

Happiness as a Paradigm for Sustainable Global Development

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Abstract

There are great challenges facing humanity today. Problems such as global warming, depletion of natural resources, environmental pollutions, hunger, poverty, social unrests, injustice, terrorism, crimes, and so on. Greed, selfishness, lack of love and respect for nature and all life forms, including people, are the main reasons for the present world calamity. All of these problems are the results of wrong belief, held by great majority of people, that one can secure happiness through wealth, fame, and power.

These global problems can be solved, if people make every effort to change or modify their attitudes for securing happiness.

An optimistic-view paradigm is presented, predicting a peaceful world by the year 2060. Love, compassion, and respect for nature and all beings prevail everywhere in the world, and people are truly happy. Science and technology are highly advanced and developed, but for the betterment of all life forms on earth. As a result of this lifestyle, trend in global warming is reversed, world conflicts resolved, and environment is pure and beautiful.

To arrive at this seemingly-utopian world, it is necessary for people to change or modify their belief system for acquiring happiness. They need to find out that they **can secure a much deeper degree of happiness through rendering of the most effective and selfless service to those who need it most, along with cultivating human values, including love and respect for all life forms.**

A procedure is recommended for people to start cultivating human values in themselves in order to increase their happiness.

Key words: happiness, sustainable development, global development

Introduction

Happiness is that quality of life which everyone is striving to acquire and maintain. Yet, there aren't too many people throughout the world who are truly happy. There are many sources of discontent and unhappiness in the world; there are deep social, economic and environmental problems that humanity needs to tackle.

There are unprecedented challenges that humanity is facing today in relation to these problems. These challenges have to be met and the problems need to be resolved, if we are to have a sustainable joyous life.

Some of these challenges are: global warming, rapid depletion of natural resources, environmental pollutions, deforestation, extinction of many animal-and plant species, social unrests, terrorism, poverty, hunger, crimes, and much more.

These challenges cannot be met by science and technology alone. We cannot just employ conventional methods of solving problems. To solve these problems, we need a new paradigm.

But we need to find out what caused these problems to occur at first place.

Causes of the Present Calamity

We are born to be happy. With this intuitive belief, people make every effort to increase their happiness in their daily activities. However, great majority of people throughout the world wrongfully seek to increase their happiness through the acquisition of more wealth, fame and power [1]. It is because of this belief system that human beings have inflicted immense pain on themselves and on the environment, and have created **all** the problems we are facing today [1]. We need to change our attitude and approach toward seeking happiness. This is of paramount importance if we are to have a peaceful and sustainable life, a pure environment, and a beautiful nature around us.

Happiness Paradigm

Environmental and social conflicts, sustainability, as well as development of scenarios are being addressed by many investigators and research institutions [2-14]. Raskin and colleagues consider four scenarios of: market forces, policy reform, fortress world, and great transition for predicting the future of the world in the year 2100 [2, 3]. They consider world population, economy, environment, equity, technology and conflict in their simulations. They predict that under the new sustainability paradigm of great transition, environment is improved, equity and technology advanced and conflict

decreased, whereas in the fortress world scenario, equity is decreased and conflict increased [2].

In the happiness paradigm being presented here, we accept it as a fact that we are living to be happy, and it is our nature to pursue happiness. In fact, all our efforts are aimed at accomplishing just that [1]. But in addition to advancing science and technology to maintain a sustainable development, we need to change- or modify our attitude toward securing happiness. We need to secure happiness and maximizing it during our life time through:

Rendering of the most effective and unselfish service to those who need it most, along with exuding unconditional love to them, and cultivating human values in ourselves [15].

Evaluating Our Happiness

Happiness is a highly valued quality that one may possess. Becoming happier is a very important effort in most people's life. Happiness, well-being, and job satisfaction have been investigated by a number of investigators [16-25]. Just how do we secure happiness depends on the qualities we possess, and the activities we undertake.

We can employ the following equation (called *happinometry* equation) to identify all the factors contributing to our happiness, or detracting from it [1]:

$$\mathbf{H} = \mathbf{J} - \mathbf{F} - \mathbf{E}$$

Where **H** represents the magnitude of our happiness, **J** includes those elements or items which directly contribute to our happiness-- elements such as:

1. Love and Service
2. Accomplishment
3. Contentment
4. Forgiveness
5. Gratitude
6. Hope
7. Optimism
8. Recognition
9. Wishing Well.

In the above equation, **F** represents all physical elements which reduce our happiness or detract from it-- elements such as:

1. Hunger and Malnutrition
2. Disease and Physical Discomfort

These elements can be called physical miseries [1].

The other term in the *happinometry* equation, **E**, includes all emotional elements which detract from our happiness. We call them emotional miseries. The term **E** includes the following elements [1]:

1. Anger
2. Anxiety
3. Arrogance
4. Attachment
5. Desire
6. Expectation
7. Fear
8. Gossip
9. Greed
10. Grief
11. Hate
12. Guilt
13. Hypocrisy
14. Impatience
15. Indignation
16. Jealousy
17. Judgment
18. Lust
19. Malice
20. Oppression
21. Resentment
22. Vengeance
23. Violence
24. Worry
25. Worthlessness

Happiness is a quality of life. Everybody can tell if he/she is happy or not, and if today, for example, he/she feels happier than yesterday. In order to estimate our level of happiness, we can arbitrary assign numbers to the elements constituting J, F, and E, and estimate H in the above equation every day [1]. After carrying out this evaluation exercise for several days, we can then determine which factors or qualities of our life need our attention in order to increase our happiness.

By cultivation of human values, one can reduce or eliminate the effects of the emotional miseries E that one may possess.

Our Expectation of a Perfect Life-style by the Year 2060

Through a change of attitude by people in securing happiness, and through the advancement of science and technology, and by having adopted a holistic approach for tackling the world problems, we visualize the life on- and beyond the year of 2060 to be peaceful and very pleasant.

There are peace, tranquility, bliss, harmony and beauty in this world which one has never seen before. There is no crime or violence, no poverty, hunger or social unrest anywhere. There is no conflict between nations, and there are no production and utilization of weapons or ammunition of any kind. Environment is pure, well preserved and respected. Science and technology are highly advanced and developed, but for the well-being of humankind and the entire planet. People need to work about 25 hours per week to make a living. They spend the rest of their time giving love to one another, particularly to children, the elderly, and to nature. In this world, nothing is wasted; everything is reused or recycled. People take time out to enjoy nature-- trees, flowers, birds and life in general. Because of this life-style, and a diet of little or no meat, people are healthy and very happy [1]. Because of the love and respect that people have for one another and for nature, and because of the Universe's grace and generosity, everything is abundant and plentiful [15].

This seemingly-utopian world can be created, or arrived at, only if people change- or modify their attitude and approach toward securing happiness-- only if people realize that there is a happiness much deeper than the pleasure which may be derived from being wealthy, famous or powerful.

How Do We Get There?

We have about 50 years to work hard in order for the people living in the year 2060 and beyond to have the life-style envisaged for them. Our work can be considered as rendering of an effective service to the generations who need it most. We can start by taking the following steps, and enjoy doing it.

1. Form small circles of people interested to become truly happy; people who do away with the notion of wealth, fame and power for securing happiness.
2. Members of the circle should evaluate their degrees of happiness, following the procedure discussed above and outlined in detail in Ref. [1]. They should identify the factors contributing to their happiness, or detracting from it. There are generally many elements in the physical- and emotional misery categories that we all possess. They should all be considered.

3. Identify the elements of miseries that majority of people in the circle are suffering from. Make a list of them.
4. First identify methods to reduce and eliminate physical misery elements in the group. For the emotional misery elimination, determine the human values or qualities, cultivation of which can reduce or eliminate those misery items [1].
5. Make an effort to cultivate human values which can best eradicate the misery elements identified. Allow about one month for each human value to be cultivated. One can follow the detailed procedure outlined in Ref. [1]. The human values recommended are [1, 15]:

1. ***Desire and motivation for rendering the most effective and unselfish service to those who need it most, with unconditional love for them,***

2. Acceptance of others as they are,
3. Courage,
4. Devotion,
5. Dignity
6. Discipline
7. Enthusiasm,
8. Ethics
9. Forgiveness,
10. Generosity,
11. Gratitude,
12. Humility,
13. Hope,
14. Integrity,
15. Justice,
16. Love and respect for all beings,
17. Moderation,
18. Motivation,
19. Optimism,
20. Patience,
21. Persistence,
22. Respect,
23. Responsibility,
24. Sacrifice,
25. Self-confidence,
26. Sincerity,
27. Stewardship for nature and the natural environment
28. Tolerance,
29. Truth,
30. Wishing Well.

6. Members of the circle should evaluate their degree of happiness, after the cultivation of each particular human value.
7. Members should continue cultivating other human values which can eradicate the emotional miseries that members of the circle are suffering from. Members should evaluate their degree of happiness at the end of each human-value cultivation period, and determine the effect the cultivation of that human value has had on increasing their degree of happiness [1].
8. Members should make every effort to exude love to their family and the people in their immediate surroundings. Each member, alone or together with others, should identify projects by which they can render the most effective and unselfish service to those who need it most, giving the recipients unconditional love. They should express their gratitude to the Universe for the opportunity provided.
9. Members of the circle should stay about one year together, feeling the joy and happiness that they have been acquiring by eradicating emotional miseries, by cultivating human values, and by extending love and respect to the people around them, and by rendering the most effective and selfless service to those who need it most.
10. Members of the “happy” circle should help form and guide other “happy” circles of the interested people, in their town, other towns in their state or province and other provinces, and in other countries. They should help the members of these circles to eradicate their physical and emotional miseries, and cultivate human values, following the procedure described above.
11. Members of the “happy” circles should demand their local media not to broadcast any program involving violence, and not to include any news of such events.
12. Members of the “happy” circles should demand their respective school boards to include education in human values in their curricula [1].

Research into Cultivation of Human Values (RICH-Values)

There is a need for an extensive research program to determine how best human values may be cultivated in children, youths, adults and the population at large. It needs to be inclusive to cover everyone.

It is suggested that centers or institutions be established at state or federal levels for research into teaching and cultivating of human values (RICH-Values) [1]. We note here that education in human values is not simply a subject to be dealt with separately from other subjects. That is, we cannot just rely on having separate class sessions or hours set aside in the school curricula to teach these values. The human values have to be

cultivated in students as a part of all subjects. This can be done by teachers who already possess and exemplify such values and qualities [1].

As a further means of fostering human values in people at large, the life stories of people who have served lovingly without selfish expectations should be brought to the attention of children through books, videos, and any other appropriate manner. Such people should be continually venerated and honored for their work as society's great heroes, including naming buildings and streets after them, providing scholarships in their names, and so on [1]

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