

Johnny about as it is
evident in



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Johnny HenchMrs. FiggeEnglish 37 December 2017Happiness By The
ByWhether it may be winning a million dollars or making someone laugh, these all give us joy and excitement, but do they make us happy? According to John Stuart Mill, a british philosopher in the 19th century, happiness is not gained through materialistic value but gained “ without dwelling on it or thinking about it”. Mill also reasoned that happiness is a temporary state and can be killed off by “ fatal questioning”. Mill based his theory upon the fact that if a goal of happiness was fixated on some sort of materialistic object, you would eventually cease to be happy. Nowadays there is modern science to prove that Mill’s theory is correct.

Intrinsic goals, hedonic goals and positive psychology are all examples of what gives people the state of being happy. But what makes people the most happy is family. It is the strongest provider of happiness because families provide support, love, care and ultimately are who you start and end your life with. I agree with John Stuart Mill’s belief that you can achieve happiness by not thinking about as it is evident in his article A Crisis In My Mental History, positive psychology and family bonds. John Stuart Mill’s basis of happiness was created from the idea that if you don’t think about happiness you will “ inhale happiness with the air you breathe”.

Mill’s autobiography A Crisis In My Mental History is where he emerged his idea of happiness. He argued that you would eventually find happiness if you did not focus upon it. If you were to instead not focus on happiness but focus on something that would make you happy, your goal of happiness would never exist. “ The enjoyments of life are sufficient to make it a pleasant thing..

. Once make them so and they are immediately felt to be insufficient.” Even if happiness was being rich or owning everything you wanted eventually it would be insufficient and happiness would cease to exist. Another great point that Mill discussed was the idea of fatal questioning. Fatal questioning is referred to when a human questions their own state of happiness and if so their happiness will cease to exist. The only way to truly be happy is to not think about it “ you will inhale happiness with the air you breathe, without dwelling on it or thinking on it”. If you don’t focus on your happiness you will eventually find it waiting for you.

Back in the 1800’s when Mill’s theory was developed, there was no proper foundation of science to back it up. Nowadays a popular form of science “ positive psychology” explores what makes life worth living and how to be happy. Positive psychology was coined by Dr. Martin Seligman and Dr. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. The two defined positive psychology as “ science of positive subjective experience, positive individual traits, and positive institutions.” Those three ideas make up how happy people are. However, many people believe that material value makes people happy, which is not the case.

According to Seligman economic standpoint and your life goals in general only reflect upon 10% of happiness while 50% is based upon your genetics and the other 40% is based upon intentional behavior. Daniel Gilbert, a psychologist, stated “ to stop buying stuff and spend more money on experiences” essentially saying don’t buy everything you want when you see it. But more or less think about the effect it will cause. Another psychological idea that makes people happy are intrinsic goals. Intrinsic goals are personal

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growth, relationships and wanting to help. These flourish happiness and all together will help you breathe happiness without thinking about it.

However lots of people seem to value extrinsic goals more than intrinsic goals. Extrinsic goals are money, image and status. These goals do not lead to a happier life, like many people believe they do.

Once these extrinsic goals are dwelled upon they will eventually become insufficient and will not help you become happy. A large percentage of the rich are not happy with their standpoint in life. Researchers at UCLA have theorized that wealth makes people less generous because it makes them feel more isolated and isolation also has a substantial effect on happiness. The rich have exercised their extrinsic goals more than their intrinsic goals leading them to a less happy life.

Once you have so much money you can ultimately purchase whatever you want and that will make every purchase feel less sufficient because you want more. This theory is known as the “ hedonic treadmill”. Eventually when you can get everything you want it will lose its value. Which leads back to how Mill stated that happiness can not be found by fixating upon a materialistic object. Family, however, is the strongest bond and is the best way to achieve anyones goal of having a happy life. An extensive research program known as Happify compiled all of the ways that Family makes people closer and happier in life.

68% of parents depend upon their children for emotional support and 60% of children depend on their parents. This already in itself leads to a closer relationship with your child or parent generally resulting in a happier life. The

closest of all bonds in a family is the parent-child bond. Once the child is raised and is an adult the child is going to have an even closer relationship to their parent. 75% of parents had agreed to this close relationship. This relationship will matter all the way to the end of the parents life. 64% of adults tend to worry about their parents health just as the parent did for the child when they were young. If a family member were to get into an emergency situation 30% of them would call a sibling first.

Family bonds are the best way to achieve the goal of happiness. These bonds do not focus on an inanimate object to run the show for them as Mill had stated. By having these extremely close bonds with family “ you will inhale happiness within the air that you breathe” as Mill had justified. There are many opposing viewpoints against the true idea of happiness. Many people believe that being rich is the key to happiness, although it is not true. Money can buy things that bring happiness but up to a certain extent.

When that bar has been reached everything else starts to seem less sufficient and ultimately you will not be happy. Another standing argument is that of fatal questioning. People believe that by questioning your happiness and seeing how happy you are, you will realize that you are a happier person than before because you are more grateful for what you have. However that is not the case, Mills fatal questioning theory states that when you question your happiness you will pick out all of the bad things in your life and try to reflect upon them, only making you depressed or sad. This is why Mill uses the term “ your happiness will cease to exist”.

The final argument relates to the family. Many people believe that families will bring you down and tear you apart, which is maybe true. But hardships in families actually bring you closer together. Psychologists Lawrence Calhoun and Richard Tedeschi interviewed many people who suffered from very traumatic events such as housefires, combat and even cancer. From interviewing these people, the psychologists learned that these people were able to grow from these events, this growth is known as posttraumatic growth. Essentially stating that you will learn from what you suffered from and will work on it and grow. By following John Stuart Mill's theory on how to achieve happiness, anybody can reach that goal.

True happiness is not found in a materialistic object and can be destroyed through fatal questioning. However, if you continue to do things you enjoy or love, you will eventually live and breathe happiness without having to think about it. Due to modern day positive psychology Mill's theory is an accurate definition of how to obtain true happiness. But it all boils down to the biggest source of happiness, the family. The family has been around since the beginning of mankind and will always be there.

By being close with your family you are already being a happier person. And if you continue to keep it that way, you will eventually find happiness by the by. Works Cited Keener, Meghan. "What Is the Science of Happiness?" The Huffington Post, TheHuffingtonPost. com, 9 Jan. 2013, www.

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