

What is happiness and how do we gain it philosophy essay



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According to literary scholar, Frederick Keonig, “ We tend to forget that happiness doesn’t come as a result of getting something we don’t have, but rather of recognizing and appreciating what we do have.” Thus, individuals should feel lucky to have the opportunity to live life and experience a variety of things within their lifetime. Unfortunately, this is a short period of time and in my personal opinion, an individual needs to grow a feeling of contentment; which leads to happiness therefore feeling satisfaction at the conclusion of one’s life. Although, this does start a dialogue over the question; what exactly is happiness?

Happiness is a universal quest, it is ontological. People spend their lives looking for happiness and make every attempt to be characterized as “ happy.” The question of what happiness is can be a difficult question to answer because no two people can agree on a precise definition. People can spend a lifetime searching for an answer, however, an answer is either never found or is unclear and puzzling. There are no requirements that must be met; and an answer is entirely relative to what each individual values as most important to them. Therefore, happiness is subjective to the interpretation of the individual.

The Dalai Lama talks and writes about life and what is important in life. In his article, “ Compassion and the Individual,” the Dalai Lama states clearly that the purpose of one’s life is to be happy. He clarifies this further by stating that all humans are in a search for happiness from the moment they are born; until the end of one’s life. Furthermore, the Dalai Lama mentioned that happiness can be divided into two categories: physical or mental happiness. According to the Dalai Lama the mental happiness is what matters the most.

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While it is true that one needs to satisfy physical needs, it is one's mind which is responsible for registering everything and it is one's mind that controls the body and formulates emotions and feelings.

The Dalai Lama thought that the best way to achieve happiness is through love and compassion. Therefore, in simpler words, that the more an individual cares about others and their well being, the more that will be reflected on one's own well being and happiness. The Dalai Lama further states; " Ultimately, the reason why love and compassion bring the greatest happiness is simply that our nature cherishes them above all else. The need for love lies at the very foundation of human existence" (Bowie, 36). It is my belief, this concept is self explanatory; for love is part of nature and one cannot exist without it. It is the thing that provides peace and what most individuals are looking for. The Dalai Lama makes the case that everyone is dependent on each other and that the solo individual cannot survive without the help of others. Therefore, one needs to have genuine feelings of love and compassion and a sense of responsibility towards one another in order to be successful. Without this activity there will be no happiness. As Dalai Lama explained people become disturbed in adulthood if they were not raised in an environment surrounded by affection either from parents or another substantial figurehead; according to him such an individual will fail to care or love anyone in adulthood and will usually end up having a disturb life. The Dalai Lama further believes, " Whether people are beautiful and friendly or unattractive and disruptive, ultimately they are human beings, just like oneself. Like oneself, they want happiness and do not want suffering.

Therefore, their right to overcome suffering and be happy is equal to one's

own” (Bowie, 38). When one believes that all are equal and are looking for the same thing, which is to find happiness, while avoiding the misery and suffering, then one can understand and begin to develop concern and responsibility for others.

The Dalai Lama believes that first of all, we need to tackle our anger in order to develop this affection for others which would lead us to happiness. In his article the Dalai Lama said, “ This controlled energy comes not only from a compassionate attitude, but also from reason and patience. These are the most powerful antidotes to anger” (Bowie, 38). Through the process of eliminating anger and hatred we would be enabled to see the reality of things. It would give patience and understanding to others’ needs and feelings. When we have the love and compassion for others as the Dalai Lama recommends, we can achieve happiness and contentment in our lives. In his article, the Dalai Lama says “ to prepare for that moment, to make genuine friends who will help us when the need arises, we ourselves must cultivate altruism” (Bowie, 39)! When we care about others and always make ourselves available and ready to help whoever is in need, then when we are ourselves in trouble, we would find everyone pursuing to lend us a hand and to comfort us. We would find people treating us the same way we treated them, with love and compassion. They would treat us with affection and care and help with whatever they can to make us feel better and overcome our sufferings and turbulences.

I support the argument that the Dalai Lama’s presents on the importance of love and compassion, thus leading to happiness. He provides good examples and evidence to support his ideas and concerns. It is my personal belief; <https://assignbuster.com/what-is-happiness-and-how-do-we-gain-it-philosophy-essay/>

happiness is extremely essential in our lives and probably is the purpose of life. However, I have a small divergence with the Dalai Lama theories. Love and compassion are emotions and actions important in achieving happiness; however at the same time, it is ok to be angry at times. Like the Dalai Lama states, when we are angry, individuals become blinded and do not think clearly. Individuals cannot control their actions and behaviors and that leads to chaos, but sometimes we need to release our frustrations. Anger can provide people the motivation and the will to change things. Rights, justice, and freedoms could not have been earned without anger. Anger can be the fuel that provides the confidence to stand up and be assertive. Of course, this is not implying that anger is the solution for every injustice, but it can be helpful. A rational anger that is combined with self-restrained anger could provide a positive outcome leading to happiness.

To further illustrate this, an example is the recent political change that occurred in Egypt. There was a peaceful anger that ultimately leads to a democracy and happiness for most of the nation's citizens. This was a political upheaval that was based out of frustration and anger, yet, it was not blinding and chaotic anarchy. Thus, it is my belief that anger can be used constructively to assist in one's pursuit of happiness.

Finally, just want to point out that happiness is extremely important in life and it is what society is looking for and trying to achieve so hard. Most will spend life running after happiness. One can always look forward and plan for tomorrow and how they going to be happy, but in my opinion, along the way one forgets about today. My feelings are that individuals should slow down every once in a while and think and contemplate of everything one has. The <https://assignbuster.com/what-is-happiness-and-how-do-we-gain-it-philosophy-essay/>

simple things are really what make us happy like breathing the fresh air, the love of those special ones in our lives and our families and the depth of our friendships. In the words of Martha Washington, “ I am still determined to be cheerful and happy, in whatever situation I may be; for I have also learned from experience that the greater part of our happiness or misery depends upon our dispositions, and not upon our circumstances.”