

## Happiness - is it truly achievable?

What is the meaning of life? What is the purpose of our existence in this world? These are philosophical questions that are probably close to impossible to answer. But what most people would say is to be happy. What makes us get out of our bed in the morning is the thought that one day we will achieve our dream life, where we have our dream job, our dream house, our dream pet etc. Happiness can mean something different for each person though. And there are certainly a lot of misconceptions about this very ambiguous concept. Personally, I feel like true happiness is not just a mask we put on when we smile or when we pretend everything is fine and there is a thin line between genuine feelings and lying to yourself and to others about your mental state. Achieving it is indeed difficult and we may never truly reach it in the true sense. One could define happiness through what it scientifically means: chemicals, specifically endorphins, serotonin, dopamine, oxytocin. And rightfully, in a very simplified version that is what emotions are, chemical reactions. But the human nature is a lot more complex than that and it also has social implications as well as things we might not fully comprehend yet.

In other words, happiness is not simple and there are often many things that stay in the way of it. Mental health issues are a subject that is not talked about enough in the present world and it is, from my personal experience, almost completely neglected in the school environment, where we should be taught about it. In this sense, the system lamentably fails to evolve the students into being happy and competent adults in the real world. We have encountered teachers and adults that don't believe "mental health" is a thing, either because they weren't taught about it when they were young so now they feel the need to take it out on the new generations or because it is an excuse to overload students with work and responsibilities in this world that is changing whether we like it or not, in this world where the ones who work smarter, not harder make it to the top. The truth is that in order to be completely happy you need to be careless of what is around you. And that is often times not possible.

How many times have you heard someone who supposedly gives advice say: "Are you sad? Stop being sad. It's that simple!" Well, it's not that simple. A breathing exercise, a walk outside or faking a smile won't help you out in the long run, yet we are encouraged to believe that as a

societal coping mechanism. It's no coincidence that when someone asks us how we are doing, most of the time the answer will be "I'm fine. What about you?" We don't want to face the reality that there is a long, indefinite way towards being actually "fine".

So can we truly achieve happiness? Maybe not. But trying to is what floats our boat. It's the journey that matters the most, it's the obstacles that form us and build our personality. It is totally understandable to not feel alright all the time and look for help when we need it and preferably professional one, rather than some empty tips that will do essentially nothing in the end. When a person is going through a rough time, telling them that everything is going to be alright is counterproductive, since it just sounds like a beautiful lie. What people like hearing instead is that they're not alone and they have someone to count on. The people we have around us probably matter the most in our goal of becoming happy persons. We have to be genuine and regardless of how we define happiness for ourselves, we should never miss out on the small moments of joy in our life and try to look on the positive side of things, because there is always one out there.