

What Is a “Happy Life”?

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Do you feel happy with your life? What is a happy life? Well, many of you may think it is to become a millionaire, to work for a famous company or to live a well-rounded family life. To realize your dream, you may now be studying hard.

These days, I often consider the importance of small examples of happiness I experience in my daily life, rather than dream those big dreams. Today, with you in this room, I would like to consider what a happy life actually is.

From my experience, I've learned two elements so far to help us become happy. Very simply, both of them are “to try”. The first one is to view things positively whenever and wherever you are. I'm a member of a baseball club. Three-hour practice everyday after school is really hard. Until it becomes dark, I play baseball with my teammates, swinging a bat, catching balls, and moving all around the field. I become quite tired, and covered with dust by the end of the training. But how could I enjoy my life like this if I were not a member of the baseball club? I'm healthy and can sleep well. When I come to think of it, I feel very happy and thankful even for the hard training.

In this way of thinking, even a troublesome thing can be a good chance for me to challenge myself. Everything that happens to me can lead to a happy life.

Once, while I was practicing on the baseball field, I stumbled, fell down, and got hurt. At that time, I was saying to myself, “Recently I didn't hurt myself and maybe I became very careless, but now I can see this is the pain I should avoid. Never mind as this accident will make a valuable experience for me.” In this way of thinking, it seemed that the pain was fading away. And when you have to speak in public, just like me today, you may sometimes feel tense and uneasy. Then, please say to yourself, “When I am nervous, I sweat, but I find a way to do it. This will surely be a good experience for me,” and then you will find yourself enjoying the speech. If you think this way, even studying can become pleasant. However, I'm afraid the same logic doesn't apply to me when it comes to studying.

Another element is the importance of having disposition for feeling pleasure. One Sunday afternoon, I was walking along the road. I saw an old woman coming toward me, pushing her bicycle with great effort, So I said to her "Hello. Are you OK? " She answered with a smile, "Oh, I'm fine, thank you." This short greeting made me feel very good. After that I came to school and noticed a flowerbed at the school gate. "Who put these flowers here?" I wondered. "Anyway, they are very nice, aren't they?" I thought. Thinking like this made me feel even happier. Thanks to such incidents, I was able to spend the rest of that day full of happiness.

Simply by changing my way of looking at things or by doing something pleasant myself, my life has become very joyful. When I come across something difficult or challenging, I think about or see the other side of the thing and take the matter positively. Then life suddenly becomes more interesting.

I think happiness lies not in what we run after, but in what we notice. Are you always looking for something in the distance in order to be happy? Are you missing the pretty dandelions at your feet? I think there are seeds of happiness all around you in our everyday life. If you can notice even one of them, and feel happy with it, it can make your life full of joy.

Thank you for listening.