satisfied by their achievements.