

VEV731 - Class 1

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Class Summary: Understanding Happiness

1. **What is Happiness?** – We began by questioning the meaning of happiness and explored its different interpretations in daily life. The difference between scientific and ancient(non-scientific) understanding of happiness.
2. **Science behind Happiness** – The discussion covered how the brain, body, and environment influence our sense of happiness, supported by psychological and neurological research. We also explored the dark age, the time before science and how questioning was a important part in the process of our understanding of things and our evolution and knowledgeable beings.
3. **Other Meanings of Happiness** – Beyond pleasure, happiness can mean fulfillment, balance, or deeper satisfaction.
4. **Ancient Indian Theory** – We looked at traditional ideas, especially the distinction between *Sukh* (temporary pleasure) and *Anand* (enduring bliss). The sanskrit meanings of these word roots and how science aligns with it and the agreements between scientific and ancient theory.
5. **Philosophical Theories** – Key perspectives included **Hedonism**, **Desire Theory**, the **Objective List** approach, and **Eudaimonia** (flourishing through virtue).
6. **Myths vs. Reality** – We concluded by challenging popular myths (money, constant positivity, external achievements) and recognizing that true happiness lies in meaning, relationships, and inner contentment.

It was a great session which helped us understand different aspects and theories about happiness and structured our understanding about learning about the same. Some new fresh perspectives were introduced to me by other peers. The interactions inside the class also promoted new thinking needs.