WHAT MAKES A GOOD LIFE?

by:
Mayralyn R. Cabling

When Emily Esfahani Smith went to college and enter on her adult life, she thought the key to a happy life was success. She was looking for the perfect job, boyfriend and apartment. But the more she chased the things she thought would make her happy, the more anxious and adrift she felt. So, she decided to go to graduate school to study positive psychology and find out once and for all what makes people really happy. But what she learned was that chasing happiness can make people unhappy. "There's an emptiness gnawing away at people and you don't have to be clinically depressed to feel it," Esfahani Smith said in a TED talk. And the research shows that what predicts this despair is not a lack of happiness, it's a lack of having meaning in life.

According to study of Positive Psychology, Martin Seligman a renowned psychologist theorizes that there are elements to have good life; positive emotion, engagement, relationships and meaning. The first element to good life is positive emotion, this broaden one’s mind, improved the individual’s subjective experience, field of vision and sense of self. This enhanced mindset, more creative and flexible, better problem solving, and greater opportunity for connection with others. The second one engagement: it is a completely involvement in a task at hand, for example I like reading books, it is the moment when the sense of time disappears and I became unaware what’s going on around me. Relationships are the third fundamental element of well-being. Positive relationships towards the others, like families and friends experience more energy, positive emotions and have a better health and live longer. The next fundamental is meaning. It gives an individual sense of belonging and sense that his or her life is matter. It may be found in relationship, work, religion and any institution. One of the keys of having a meaningful life is finding a purpose. Finding a purpose is not the same
thing as finding a job that makes you happy. When you’re a teacher, your purpose is to educate children, when you’re a doctor your purpose is to apply treatment for the sick people, for the parents their purpose is raising their children. The main part of purpose is to serve other using your strength and from there develop to the best version of you. This is where we feel needed and contribute to other people.

Creating a meaningful, good life, it takes a lot of work and it is an ongoing process. As we continue living here each day, the life also teaching us to be a better version of ourselves. People are interconnected and every story we made will add to our life and others that had an impact to them.

“Happiness comes and goes. But when life is really good and when things are really bad, having meaning gives you something to hold on to”. --- Emily Esfahani Smith

References:
https://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1061&context=mapp_capstone
There’s is more to Life than Being Happy—Emily Esfahani Smith (TED talk)