

Happiness (Part 3)

What is happiness anyway?!

INTRODUCTION

Remind the students that they are thinking about what happiness actually is and reflecting on whether the pursuit of happiness is all that it is cracked up to be!

Having discussed possible ways of being happy in the first two sessions of this unit this final session is designed to help students consider how we use the word 'happiness' and whether pursuing happiness is actually a good idea anyway!

ACTIVITY

Begin this session by asking each of the students to create a 'Happiness Matrix' like this:

Being happy	Shallow	Deep
Short term happiness		
Long term happiness		

Then ask them to fill it in as per the example below. In this example, the student has identified 'Eating sweets' as a source of 'Short term' and 'Shallow' happiness whereas 'Getting married' has been identified as a source of 'Long term' and 'Deep' happiness. It is vital that the students do this **ON THEIR OWN** because they are going to discuss their findings later on in the session.

Being happy	Shallow	Deep
Short term happiness	Eating sweets	

Long term happiness		Getting married
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Once the students have filled in their matrices ask them a series of questions about their choices, such as:

- *Was this an easy activity? Why or why not?*
- *Is there anything you all agree about?*
- *Why do you think you have different opinions about some of these issues?*
- *Is there really a difference between these different 'types' of happiness?*

ACTIVITY

These questions should help the students to really delve deeply into the philosophy of happiness. As the discussion begins to peter out ask them to reflect on the following quote by John Stuart Mill:

'It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied. And if the fool, or the pig, are of a different opinion, it is because they only know their own side of the question.'

Encourage the students to reflect on this quotation and to offer some thoughts on it.

It is crucial that the students understand that John Stuart Mill meant that pursuing shallow and short term happiness was only suitable for animals and fools. As such, if they are struggling to identify what Mill meant then it is appropriate to ask them the following questions:

- *Do you agree with his view that it is better to be clever but unhappy than ignorant but happy?*
- *What do you think is more important – the search for happiness or the search for truth?*

After this discussion has finished ask the students what they think of this quote from the philosopher Albert Camus:

'You will never be happy if you continue to search for what happiness consists of. You will never live if you are looking for the meaning of life.'

CONCLUSION

Once you have shown them this quote finish the session with a plenary discussion drawing on Camus' quote but getting them to think more deeply about all the thoughts they have uncovered during the past three sessions. The following questions might help to stimulate the discussion:

- *What do you think Albert Camus meant by this quote?*
- *Do you agree with his thoughts?*
- *How do you think John Stuart Mill might have reacted to Camus?*
- *Do you think looking for happiness is a good idea or is it better just to get on with your life without thinking too deeply about it?*
- *Have these sessions made you more or less likely to actively search for happiness?*