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Mother Teresa was one of the 20th century’s greatest humanitarian but she wasn’t perfect just like anyone else she had her struggles including depression and spiritual doubt. Before she became Mother Teresa she was … at 18, she became a nun and took the name sister Mary Teresa before long she was in India teaching children from the poorest … family. But it wasn’t until she was 36 that she found her true calling.

She began working with cow cutters, poorest and sickest. She famously devoted her life to the unwanted, the unloved, the uncared for. She opened schools, orphanages, leper colonies, clinics and other facilities. She worked personally with the poor and the sick around the globe and she often did so as risk to her own health and safety. She helped so many people that she received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979 and became a Saint in 2016.

Mother Teresa is remembered as a cheerful person who was always smiling but her private letters showed another side. She called her happy appearance the cloak by which I cover, the emptiness and misery. In the 1950s she found herself in an existential crisis. She felt abandon by God. But even as she struggled she did not lose heart in her work. She continued her mission to help the poor and sick offering love and support wherever she could. While she may not have always been as happy as she appeared she had a deep sense of purpose and this purpose gave her life meaning even through her suffering.

According to author Emily Asphohony purpose is critical to a meaningful life. She says modern society is obsessed with superficial ideas of happiness. But a lack of happiness is not the reason for the despair we often see in the world. It’s the lack of meaning. Asphahony spent 5 years trying to find out just how a person can live a meaningful life. She found that a sense of purpose or using one’s strength to help others was critical. Mother Teresa of course had this in space. Asphahony also explains that a sense of belonging, moments of transcendence and the way we frame our life stories are also important for living a meaningful life. Asphahony says we live in a world of increasing loneliness and depression and she counsels that pursuing happiness does not actually lead to happiness. Instead, we should be seeking a life of meaning. She says happiness comes and goes but when life is really good and when things are really bad having meaning gives you something to hold on to. What Asphahony Ted talk to learn more about her research on living a meaningful life.

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According to one survey, a hopping 80% of millennials say that one of their greatest desire is to have a lot of money and 50% want to be famous. Are they onto something or this desire’s misguided. According to a Harvard University Studies on human health and happiness. They are weigh off based. In 1928 researchers started tracking the lives of a group of 724 men from all walks of life. They are still following the lives of the 60 surviving members today. Their wives and children 2000 of them are now part of the studies as well. With the wealth of the information that they gathered, they came to some very important conclusion. Three things stand out. First, social connections increase our happiness, physical health and lifespan. Unfortunately, one in five American said they are lonely. Second, it’s not about the numbers of social connection one has, it’s about the quality of the social relationship. They found that the man who was most satisfied in their relationship at 50 years old would the healthiest at 80 years old.

In fact, the relationship quality was a better indicator of future health than the usual things like cholesterol. Not only that at 80s people aches and pains affected their mood less if they were in a happy relationship. Third, having good relationship affected their brains too. The man who felt they can count on their partners when times got hard had sharper memories as they grew older. Robert Wald Inger, the forth director of this 80 years old studies is quick to point out that a good satisfied relationship does not mean the couple doesn’t fight. Often there were plenty of bickering within the healthy couples. But they knew they would be there for each other. And it’s not just the romantic relationships that matter, family friends and communities are important to. Recently studies provides some insight into how to maintain a healthy relationship. Relationship satisfaction tends to be higher when you express gratitude for your partner. Open communication even about the hard things is also connected to healthy relationship and it’s important to make time for play. Couples who experience exciting and enjoyable activities together tend to stay together.

Wald Inger suggests livening up stale relationship by doing new things together. They also suggest simple things like replacing screen time with people time, talking walk together, having date night and reaching out to result that long standing family food. Like Millennials who were surveyed, many of the man of Harvard Studies initially thought achievement and wealth as young men. As it turns out that’s not what life all about. It’s about the relationship that we cultivate. It’s about connection and it’s about being there for each other.