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**Date**: April 13, 2025

**Cohort**: (Francom, French, McMahan)

*In what follows, reflect on your learning and personal growth at this point in our course. Consider this week’s readings, multimedia sources, presentations, discussions, activities, etc. To your best ability attempt to integrate these experiences into our own developing understanding of the ‘Good Life’.*

This chapter in the book about India was very interesting and offered a new and unique perspective on how to approach life. For Indians, they are strong to their spiritual beliefs that life isn’t perfect and that’s ok. When Indians face a problem, they don’t stress over it at all, they see it as a normal part of life and just simply move on. Reading this perspective for going about life is entirely different from Americans. Growing up, whenever an adult would teach me how to deal with problems, they would say to not procrastinate, and to attack it directly. We are taught to not forget about the problem, or diminish its significance, but to instead try to solve the problem by going right at it. And this small difference is a big reason our two countries look so much different. In the passport, I raised a question whether or not someone in America could live a life the way Indians do. And ultimately, I think the answer is no. When you are grown up in one specific way for how you are going to handle your problems, it’s not easy to entirely change that approach. You are essentially hard-wiring yourself to think one way, until it’s subconscious. For example, I might have a test coming up in a few days, but at one instance I might have forgotten about the test, but I still feel nervous, even though I have forgotten about the test. Then, I have to think and remember the reason why I am nervous. In India, this would never happen. However, here in the United States, we are taught and raised to tackle problems directly, which is why I think completely abandoning this approach in any way would be impossible to do.

Next, another difference to the United States, is how Indians perceive happiness. For us in the United States, happiness is often seen through material goods. When you get a salary bonus you might in response buy a new phone, and then post that on social media for everyone to see. However, for those in India, happiness for them is individual growth. They don’t care about the material goods. If an Indian got a pay raise, they would be happy simply off of this bonus reflecting their hard work ethic; they wouldn’t need to buy a new phone and post it. And I think this is so important towards how individual people and societies overall go about life. I say this because Indians approach life trying to improve themselves, while Americans go for materialistic items. I see this to be a loss of purpose for Americans, as what they’re trying to achieve for happiness is just in order to show off to other people that they’re successful. It's not genuine happiness, and true happiness won’t even be plausible if you are only trying to succeed in order to change how others perceive you. It’s a flawed approach to life, which citizens in India don’t do, and in response have a more ethical and sound approach towards striving for happiness. Thinking about building a utopia, this is something that I think would need to be figured out from day one. To build a successful society, you need people to have good moral goals that will push them to succeed, for good reasons, and not just to show off. Therefore, when making a utopia, I think it’s so important to teach the younger generations that happiness isn’t defined by material goods, but rather how you feel about yourself, truthfully.