

Sample essay on definition descriptive on the term: happiness

[Experience](#), [Happiness](#)



In Pursuit of Happiness

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It is not easy to define happiness since we cannot necessarily put it into words. However, we all know when we are experiencing happiness. For example, when I go out with friends after not seeing them for a while I know I am happy but if I was asked to define what that meant in that situation I wouldn't be able to do it. I might say I enjoy myself with them, I have fun with them, I can talk to them about anything, I can be myself around them or that they are great to be with but none of these actually gets at what happiness really means. It seems that it just has to remain defined as a subjective positive emotional experience that we know when we feel it. Many people have defined happiness as a subjective feeling of well-being and having predominantly positive emotions in the absence of negative emotions. In the book, *The How of Happiness* (Lyubomirsky, 2008) the author describes happiness as, "the experience of joy, contentment, or positive well-being, combined with a sense that one's life is good, meaningful, and worthwhile." The Dalai Lama believed the purpose in life was to go in search of happiness. According to him, "If we are unhappy, then we should rearrange our lives so that we are on the path toward happiness." I agree with this statement. Everyone can attain happiness if we are willing to work on changing our thoughts, feelings and actions to reflect a happy, positive, optimistic outlook on life.

Another way to get at happiness is to determine aspects that might indicate the definition of happiness like the presence of positive emotions, and concepts that would seem to be associated with happiness like quality of life

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and measure both to determine if they co-vary in an experiment. For example, the Center for Positive Psychology at the University of Pennsylvania, Seligman and colleagues (2011), have shown that external factors such as wealth, climate, physical health, or winning the lottery have almost nothing to do with happiness. Instead, Seligman said that we can use what he called signature strengths to cultivate pleasure, goodness and meaning in life. Once we establish our signature strengths such as persistence and creativity we can further build on those and use them to pursue a life filled with happiness (Seligman, 2002). He also believed that optimism and hopefulness can be learned by focusing on altering how we think about ourselves and our world. When we are more optimistic and positive we treat others better and they treat us better leading to an even greater increase in happiness (Seligman, 2006).

After reading this, I noticed that on days that I was unhappy I had thoughts such as, “ This is never going to get better,” and “ I’m miserable because that’s what I deserve.” The more I had these thoughts the more upset I became. I have tried to change my thought patterns and so far have only been successful when I’m not unhappy. But I have noticed that when I’m feeling neutral, not happy or unhappy, by focusing on making my thoughts more positive and stopping the ones that are negative makes me feel happier and more optimistic.

Another key to happiness is the vividness of language. If we tell stories of our experiences with a lot of vivid language, we can double the happiness we feel related to the story by re-experiencing the events again. This also leads to increased happiness in those who are listening and since happiness can

be contagious, when we are happy and others are happy we can continue to boost the positivity of each other's subjective reality (Augustine, Mehl, & Larsen, 2011)

When we pay attention to how we think, how we feel, how we treat others and the language we use when describing positive experiences we can increase our own happiness as well as the happiness of others.

References

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