

What makes us
happy?



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

During many centuries people were looking for happiness. But the question “What makes us happy?” still needs the answer. There is no recipe of happiness. It is very individual concept, though there are some general statements that can help person to feel complete and satisfied with his life. These statements were noted in the article “What makes us happy?” by Joshua Wolf Shenk. Some parts of the text deserves to take the place at the curriculum of the psychology course with a title “The Pursuit of Happiness”.

The goal of the paper is to determine the statements that could be useful for students. To achieve the goal I divided this work into short parts devoting separate questions. Every abstract contain the idea and its value.

The question “What makes us happy?” very philosophic and it is not so easy to find the answer. Different people see their happiness in different things. But it is extremely important to understand what happiness means for you. There are a lot of research works and books devoted this question but nobody take the liberty to give the strict determination to this phenomenon.

The article “What makes us happy?” by Joshua Wolf Shenk contains rather interesting and important information related the question. It says about experiment that had place in Harvard in 1937th and lasted during 70 years. Harvard’s sophomores agreed to take a part in these researches. They took psychological tests, passed regular medical exams, sat for interviews, everything that were necessary. George Vaillant was a chief curator of these lives, he devoted all his life to this study. He also participated in similar work that was dedicated heroin addicts. W. T. Grant also participated in researches that were directed to identifying the features of successful living.

But his work did not last till the end because the chief curator expected the results very fast. But Vaillant was conscious that researches as wine get better after long time.

Sometimes the article shortly describes student's lives that took part in investigations. It is easy to see that all details of male's beings were noted: details about their family, childhood, illnesses, education, social life, marriage life, stresses... Vaillant tried to see the hidden facts that connected or differed all these males, to determine the life facts that made them satisfied with their lives and compare those facts. As it turned out during the researches all the lives were too wired, complicated and big to make any strict conclusion about "successful living"(Shenk J. W., 2009).

After reading and examining the article "What Makes Us Happy?" I came to decision that it deserves to be mentioned in curriculum of the psychology course with a title "The Pursuit of Happiness". But it should take its place among the informational literature as it tells about researches and describes someone's experience. This article does not teach us how to be happy or what happiness is! What is important is not to mention all the information that was written in the article. Only some parts deserve student's attention. These parts will be given below with explanation of their importance.

Physical and psychological health.

Joshua Wolf Shenk note about some phenomenon that can be a source of happiness and satisfaction for some people. Some of them are good health, adaptation in society, good family, putting and getting the goals etc. Vaillant pointed at seven factors that can promise healthy aging, he meant

<https://assignbuster.com/what-makes-us-happy/>

psychological and physical health. “ Employing mature adaptations was one. The others were education, stable marriage, not smoking, not abusing alcohol, some exercise, and healthy weight” (Shenk J. W., 2009). This information should take a place at curriculum of psychology course because it throw light upon scientific research fact and shows the importance of living “ right way of life”. The goal of every curriculum is not just to give scientific information but also to make a stress at importance of good habits and right life views.

Alcoholism is one of the most serious problems.

Vaillant is sure that alcoholism problem is one of the sharpest one: “ One is alcoholism, which he found is probably the horse, and not the cart, of pathology” (Shenk J. W., 2009). He came back to this harmful habit again and again in the article text. This problem must be stressed during curriculum because it spoils both individual’s physical and social harmony. After the person become alcohol addictive he ruins all spheres of his life, he loses the respect in society, this causes miserable feelings in his mind plus physical disharmony make person totally unhappy. This fact is very important for understanding happiness phenomenon.

Defense mechanisms work to protect people, the rest depends on humans.

There is very important idea that goes across the article: human’s mind and body are very smart; they change under life conditions to protect us and give good feelings: “ unconscious responses to pain, conflict, or uncertainty” (Shenk J. W., 2009). These processes were also called “ defense mechanisms” (Shenk J. W., 2009). It means that the nature of human’s body

and mind is perfect, the last depends on human. This fact should make students to remember that individual's life mostly depends on him and in some range on circumstances. Every human should take care of his health, social life, education and other life aspects. He is a master of his life and fate. This kind of information should make student conscious their fortune depends on them and they can make themselves satisfied with their lives.

Warm relations with family and society are necessary.

The article makes a big stress at family relations. Valliant was sure that this fact is extremely important for every person. "It is social aptitude," he writes, "not intellectual brilliance or parental social class, that leads to successful aging" (Shenk J. W., 2009). Good relationships with parents, cousins, siblings, friends are necessary. As Valliant said in interview: "The only thing that really matters in life are your relationships to other people" (Shenk J. W., 2009). This statement is one of the leading in the question "What makes us happy?" It is well known fact that definitely important for every society member.

Some statements of the article should be mentioned during psychology curriculum but only as a literature with researches. The question "What makes us happy" too complicated to give exhaustive explanation. What is necessary is to explain students that such conception as happiness is totally individual. Every person should determine the things that will make him satisfied and happy. There are a lot of fake pictures of happiness that society created. In fast modernization era very hard to determine and follow individual goals instead of that, people used to accept dictated pictures of

happiness. This fact is essential because fake satisfaction never makes human feel harmony. There were million of examples when people committed suicide after getting wrong goals. Imagined feeling of happiness did not make them really happy. This fact says about emotions sincerity that gives the feeling of completeness and satisfaction. This is one of the weighty reasons to define the things that make person truly happy.

The philosophic question “ What makes us happy?” is too complicated and multilevel to give exhaustive answer. The article with a title “ What makes us happy?” by Joshua Wolf Shenk presents the information about researches dedicated the identifying main features of successful living. Some statements of the text are worthy to be represented at curriculum of the psychology course, because it contains important information. Thought it should be noted that this kind of information is rather general, every individual can add his own criteria of successful living and happiness. Though it should be noted that all the facts are definitely incontestable.

The curriculum of psychology should contain such statements as:

physical and psychological health are necessary;

alcoholism is one of the most serious problems that ruin both physical and psychological individual’s health;

defense mechanisms works to protect our body and mind, the rest depends on people;

warm relations with family and society are necessary to feel complete and satisfied;

<https://assignbuster.com/what-makes-us-happy/>

extremely important to remember that the concept “ Happiness” is individual; every human must determine the things he needs to be happy. Never accept fake form of happiness otherwise you will never be truly happy.