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Happy Essay

In this day and age, there are many ways to be truly fulfilled and happy. Two ways that people find happiness are by working on their passions and by having a positive impact on the world.

Working on your passions is one of the things in life that can truly fulfill someone and give them a true sense of happiness. One person who has lived by this sentiment is Ronaldo Fadul. He has rejected the world’s materialistic nature for a humble house on the beach where he surfs day in and day out for over 50 years now. He expresses that, “This is the life that I chose. This is not the life of a PhD, but I live well.” He doesn’t quite have as much money as Elon Musk, but he lives a life that he is passionate about, and that’s enough for him. He has stepped off the hedonic treadmill, and in stepping away from the dystopian materialism that has affected Western society, he has found solace.

Another example of honing a skill and focusing on passions is actually a personal example. What surfing is to Ronaldo Fadul, making music is to me. I find tranquility and peace within the confines of my headphones, when making music, it seems as if everything else fades away. It’s just me and the music, in a sense. The thoughts that plague my mind in my day to day life seem to be silenced and my mind is whisked away into a state of flow. This state of flow has helped me through any mental health problems that I have struggled with in the past. One example I can give was a couple weeks ago. I knew that school was starting soon, and whatever I thought about it, I had a sense of dread and anxiety that would just not go away. Even as I would try to sleep, I would think about all the things that could go wrong. My only way of escaping this sense of dread was with music. Whenever I would go onto my DAW (Digital Audio Workstation) to work on projects, I would feel a sense of tranquility. As a result, eventually my passion for music helped me overcome the anxiety that gripped me during the summer. The flow state I was constantly entering on the daily helped me focus more on the present and what is happening right in front of me.

Additionally, it is known that doing acts of kindness and having a positive impact on the world is amazing for one’s mental health. A prime example of this is Andy Wimmer, who works at the Home for the Dying and Destitute in Kolkata, India. He has been helping people for 17 years and before his time in India, he was a rich banker. He lived a normal life, and he was quite into fashion. He spent lots of money on clothes, and materialistic things. However, when he was introduced to the Home for the Dying and Destitute, he thought that there must be more to life than a big house and a fast car. He started living in India and regularly volunteering, and he is living out his intrinsic goals. This is yet another example of people rejecting materialism and how it has made them happier.

Another example of the link between being kind and being happy was found in a study conducted by Kathyrn E. Buchanan and Anat Bardi in 2009. According to berkeley.edu, the study was conducted by sorting 86 participants into three groups for ten days and measuring their life satisfaction via survey before and after the study period. Group one was instructed to do at least one genuinely kind thing every day. Group two was instructed to do something new each day, and group three was not instructed to do anything. At the end of the study, it was found that after being surveyed, groups one and two had roughly equal increases in happiness. Even though group one only had to do one kind thing every day, they managed to feel the same amount of happiness as the group who were constantly doing new things. Additionally, both groups were focused on more intrinsic goals, and that’s why the happiness in the study grew.

Now looking back at this evidence, it’s no wonder that the general population has gotten unhappier and unhappier. If the American Dream of having a big house and fast cars was really the peak of the human experience, if money really was the key to happiness, then why did the suicide rate in the United States soar by 30 percent?