

Pleasure

1. Happiness as an End of Human Action
2. The Utilitarian View
3. The Aristotelian View
4. Other Views on Happiness

What is important to me in life? How will I be satisfied?

Nearly everyone's answer to an open-ended question of this kind could be categorized into one of the following 5 types:

1. A great job
2. A close family
3. A loving spouse
4. God
5. Leisure pursuits



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Thinking Philosophically:
Why do I seek these things?

They make me happy!

Happiness is a natural end of human life.

The desire to be happy is basic and needs no further justification.

What is Happiness and How Do I Achieve It?



The Utilitarian View (Bentham, Mill)

Happiness is the *only* end of human action.

Hedonism: Happiness is pleasure and the absence of pain.

It is personal and subjective to individuals in two senses:

1. Happiness is a FEELING
2. What produces happiness for will VARY for people (though certain things produce happiness in most people).



You should live a life of pleasure, but don't forget other people. Help them to live with pleasure, as well.

The Aristotelian View

Eudaimonia: Happiness is a property of living a certain kind of life. It is 'flourishing' or 'prospering,' not a feeling.

What is my purpose in life? How can I fulfill it perfectly?

1. We are 'rational animals' and must live fully RATIONAL lives in order to fulfill our purpose and be happy. Traits that allow us to flourish are 'virtues' traits that cause our demise are 'vices.'

2. People may have SPECIFIC CALLINGS give VARIABILITY in how rationally to live well.

The Aristotelian View

Happiness is objective in the following ways:

1. It is grounded in individuals living up to their purpose, which means that there is a standard that they can either succeed or fail in meeting.
2. People's purpose in life is an objective matter that depends on who they are and not on what they feel or desire.

Refine yourself and develop your talents. Use them for your own good and the good of others.



Doctors Without Borders

Other Views on Happiness

Plato: Happiness results from a perfectly balanced soul.

Buddhists: Happiness is the result of letting go of attachments (among other things).

Kant and Christians: Happiness cannot always be achieved while doing what is right.

If we desire happiness, we would do well to first know what it is that we seek and how it is related to a good life.

Discussion Question:

Contrasting 2 POVS on Happiness

Although they both believe that happiness is central to human life, Utilitarians and Aristotelians differ on their conceptions of happiness and how to achieve it. Explain what specific concrete suggestions you would give to someone on how to live the best life according to each of these views, comparing and contrasting them as you do so.



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