

ISSUE 2

Are You Happy?

What makes you happy? More fundamentally, what does “happiness” mean? The way we answer these questions is very important if we want to achieve a happy life. We should know what makes us feel satisfied and sad. That way we could **pursue** some situations and **evade** others. Everyone is different **in terms of** what he desires and what he **despises**. For example, most people seem to want more money, thinking it will make them happier, but some believe that material desire is endless and thus causes **eternal** trouble.

What makes you happy?

1. Being healthy and physically attractive
2. Having money
3. **Preserving** my **integrity**
4. Doing my job well
5. Having friends
6. Being in love
7. Accomplishing my goals
8. Having a hobby
9. Learning more
10. Getting a college **diploma**



> **pursue** : continue in order to accomplish some goal > **evade** : avoid > **in terms of** : concerning; about
> **despise** : hate (sth) or (sb) > **eternal** : continuing forever or for a very long time > **preserve** : keep
> **integrity** : honesty; soundness of moral quality > **diploma** : official paper showing that a student has successfully completed an educational program, esp. high school or college



Are you happy?

Issue 2

Sample Answers

- (A) I would say that being in love is the happiest feeling in my life, except that every time I've been in love I've felt **miserable**. You want the other person to love you **in return**, so you are **hyper**-sensitive about whether that is true or not. If you are not with your loved one all the time, you feel lonely and anxious. Emotionally, it's like being **on a roller coaster** at the amusement park, but the ride never ends.
- (B) If I had my diploma I could do anything I wanted in life. It would be easier to find a better job and make more money. I could attend concerts and sporting events and take wonderful vacations. I could drive a nice car and live in a big house. And I'd be able to be friends with rich, attractive, successful people. But, unfortunately, studying doesn't make me happy at all!

SPEAK YOUR MIND

1. How do you usually respond if your friend asks if you are happy?
2. Are you satisfied with your current life? Why or why not?
3. What is your **secret** for a happy life? Is it **applicable** to other people?
4. Does money make people happy? Or does the love of money destroy their happiness?
5. How do your friends make you happy? When do they disappoint you?
6. Do you think knowledge makes people happy or unhappy?
7. We **overlook** a lot of trivial and routine things that actually make us happy. Name some "unimportant" things that are **vital** to your happiness.
8. A certain man is handsome, intelligent, and rich, and everybody knows and respects him. He has a beautiful wife and terrific children. The whole family enjoys a high social **status**. Do you think he is always happy? Why or why not?
9. We must learn how to be happy and then **work at** it. What have you learned about happiness? How do you practice happiness?

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- > **miserable** : extremely unhappy > **in return** : in exchange > **hyper** : more than usual
 > **on a roller coaster** : being in a situation that is impossible to control, because it keeps changing very quickly
 > **secret** : method or formula for making or doing (sth) > **applicable** : capable of being applied; appropriate
 > **overlook** : fail to notice > **vital** : very important, necessary, or essential
 > **status** : (sb)'s position in a profession or society > **work at** : try hard to develop or improve (sth)

Speak Your Mind Helpers

1. How do you usually respond if your friend asks if you are happy?

- (A) I always pretend to be overjoyed, even if I'm very **depressed**. Just because I might be unhappy does not mean that I have to **bring my friends down** too.
- (B) People wouldn't ask me how I felt unless they really wanted to know, would they? So I always give an honest answer. If I'm happy, I tell them so, and if I don't feel very cheerful, I let them know that as well.

2. Are you satisfied with your current life? Why or why not?

- (A) Things could always be better, but they sure could be worse, too! In general, I'm in good health and busy. I see my friends often and enjoy my life. So, I must say I'm pretty happy.
- (B) It has been a very difficult time for me lately. I've had a lot of personal problems. I hope things get better soon, because I can't take much more of this!

3. What is your secret for a happy life? Is it applicable to other people?

- (A) To be happy, one must have friends. Just having a lot of money would be pretty **empty** unless we had someone to spend it with. Living in a big house would be lonely if no one ever visited.
- (B) Everyone must discover for himself what he needs to be happy. I'm sure some of the things that make me **ecstatic**, like reading a good book, would just **bore you to tears**. If you don't know what makes you happy, just keep **experimenting** until you find it.

> **depressed** : feeling very unhappy > **bring (sb) down** : depress; dispirit; sadden
> **empty** : meaningless > **ecstatic** : feeling extremely happy and excited
> **bore (sb) to tears** : make (sb) extremely uninterested
> **experiment** : try or test in order to discover or prove (sth)

Speak Your Mind Helpers

4. Does money make people happy? Or does the love of money destroy their happiness?

- (A) I don't know, but it seems to me that people who have no money find it very hard to find happiness, while people who have too much money are too busy to look for happiness.
- (B) Money can indeed make us happier, at least to the extent that it allows us to take care of some of our problems. For instance, if we were sick and too poor to get proper medical treatment, we could not be very happy.

5. How do your friends make you happy? When do they disappoint you?

- (A) Friends are always around to share our good times and make them better. They are also around to share our bad times and make them better, too. But sometimes they are too busy to spend time with me when I really want their **company**.
- (B) I love it when one of my friends takes me out to a nice restaurant and buys me a great dinner. Of course, I'm expected to repay the favor, but I also enjoy doing that very much. The only time I'm disappointed is when I take one of my friends out and he never returns the **courtesy**. After a few times I begin to think I'm just being used.

6. Do you think knowledge makes people happy or unhappy?

- (A) If I'm taking a test and I know most of the answers, I feel happy. But I feel terrible when I don't know any of the answers.
- (B) **Ignorance** has always been the root of great **misery**. Knowing even a little bit about our situation is better than not knowing anything.

> **company** : comfortable presence
> **courtesy** : favor; generosity
> **ignorance** : lack of knowledge or facts
> **misery** : state of being extremely unhappy or uncomfortable

Speak Your Mind Helpers

7. We overlook a lot of trivial and routine things that actually make us happy. Name some “unimportant things that are vital to your happiness.”

(A) I never fail to feel better when I take a slow **stroll** through a wooded place.

(B) “Little things” like being loved are truly the most important.

8. A certain man is handsome, intelligent, and rich, and everybody knows and respects him. He has a beautiful wife and terrific children. The whole family enjoys a high social status. Do you think he is always happy? Why or why not?

(A) I'm sure that this man, like everyone else, is happy sometimes and unhappy at other times. Money, intelligence, position, and looks are wonderful things to have, of course, but in themselves they cannot assure one's happiness. No one needs anything to be happy except a good attitude.

(B) I guess I would rather be a rich, good-looking, well-respected **genius** and then **take my chances** on being happy. Since happiness is never **guaranteed**, it would be the same if I were poor, ugly, disliked, and stupid, but then I think my **odds** would be a lot **longer**, don't you?

> **stroll** : slow walk for pleasure

> **genius** : (sb) who is much more intelligent or skillful than other people

> **take one's chances** : do sth that involves risk > **guarantee** : promise that sth will happen or be done

> **odds** : likelihood or probability that sth will happen > **longer** : less likely

9. We must learn how to be happy and then work at it. What have you learned about happiness? How do you practice happiness?

F : I feel wonderful today!

M : I thought you felt wonderful every day. Is today special?

F : Well, of course, every day is wonderful, and I do feel terrific all the time. But, yes, today is a very special day indeed!

M : Why? It's just like any other Wednesday.

F : No, it's not. It is a Wednesday beyond compare!

M : Why? How?

F : Today is the Wednesday that will notify me that I just won the lottery. I know I won! I can **feel it in my bones!**

M : Are you sure you won? Have you checked the newspaper?

F : Not yet. I'm delaying as long as I can, because I love the happy sense of **anticipation**. When the **suspense** has **built up** to the point where I can't take it anymore, then I'll check out the winning numbers.

M : And then what?

F : And then I'll find out that I actually won, and my excitement will know no **bounds!**

M : Gosh, I sure hope you win. You're so high that a fall in your spirits if you lose could be **downright** painful.

F : Don't worry. I'm so high because I know I'll win. It's just impossible for me to lose!



> **feel in sb's bones** : to believe something strongly although you cannot explain why

> **anticipation** : feeling of excitement about something that is going to happen in the near future

> **suspense** : excitement or worry while waiting to find out what has happened or what will happen

> **build up** : prepare for a particular moment or event

> **bounds** : limits

> **downright** : thoroughly; absolutely