

## Meaning of Life

Some of the topics we spoke about in this class which were of interest to me were: what our ultimate life goals were, what we will do or would have done differently if we had won the lottery, what we think happiness is and whether it is the goal of every human being.

The readings defined happiness (subjective well-being) as “a combination of life satisfaction and having more positive emotions than negative emotions.” Happiness could also be thought of as “the good life, freedom from suffering ... and pleasure.” Is happiness really the goal of every man’s existence? In my opinion, happiness drives our every actions whether in the background or on the surface. In class, we spoke about people who do jobs that make them unhappy just for the financial security it brings, or as another student put it “to help the people they care about most,” even before helping themselves. The argument that some people do unhappy things is not valid to me because for the case of the mother who is suffering with three jobs to put food in her children’s mouth, happiness is the overall picture not the specific. The mother gains satisfaction from seeing her children eating. Her life’s goal is to feed her children. Even though she achieves this goal via unhappy means her ultimate goal is the happiness of her children and her family. If she did not care about her children more than she did care for herself, she could have sent the kids to social care and worked less hard to sustain herself in even better living conditions, but since she so loves her kids, she is ready to make the sacrifice to attain that higher goal. People do all sorts of things for happiness; my opinion of life is that whatever we do, no matter how depressing or dangerous it might be to our present state, happiness runs behind it.

The case of the lottery win which will change our lives was very telling as to what we in class perceived as ultimate joy/happiness. Most people would have gone to schools other than MIT, most students would have worked less hard, most students would have had more fun than they are currently

having, should they have won the lottery before enrolling at MIT. We all want different things, and we get them via different means.

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