

Happiness

Happiness is defined as an emotion in which one-experience feelings ranging from contentment and satisfaction to bliss and intense joy. Although happiness may be defined in such a way it can be interpreted in many different ways by different people. Three philosophers Plato, Aristotle, and Kant all have each developed their own theory of happiness and how to achieve it. Plato's theory involves moral behaviors leading to deep spiritual happiness, Aristotle's theory involves achieving long term happiness and Kant's theory involves the idea that your actions are not necessarily done because of happiness but because of obligations. Even though all three philosophers have very different ideas I believe that Aristotle's idea is the truest example of genuine happiness because ultimate happiness comes from accumulated events within your life.

To begin, Plato is one of the many philosophers who has developed his own theory of how to achieve the ultimate happiness. Plato's theory on happiness involves the deep, spiritual happiness of the soul. According to Plato one's happiness is related to one's moral behavior and someone who makes immoral actions will be motivated to be moral if he wants to be happy. Plato claims there are three parts of the soul: reason, spirit, and appetite. Each part is satisfied differently: reason is satisfied by wisdom, spirit is satisfied by courage and appetite is satisfied by moderations. When all the parts of the soul reach virtue through satisfaction then the soul is harmonious which equals happiness (power point slides). For example when you do something good like helping out a family in need during the holiday season then you will be able to achieve happiness.

Another wonderful philosopher with an ethical theory of happiness is Aristotle. Aristotle's theory on happiness is different from others. Aristotle believes all human behavior is purposive and that the ultimate purpose of all our actions is to reach the final end which he believes to be happiness.

Happiness refers to the quality of our lives achieved over a lifetime. He focuses on what brings you to happiness over all and not the little things that make you happy for short periods at a time. Your life on one extreme may involve joys, pleasures, and successes and on the other hand you may also have many pains, griefs and troubles but overall it is still a good life which brings happiness (The Radical Academy). Although Aristotle believes that happiness is not about fame, fortune and honor it is still necessary to some extent "for it is impossible, or at least not easy, to act nobly with some furniture of fortune... There are some things whose absence take the bloom off our happiness, as good birth, or alone in the world, or childless..." (529). He also says that Happiness is self-sufficient. The self-sufficient is defined as that which when isolated makes life desirable and lacking in nothing (Corder 1).

Furthermore, Kant the last of the three philosophers who introduces a theory of happiness. Unlike Aristotle, Kant's theory does not evolve from a long-term happiness instead it is a result of pleasing others. He believed that to earn happiness, you must be a moral person, even if it means that you can never be happy. Your actions do not result because of some sort of personal benefit but because we are obligated to do good things regardless of the consequences (Thoughts of Kant's Ethics). In fact, Kant says that it's better not to feel happiness after committing a moral act, because he believed that if you are acting out of happiness, then you are not acting out of duty. Therefore you must please others before you please yourself. For example if you help out your mother and clean

the house for her you doing it because you know you are obligated too even though u might not want too.

In the end, ultimately I believe that Aristotle presents the best theory of happiness. Like his theory says Happiness refers to the quality of our lives achieved over a lifetime. When you are older and have lived your life to its maximum you are able to look back at all the experiences through out your life and evaluate them all as a whole. Ultimately they will all bottle down to an overall achievement of happiness. Even if your life you consisted of many ups and downs you can still think of those time and say that you were strong and got through them and moved on. Little achievements such as winning first place in a school talent show or passing the test to get you drivers license also add up to your ultimate happiness. And even though little things like that may bring you happiness for a short period when they are achieved, in the long run they contributed to your happy life. According to Aristotle your happiness comes form a life time of experiences and for that reason a young child will never understand this ultimate happiness till they have lived their life fully. Because a younger child will never be able to see that all the experiences in your life benefit you in one way or another and in the end they make you who you are. And for that reason I believe that Aristotle's theory on happiness is the truest example off genuine happiness.

Overall I came to the conclusion that Aristotle had the best idea, which demonstrated genuine happiness because even though you may be happy about little things in life ultimately happiness comes from an overall evaluation of one self. As Aristotle says "happiness depends upon ourselves".