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### Week 5 Paper

This week's readings cover how you can find a balance in life during the age of affluenza. This includes talking about finding how to ethically make and spend your money to focus on finding what really matters in your life. From making the right financial decisions while still enjoying your time, and designing a lifestyle that you can be proud of, these readings outline the ways in which you can find your own path to ethical and meaningful happiness in the current consumer economy of today. IT was truly enlightening reading these passages and helped me to personally reevaluate my priorities and enjoyments that I find in life, despite not being an avid consumer of products it still shined a light on some of the aspects of enjoying life that I might not have thought about. We are not alone in our fight against the corruption of affluenza and building a strong support system and finding the solutions and comradery in breaking free from the scourge that is affluenza can really help.

Money doesn't bring you happiness is a term we hear often but tend to dismiss it as it buys you options and with those options you tend to be able to provide yourself with a more rich and fulfilling life but chapter 8 explores how even without making an exorbitant amount of money you can still provide yourself with opportunities by spending wisely and making the right decisions with your money. Things like tracking what spending habits actually bring you "life energy" (165) and calculating spending and income can help you find the correct balance in your life between what you want and

what you can afford. Things like “downshifting” (166) can also help you realize what you truly find important in your life. And also help you realize that living better is not always about having the biggest home or the fanciest car. This chapter really helped me better grasp the steps that one might take to realize the things they truly find valuable in life and ways to focus on spending wisely to enhance those values while saving in other places to better gain a more fulfilling life.

We often feel disconnected from the great outdoors in a society that is pushing materialistic desires down our throats, so finding satisfaction in the wonders of nature is a great way to break through the haze that covers society and finding those escapes into nature is what chapter 20 is all about. To help take the several steps needed to engage with nature and promote environmental conservation, for a more clean and healthy way of living you could: protect nearby natural elements like creeks and woods, maintain birdbaths, and incorporate native plants into the home and yards. Additionally, Creating a Certified Wildlife Habitat can provide food, water, and shelter for wildlife. Encouraging backyard camping and playing games to discover critters fosters a deeper connection with nature. Practicing effective recycling and opting for eco-friendly products conserves natural resources. Regular nature walks allow for observing the cycles of nature, while cultivating a green thumb through gardening provides a hands-on experience. Lastly, shopping for products with green labels ensures support for nature-friendly practices across various sectors. (179) These actions empower individuals and families to embrace nature, contribute to conservation, and foster a more sustainable future. For early education I went to a Waldorf school and they often

incorporated many of these aspects into their way of teaching and I think that has had a profound impact on the ways I enjoy interacting with nature.

Now that you are able to discern what things truly matter to you and are also able to spend accordingly to enable yourself to live your most fulfilling life, there comes the next steps of maintaining your abilities to hone in on these important factors in your life and apply principles to the “maintenance of health” (216). This can come in the form of applying your values on your relationships, career, and your plan for the future while also reflecting upon if the decisions you have made along the way have gotten you where you want to be or if perhaps their might be some shortcomings due to your decisions not always following your values (216-217). One thing that chapter 24 brings up is the community and national checkups to see if the politicians are also helping to breathe the vital support to the general values that the community has expressed into the community. Only through the reinvestment into the community that truly helps bring a rise in genuine progress can we hope to increase the standard of living for all. The three main pillars highlighted for the rise of Genuine Progress Indicator or GPI are security, fairness, and access to work. These are staples to building a cohesive and strong community and I believe the keys to having a good society. I agree that the keys to social happiness are up to the individual but as a society we need some sort of general programs to help enable people to find and explore their own path to happiness.

So now that we know the ways out of the disease that is affluenza, what immediate steps can we take to find our way out? Chapter 25 outlines the cures to finding the way out. Firstly admitting we have a problem is essential to changing our path. This can help us to redefine the goals that we are working for and help to

restructure our lives to be more ethical. We need to reframe our way of thinking and shift our approach. This can take the form of believing in a duty to achieve sustainable yield, preserve ecosystems, and enhance quality of life. (231) This can only be achieved through the reshaping of the economy that we live under to better fit human needs rather than corporate profit.

The readings of this week have provided invaluable insights on finding balance and meaning in life amidst the era of affluenza. They have prompted a personal reevaluation of priorities and the enjoyment derived from life, shining light on aspects that I may have overlooked. I learned that we are not alone in the struggle against affluenza, and building a strong support system and finding solutions together can be instrumental in breaking free from its grip. The notion that money alone does not bring happiness is explored, highlighting the importance of making wise financial decisions and finding the right balance between wants and affordability, and providing practical steps to identify what truly holds value in life and how to allocate resources accordingly. The readings have helped me to identify the necessary steps to find my way out of affluenza, by acknowledging the problem, reframing my ways of thinking, and hopefully helping society to reshape the economy to prioritize human needs over corporate profit. By implementing these insights, we can strive for a more ethical, balanced, and meaningful existence in today's consumer-driven world. If I were to be able to ask the author a couple of questions about this book after reading it and writing about it for the past few weeks it would be about what the best, and most impactful ways that a single person can have in reshaping the world into a more human centered one and about the best ways of convincing others to understand the problems that affluenza has had on

our society, as many do not feel the same way about the problems facing us today due to the lack of education on the topic or being too engrossed in the propaganda that affluenza has made inescapable in our modern society.