

Meaning of Life Profile

1. What does happiness mean to you?

My view of happiness has not changed too drastically. I still hold the same beliefs that a truly happy life comes from enjoying life with the people that I love and care about. Ultimately, it is friends and family that make life worthwhile. I've always valued friendship and spending time with them and loved ones. The key factor in a happy and successful life are being surrounded by the people that you love and love you back unconditionally. At the end of the day, friends and family will always be there for you.

Although my initial view hasn't changed much, I would like to add onto my original beliefs. Another aspect of my view towards happiness is that we must seek simple pleasures to live a happy life. Epicurus stated, "So we must exercise ourselves in the things which bring happiness, since, if we are happy, we have everything, and, if not, we do everything to possess it." I now fully understand that by doing things that you enjoy, no matter how insignificant it may seem in the beginning, comes a long way in having a good life. Finding little pleasures that life has to offer is easy and can be done.

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

Epicurus once stated, "Of all the things that wisdom acquires to ensure happiness throughout the whole life, by far the most important is friendship." This quote perfectly encapsulates my beliefs. I still believe that a truly fulfilling, beautiful life must include friends and family. There is nothing more important than loved ones because they are, ultimately, the people that makes life worth living. The memories,

unconditional support, and the pure beauty of loving and being loved is what it really means to be human and to have lived.

I also believe that you must be virtuous in order to have a good life. Like Aristotle believed, "If activities are, as we said, what gives life character, no happy man can become miserable; for he will never do the acts that are hateful and mean." Happiness and character go hand in hand. By practicing moral acts until it becomes second nature to them, true human flourishing will take place. A person cannot truly be happy if they do bad things and I completely believe in this. Therefore, a life of beauty has to be a life of virtuosity.

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

I still have a Stoic viewpoint on this question. I do not agree with the idea that people are fully responsible for where they end up in life. Things happen in life that are beyond our control. Epictetus stated, "Some things are in our control and others not." We cannot control the situation that we were born in or how we were born or came into this world. If we spend all our time trying to control the things that we can't then we will never truly be happy or content with how our life is. Although many people tend to do this anyway, I think that it is important to realize that we can't control everything, no matter how hard we want to or how hard we try.

4. Where would you like to see yourself in about 10 years? Comment on whatever is relevant to your self-image: relationships, personal accomplishments, social status, emotional state, profession finances, geographical location, etc.

In 10 years, I would like to see myself as happy and be surrounded with the people I care about the most. I hope that the people I've become so close to in college in such a short time span would still be in my life. I also hope to have a family by then and

be happily married. A stable job would also be good to have because financial problems are very real in today's world. Although I want a good paying job, I would also want my job to be fulfilling and meaningful. Even though I do not know what I want to do yet, I know that the best job, for me, would be a job that helps people and has a good influence on a wide audience. It will make me more than happy to be doing something good and meaningful.

As for my personal accomplishments, I would like to see myself improving a little more each and every single day. Whether it be my health, emotional state, wisdom, I would want to see myself as a better person that I am now. "While we are on the road, we must try to make what is before us better than what is past; when we come to the roads end, we feel a smooth contentment." (The Vatican Sayings, Epicurus)

5. How has your view on goals and achievement changed?

Sometimes the end goal, or prize, is what people aim for when doing something. I understand now that this is not good because the process of achieving whatever there is to be achieved or being blind by the need to win ultimately robs you of being genuinely interested in the act of doing whatever activity that is done. This quote from Chuang Tzu really resonates with me on this question. "His skill has not changed. But the prize divides him. He cares. He thinks more of winning than of shooting - and the need to win drains him of power."

I greatly relate to this as a student. Learning used to be fun for me back then because I was genuinely interested in the topics that I was being taught and I loved learning new things. However, as I grew to be older, grades became more and more important, so I forgot all about my love for learning and cared more about the grades in the class that I was in. Although I did good in my classes thus far, I still miss being able to really enjoy the process of learning and wish that grades didn't exist anymore so the pressure wouldn't be there for me to always get an A. I care more about grades than

learning just like the archer cares more about winning than shooting. Since I have been in college, I tried to not care as much. But it has become so ingrained in me that I cannot help but think of grades even though I try my hardest not to. With this class, I find it much easier because this is the first class that I've had in a long, long time that I am genuinely interested in learning about. And for that, I am thankful.

I understand now that goals can blind you from what you really want to achieve. Sometimes, in being so focused on that goal, you don't realize what you might miss important things. "You, O worthy one, are perhaps indeed a seeker, for in striving towards your goal, you do not see many things that are under your nose." (Hesse, Siddhartha)

6. Would you say you have a much better understanding of what it means to be free?

Definitely. I understand much more now that in order to be free, we must be detached from external things that are not within our realm of control. I am guilty of trying to do this but I fully understand now, how not to. "If a person gave your body to any stranger he met on his way, you would certainly be angry. And do you feel no shame in handing over your own mind to be confused and mystified by anyone who happens to verbally attack you?" I used to always be self-conscious and worry about what other people thought of me. Now, that I have matured, these thoughts have been less and less often. I hope to one day be finally free of being controlled by the judgement of others. By doing this, I'll finally have the power to control my thoughts and my own self. That is one way to be free.