

Unreasonable happiness

Sociology



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Indeed there are powerful cultural influences to continue consuming even if it requires going into debt, which happens frequently. If so many people shoulder the unpleasant cycle of indebtedness in order to continue consuming, it seems a shift in the entire paradigm of capitalism based on distant people and the abstract next generation is unlikely. However, as an individual who has a deeper understanding of the consequences of wastefulness and pollution, I have a greater ethical obligation to make conscious decisions regarding what I use and discard.

There is a deep and vested interest to keep Americans consuming goods and services that they do not need strictly for survival purposes. The growth of the economy depends on many people spending money which drives the industry to create more consumables. The most successful marketers are able to tap into and manipulate the aspects of identity that are significant to our sense of well-being. If a dramatic drop in consumption occurred, real and present negative consequences will occur, including many people losing their own job. This is a short term problem compared to the consequences of environmental change; however, drastic changes in the average lifestyle of most Americans would cause a lot of unhappiness.

A fundamental change would have to occur that shifted economic models away from objects and activities that are causing harm to other people and future generations. There are certainly other forms of happiness that don't involve wasteful consumerism. The satisfaction derived from the delayed gratification of accomplishing a challenging task is an example. There is a very pleasurable sensation associated with having a sense of safety and good health. The most important aspect of enduring happiness for me is feeling as though I am working towards fulfilling my purpose in life. When I

am working for a higher purpose I am much more willing to forgo small, momentary pleasures.

As an informed individual I have a strong obligation to reduce waste, use renewable energy, recycle, and make lifestyle choices that reduce my impact on the earth.

Sensory pleasure contributes to a sense of comfort and happiness, but the consequences for over-indulgence are detrimental to an individual's happiness, and the condition of people worldwide. As I become more aware of how the daily decisions I make affect others, I realize that being more conscientious is important. It is too easy to focus on work and family, and not consider how much plastic, Styrofoam, and gas I am using. A gradual shift to a less disposable lifestyle and a focus on finding happiness through relationships, creativity, and simple pleasures is my plan of action to promote a greater level of happiness for all people.