

Jordan Simons

Meaning of Life Profile

1. What does happiness mean to you?

I do not believe my initial view on happiness, that it is achieving one's goals or being at peace with where one is in life, is wrong. In fact, I do not believe one person's view of happiness could be "correct," just as I do not believe another individual's opinion could be "wrong." However, my own meaning of happiness has definitely changed. I now see friendship as the prime source of happiness in my life. To me, happiness means having meaningful relationships with diverse individuals. Friendship is the one aspect of my life I can confidentially say I cannot be happy without. Originally, I viewed financial stability as a higher priority than friendship. While I do believe that financial stability is extremely important modern times, I do not believe it is a concrete requirement for happiness. I think back to the times when I did not have stability in that regard, and my friendships were the main aspects of those times that preserved my happiness. More than financial stability, I believe that genuine and intrinsic friendships are the most important components in achieving happiness. While friendship is not a constant road of bliss, "loving friendship is able to endure everything; it refuses no burden" (Petrarca). A truly genuine friendship can withstand any burden or challenge, and will be stronger because of it. The burdens of my financial hardships took a major toll on my emotional state, but my genuine friendships aided me during those times. This time in my life was a burden that real friendship could truly withstand. Friendships are not without conflict, it is natural. However, a genuine friendship can experience these conflicts and become stronger after prevailing through them. In life, happiness is knowing you always have a friend to go to, regardless of the difficulties that have transpired between you and them. My happiness stems from knowing I am fortunate enough to have people in my life that genuinely care for me.

2. A truly fulfilling, beautiful life must include...

A truly fulfilling, beautiful life must include one taking advantage of all the opportunities and experiences given to them. A life where one does not explore beyond the environment one started out in is a sheltered one. An experience can be any personal event, challenge, or opportunity. The nature of these experiences are irrelevant, the most important aspect is that one has lived through them. Any sort of adventures or interests are prime examples of what should be sought out and explored. If one has opportunities to broaden their horizons, they cannot truly live a meaningful life without taking advantage of them. In regard to humanity's place in this world, "I have placed you at the very center of the world, so that from that vantage point you may with greater ease glance round about you on all that the world contains" (Mirandola). Though I do not believe that all life revolves around humanity, there is no question the world offers immense amount of opportunities to us. If the world has so many

experiences waiting for humanity, we would be fools not to seek them out. One cannot call their life beautiful and fulfilling if they squander the potential experiences and opportunities that are set out right before them.

3. Do you agree with the idea that people are fully responsible for where they end up in life? Why or why not?

I agree that to an extent, people are responsible for where they end up in life. There are several aspects in life that are determined only by factors individuals can control. For instance, the amount of effort and work one puts in to receiving a higher education can play a major role in the success that individual has in finding an ideal job. I agree with the sentiment, "It is pointless for a man to pray to the gods for that which he has the power to obtain by himself" (Epicurus 65). If one does not work towards where they want to end up in life, they cannot expect to miraculously find themselves there. One cannot merely pray and wish for all of their aspirations to become reality, they must take their destiny into their own hands. If a goal is in one's own control, one cannot hope that wishing alone will lead to a realization of that goal. However, there are circumstances beyond the control of one individual that can change where one would end up in life. These are uncommon in the grand scheme of life, but do happen nonetheless. In addition to being uncommon, they can immensely skew where one ends up in life either positively or negatively. For example, an individual could win the lottery and would no longer have to work or worry about financial needs in any way. On the other hand, an individual could develop a deadly illness that puts them in hospital care for the rest of their life. Either of the occurrences are uncommon and extreme, but lesser extents of that same idea do occur more frequently. Whether positive or negative, these sort of occurrences would effectively skew where one ends up in life in a manner that is beyond that individual's control. For the most part, I believe people are responsible for where they end up in life. However, the aspects that individuals cannot control in their lives can play a major role in the direction one's life goes.

4. Where would you like to see yourself in about 10 years?

In ten years, I hope to have graduated with honors from Suffolk University and to be in a work environment in the field of my choosing. I would really like to have a stable income, and have my financial situation in check. Additionally, I aspire to be in a social situation similar to what I have now. Friendship and connections are very important to me, and I want to maintain social connections with a large amount of people. I enjoy living in the Boston area, as I have been here all of my life and hope to stay here. However, I would love to have travelled to different areas of the world by this point in my life. I have yet to broaden my horizons and really want to explore as much of the world as I can. I want to live in America, but I do want to see other cultures first hand. Hopefully I am in a similar emotional state as I am now. I have struggled in the past with maintaining at stable emotional state, but I have immensely improved upon that and hope to continue my control. While I am able to provide hopes and

aspirations with relative ease, I feel it is difficult to ensure their validity. While planning for the future, I cannot help but reflect upon "Consider first, man, what the matter is, and what your own nature is able to bear" (Epictetus 29). I find it incredibly simple to create goals for myself, but how do I know these goals are what I seek? I would like to find a job in computer science right now, but there is no certain way to tell if that is an occupation that would agree with me. Needless to say, I will not even entertain the thought of uncertainty preventing me from striving for my current goals. I merely feel that it is difficult to give a specific and concrete answer to this question. There are several aspects of my life I can only assume I'd like to keep in check, but I cannot be sure that will lead to the outcome that I seek. However, I know for certain that a happy life is what I strive for. Happiness is something I experience now, and I know for certain it is something my nature is willing to bear.

5. How important do you feel you are in the grand scheme of the universe?

I do not believe humanity holds a huge importance in the overall universe. I by no means feel that human life is worthless, though it is only as important as all other life. I do not see humanity as above nature, merely an extension of it. Our lives are not long when compared to the Earth, and many people are forgotten once they are gone. It is indisputable that "one generation passes away, and another generation comes: but the earth abides forever" (Ecclesiastes 1:4). One day I will pass away, but Earth will still be here. I feel that my one life is extremely insignificant when compared to merely Earth, even more so when compared to the entire universe. Though I do not believe humanity is extremely important in the grand scheme of the universe, I do not believe this notion should make one feel negatively. I believe that this is humbling, it becomes very easy to get so caught up in one's life that we genuinely forget about everything else around us. We become so immersed in our own lives, that we neglect the sheer immensity of the universe around us.

6. Do you believe in Fate?

Whether I believe in Fate or not is irrelevant. I claim this because even if some part of my life is "fated" to happen, I would never know it was inevitable. If some parts of my life are inescapable and predestined, how would I even know? I believe that focusing one's thinking to whether they are "fated" to achieve greatness limits them. One should never hinder their own success, as "it is always within your power to prosper provided you are able to choose your own path wisely and can think and act in accordance with your choice" (Aurelius V.34). More than anything else, we are in control of our own lives and our own destinies. I believe that anyone has the power to achieve greatness, just as anyone can slump into a lazy existence. Even if Fate exists, we would never achieve anything in our lives if we sit back and do nothing. I believe that Fate is irrelevant because one can never truly know of its existence. Additionally, if it were to exist, what would that change in the way we live our lives? Regardless of Fate's possible existence, we each need to strive for our goals and take our destinies into our own hands to truly achieve a meaningful life.