Frimpong Opoku Agyemang

ECA Writing

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**CAN MONEY BUY HAPPINESS?**

The one thing, that is responsible for the drive, motivation, and the motives behind everyone’s hectic daily routine is – money. As humans, we strive for a good life. We want to live comfortably. We have dreams and plans that need to come to fruition; and for the bulk of us, the line between where we are, and the execution of our goals, is money: literally. That is why it is very easy for us to tie money directly to happiness. It is very easy to relate the excitement one might have after executing a certain plan with money with true happiness. But that is not happiness! Money cannot buy happiness, and here is why*.* For real happiness to happen, joy must last long. (E.g. Longer than a week or a month) – and money cannot make that purchase. Real happiness is different from excitement and comfort.

Money is only a legal means of purchase and exchanges. And for all the purchases money can make, the joy attached to them, fade away in a very short time. That, is not what happiness is. Yes, one may get excited on acquiring the latest apple mobile phone, or the latest car, or a very big house. But, the joy of having these things have a very short life span

Peterson (2008) *Money And Happiness* talks about how money increases comfort in people’s lives. And how money raises the standards or people; hence assuming that they are relatively happier. But I disagree, and strongly believe that happiness is different from comfort. To be comfortable, is to live a life that is conducive and less stressful. To be comfortable is to have no worries about basic needs like shelter, food and water. And that is what money always provides in abundance –hence Peterson’s conclusions.

However, consider the people in most rural areas of Ghana, who have no money at all. People that just spend their days farming, making children and spending quality time with their extended families. They have these basic needs already catered for by other means other than the usual exchanges with money. Would we call them happy? If they are, was it because of money? Surely not! So then can we say happiness transcends comfort? Could we say, that there is a difference between happiness and comfort? Could we say that there is absolutely no relation between happiness and money? Comfort is merely a state where one has very little worries and generally appreciates their current situation or status. A middle-aged woman who earns enough money to rent a house, provide food, and buys herself necessities and even afford her “wants” is one that can be classified as comfortablebut not necessarilyhappy.

Contrary to Peterson, Novotney stresses that rich people are not as happy as they are considered to be. According to her, there are numerous problems and worries that sprout from “riches” itself, that make rich people as unhappy as poor people. She then gives instances with situations like; children of rich people being fooled and being treated differently because of their wealth. Then concluding that, money cannot buy happiness.

I side strongly with Amy Novotney (2012) *Money Can’t Buy Happiness*, but not necessarily with her analysis. There are general things that money cannot solve and hence put equal stress on both the rich and the poor, and a typical example is one with how children turn out. That is a worry that goes for both the poor and the rich. But I do not think that is what makes money unrelated to happiness.

Happiness should be long and self-sustained. It should spread over a long period of time. Happiness is the constant joy that one feels, from within that could be due to a barrage of reasons in different aspects of life depending on one person to the other.

The kind of happiness that a person might get from buying a new house, cannot be compared with the happiness they get with connecting with family and getting all emotional support they might need at a point in their life. That, is what money cannot offer. Even with the vast power and capabilities of money, it can never secure emotional and abstract excitements and joy that human beings really cherish most. Think about a time when you acquired an item you had been dreaming of having for the longest time ever, and how you got excited. Can you pin point how long you were excited for having that item?

Now, think of another time, you gathered with your family, and each one of you were in good health, and shared jokes and adorned and appreciated each other. Can you compare what you felt at that time, and how you feel now, even thinking about that time?

You still appreciate the moment, right?

That kind of excitement, is what I think should be considered as happiness; and that is what money cannot get anyone. Money can simply grant access to what one needs, but the increase and decrease of the amount of a person’s wealth, has nothing to do with how happy they are.

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