

The Mirror Test – A Comprehensive Analysis

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The growth of technology over the last decade has been astounding – but can we say the same for human happiness? As countries get wealthier and more developed, are we, as human beings, getting lost in the process of acquiring materialistic entities? Has the time come to focus our attention on the quality of life, our relationships and our fears?

Introduction

One of the most ground-breaking studies, perhaps the longest research till date, on psychology and human happiness has been the **Harvard Study of Adult Development which began in the year 1938**¹ during The Great Depression, now nearly 80 years old, to determine the factors that happiness depended on. The study began with a little over 250 subjects (Harvard students), and continued all the way till their death.² The study expanded as the researches began to include the subjects' children into the study. The subjects were carefully monitored at every stage of their life, as they went on to become successful entrepreneurs, engineers and doctors – as they faced their successes and their failures – in jobs, in businesses and even in their relationships. Their findings were astonishing. The study concluded that the parameter which influenced human happiness the most, was not money. It wasn't the size of one's house, or the car you drive, or the food you eat. It was the quality of relationships with others that mattered the most at the end of life. They found that relationships were what caused the most inner bliss, and the greatest sorrow.

¹ Majority of the students in the study were members of the undergraduate classes of 1942 to 1944.

² Researchers tracked the lives of the individuals on an annual basis to keep track of their work, home lives and health. They were also interviewed in their homes, provided questionnaires, and they provided their medical records and got their brains scanned.