

The Four Levels of Happiness™

“The human heart desires joy. We all desire joy, every family, every people aspires to happiness.”



“Christianity spreads through the joy of disciples who know that they are loved and saved.”

Aristotle – *Happiness is the meaning and purpose of life, the whole aim and end of human existence.*

Augustine – *We all want to live happily; in the whole human race there is no one who does not assent to this proposition, even before it is fully articulated.*

Aquinas – *Man cannot live without joy.*

Name:

Date:

The subject of our inquiry is of immense importance, namely, happiness. Our definition of happiness will determine all of our choices and priorities, shape our outlook, and even determine our destiny.

The desire for happiness is the root and driver of all human behavior; the ultimate fulfillment of all desires; the only goal that people pursue for its own sake. It is also the fundamental catalyst for a life of holiness, the deepest longing of the human heart.

It is no accident therefore, that the Church, as an expert in humanity, is the gold standard on this subject. She offers the answer for this universal yearning. *Only in God will man find the truth and happiness he never stops searching for* (CCC).

Topics

1. The definition, nature, and importance of happiness
2. The Four Levels of Happiness
 - a. Why a hierarchy?
 - b. Is there a dominant level and, if so, what difference does it make?
 - c. What constitutes each level, and the healthy and unhealthy expressions?
3. The PED formula
4. The Comparison Game
5. Four Fundamental Attitudes
6. Five Commitments for Increasing Trust
7. How to make Level Three a habit
8. Personal and Pastoral Application
9. Three Roadblocks to Level Four

Just for Fun

According to St. Thomas Aquinas,

Contemplation of the truth is the greatest of all pleasures	True	False
Man's desire for honor is unnatural	True	False
Virtue's true reward is happiness	True	False
Perfect happiness is possible in this life	True	False
Pleasure is a highly preferred form of happiness	True	False
Happiness is man's perfection	True	False
Bodily health is essential for happiness	True	False
Man can attain happiness by his natural powers	True	False
The foolish value wealth as the greatest good	True	False
Without friends even the most agreeable pursuits become tedious	True	False

Make a list of at least 10 things that make you happy. (Anything counts – from chocolate to prayer)

- | | |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 6. |
| 2. | 7. |
| 3. | 8. |
| 4. | 9. |
| 5. | 10. |

Happiness Level One – *I lunge toward the bowl of the lingvine*

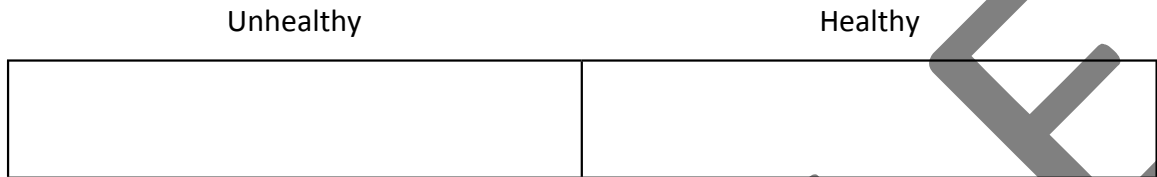
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(Laetum)

The beautiful form of material things attracts our eyes, so we are drawn to gold, silver and the like. We are powerfully influenced by the feel of things agreeable to the touch; and each of our other senses finds some quality that appeals to it individually in the variety of material objects.

Mystery Philosopher

Goal: Pleasure
Means: The physical senses
Breadth: Self
Duration: Immediate



NOTES:

- *Go, eat your bread with enjoyment, and drink your wine with a merry heart; for God has already approved what you do.* Ecclesiastes 9:7
- *So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all for the glory of God.* 1 Corinthians 10:31
- *Be content with little or much.* Sirach 29:23
- *The human person cannot do without the material goods that correspond to his primary needs and constitute the basic conditions for his existence.* Pius XII
- *Happiness does not consist in bodily good as its object; but bodily good can add a certain charm and perfection to Happiness.* St. Thomas Aquinas
- *When a man arrives at the point of perfection in bodily pleasures, he wearies of them, and sometimes desires another kind.* St. Thomas Aquinas
- *Any one that chooses to look back on his past excesses, will perceive that pleasures had a sad ending.* Boethius as quoted by St. Thomas Aquinas
- *Because of this bodily dimension, however, following the wound of sin, man experiences the rebellion of his body and the perverse inclinations of his heart; he must always keep careful watch over these lest he become enslaved to them and become a victim of a purely earthly vision of life.* Compendium of Catholic Social Doctrine of the Church, 128
- *The end and rule of temperance itself is happiness.* St. Thomas Aquinas
- *Temperance more than any other virtue lays claim to a certain comeliness, and the vices of intemperance excel others in disgrace.* St. Thomas Aquinas
- *What we observe and seek most in temperance is the safeguarding of what is honorable, and the regard for what is beautiful.* St. Ambrose

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Ultimate Good

Objective: Participate in giving and receiving ultimate meaning, goodness, ideals, and love.

Characteristics: Good is ultimatized. Principles include ultimate Truth, Love, Justice, and Beauty.

Gratification: Eternal

3

Good Beyond Self

Objective: Do good beyond self.

Characteristics: Principles include Justice, Love, and Community. Intrinsic goodness is an end in itself. Decisions are focused on the greater good.

Gratification: Long-term

2

Personal Achievement/Ego

Objective: Ego Centeredness, better than, gain advantage.

Characteristics: Promotion of self is primary. Personal power and control are key. Jealousy, fear of failure, contempt, isolation, loneliness, and cynicism.

Gratification: Short-term

1

Immediate Gratification

Objective: Maximize pleasure and minimize pain.

Characteristics: Obligation is to self alone. No desire for common, intrinsic, or ultimate good. Lack of self-worth, fear of tangible loss/harm, boredom.

Gratification: Immediate

