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**Brief and Long Lasting Happiness/
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The distinction between inherent happiness and the happiness that is caused forms a central theme in most every great religion and philosophical persuasion. It is not the things or the power you have that makes you happy, it's what you are and how you value and relate to others, creatures, and things. It has always been noted that happiness is not in things, but in feeling, in being, in love. This distinction between inherent, expressive happiness and caused, acquired happiness forms the foundation of character: Morality itself could be said to be described by this distinction. For in simply noticing this difference between happiness and excitement, a worthier life is nourished; an unexamined life is truly not worth living. This is values education at its core.

Because inherent happiness is native and is the simplest of all feelings, it doesn't require any form of special knowledge to feel it. Sage counsel has always pointed to a childlike (not childish!) awe in mature living. But children in their naive state of openness can also easily feel this basic happiness. They enjoy (and come to understand in their own way) the lesson of inherent happiness' seniority over acquired glee in a plethora of stories throughout the world. Commencing with the archetypal western tradition, the classic stories herein begin with the idealized story of gold-loving King Midas.

As you may know, Dionysus only reluctantly gave the magic touch to King Midas for taking care of his friend Silenus, who had lost his way and fallen asleep in King Midas' rose garden. And of course, Midas,

“If you give a pig and a boy everything they want, you get a good pig and a bad boy.”

—88 year old Tennessee farmer, when asked what he had learned in life upon attaining his reward, ran around turning everything to gold, until no other enjoyments remained, not even the natural pleasure of eating, drinking, and smelling the roses. Most poignant of all, he lost his relationship with his daughter. Only gold was the tragedy foretold in Dionysus' reluctance.

When Midas realized that he had wished for a tragedy, he was truly sorry for the real treasure he had lost. On the basis of this turning from acquiring happiness (selfishly) in objects to relational,

harmonious appreciation, he washed everything in water from a nearby river, restoring every thing and everyone to their greater-than-gold native state. Realizing that happiness was not found in things but in the open wonder of relational existence itself, King Midas left his kingdom and went with his daughter to live in a small cabin near a meadow in the woods. This most foundational of all lessons guides us to locate true happiness.

Developing character deepens the primary feeling at one's core; the open, relational heart in the middle of one's being. This core-happiness, not to be confused with gleefulness or even a "positive outlook", comprises the deep substance of an intelligent life. Happiness distinct from excitement widens the door to deep, full character. The stories and games in this section, combined with our own growth, sensitivity, and confession, guide our children to feel this primary urge to true happiness, and also confirms in them their own emotional durability. They strengthen their ability to feel toward long-lasting happiness in every situation, even in the midst of difficult circumstances. This preference for native, relational happiness is the foundational wise choice of all other wise choices.

A corollary theme immediately appears: how we feel affects how we see. As we notice happiness and unhappiness and a vast range of emotions, we also notice how our perception of our world is colored by how we feel. We see poorly when we are unhappy and lazy; we see better when we are excited or energetic; we see best when we are happy and engaged. Wisdom about perception itself naturally arises when we give our attention to this primary issue of true and lasting happiness.

It is good and essential to talk about happiness directly, learn about happiness with your children, and demonstrate happiness to them. Let them simply know that happiness does not come from things but is always at one's core, and magnified in caring relations. True happiness is not acquired but shared. Such straightforward attention to this most essential need provides an inviting avenue to the unthreatened, simple feeling of real joy. Let us share this openness with our children and teach them to share it in ordinary and intelligent ways with the world.

The Story of King Midas

The Story of King Midas is a classic Hellenic myth on the tragedy that is inevitable when true happiness is not noticed.

Midas was once a very rich king who ruled the land of Phygia. He had everything a king could want. He lived in a huge castle surrounded by rose gardens and all kinds of beautiful and luxurious things. He had all the good food he could eat, and shared his abundant life with his wonderful daughter, Zoe (meaning “Life”).

But Midas thought that his huge pile of gold made him happiest of all. Every day, he would begin to count his gold until he became so excited that he would laugh and laugh and throw the gold up in the air to shower himself with his gold coins. Sometimes he would even lie down and cover himself with golden things, giggle and giggle, and roll around in it like a baby.

Dionysus, the god of celebration, went traveling through Midas’ kingdom. Dionysus had a friend named Silenus who wandered away from his traveling party and fell asleep in Midas’ famous rose garden. Midas, upon recognizing Silenus, took special care of him for eleven days and then returned him safely back to Dionysus. The god, delighted and grateful to see Silenus, said to King Midas, “You have done a great service by taking care of my friend for me that I want to grant you any wish your heart desires.”

In an instant Midas replied, “I wish that everything that I touch would turn to gold!”

Dionysus frowned, “Are you sure that’s what you want?”

“Oh yes,” Midas answered, “gold makes me completely happy!”

“Very well,” Dionysus sighed reluctantly, “starting tomorrow morning, everything you touch will turn into gold.”

The next morning Midas woke up and couldn’t wait to try out his golden touch. Before he got out of bed, he reached over and touched his bedside table and instantly it turned to gold, just as Dionysus had promised. Midas had the golden touch!

“It works, it works!!!” he shouted as he sprang out of bed. He touched the chair, the table, the rug, the door, the fireplace, his bathtub, a picture, and went running like a madman on and on through his palace, touching one thing after another until he was out of breath and hungry, but still elated.

Midas felt all bubbly as he entered his dining hall. He sat down at the breakfast table, leaned over and pulled a rose close to his nose to enjoy its fragrance. But when he touched the flower, its sweet smell poured forth no more. It was now cold metal. “I’ll have to sniff them without touching them from now on!” he thought to himself with disappointment.

Without thinking, he popped a grape into his mouth, but he nearly broke a tooth for the grape had

also turned to gold. Very carefully, he tried to eat a muffin, but his teeth only clanked on the now hard bread, once so soft and delicious. “Gold again,” thought Midas. “Oh no! Everything I touch turns to gold. Perhaps...” he said, as he grabbed his wine glass to take a drink, but immediately he began to cough and choke as liquid gold slid down his throat.

Fear suddenly gobbled his joy. At that moment his favorite cat jumped up into his lap, wanting to get stroked and petted, but was instantly turned into a metal statue. Instead of snuggling his fingers into warm purring fur, Midas’ fingers touched only hardness and coldness. He started to cry. “Am I only to feel gold’s coldness for the rest of my life?” he shouted through his tears.

Zoe, hearing her father cry, ran over to comfort him with a hug. He tried to stop her, but accidentally touched her. Instantly before him was only a gold statue of what before had been his joyous daughter. Midas cried and cried and cried.

Finally, he held his arms up and pleaded, “Oh Dionysus, gold is not what I really want after all! I already had all I wanted all along. I just want to be able to hug my daughter again, to hear her laugh, to see her smile, to touch and smell my roses and pet my cat and share food with my loved ones. Please help me, save me from this golden curse.”

Dionysus, being a very kind god, whispered an answer into Midas’ heart. “You may undo your golden touch and restore those golden statues to life again, but it will cost you all the gold in your kingdom.”

“Anything,” Midas cried, “I want life, not gold.”

“Then go to the river Pactulus and wash your hands at its source. Carry the water back home in jugs and pour it over everything that you’ve changed to gold. That water, along with your changed heart, will restore the liveliness to those things that your greed froze into metal.”

Midas ran to the river and washed his hands, grateful to Dionysus for another chance. He watched in wonder as the gold flowed from his hands into the sand at the bottom of the riverbed. Quickly he filled a jug with water and hurried to his royal palace to pour it over his daughter. He wetted his hand from the jug and petted the cat.

In an instant, the empty silence reawakened into laughter and the music of Zoe’s voice and his cat purring. The sounds filled the rooms and hall of the palace once again. Midas and his daughter hugged and laughed over and over again. Then she helped him bring jugs of Pactulus water back to the palace to pour over every last twig, rose, rock, rug, bed, bread, and grape that still gleamed gold.

Midas rejoiced as the vibrance of life returned to his garden, palace, and heart. He now loved the Brightness of life instead of the luster of gold. To celebrate, he gave away the rest of his money and possessions and moved to a cabin on the edge of the forest. There, having learned life’s most valuable lesson, he and his daughter enjoyed the wonders of the fields and forest, and never forgot where true happiness is found.

TEACHER'S CURRICULUM

Teachers' Guide

1st: Accentuate the Distinction

ASK: Was King Midas really happy when he could turn things into gold? OR

Was he really happy when he got his daughter back?

SHARPEN the Distinction:

Did he think he was happy when he first got the golden touch? Was it long-lasting happiness? Was he sure he was happy when he got his daughter back? Did that happiness pass?

With this kind of accentuation, explain to your child in your own words that the happiness of relationship and sharing is greater than the happiness of things and possessions. Using the supplemental stories, guide them to feel the difference between brief and long-lasting happiness. Develop simple terms such as passing enjoyments and long-lasting happiness; excited <--> truly happy; 'high happy' <--> 'deep happy'. (more below)

Remember to let them feel good about excitement and pleasure; and feel better about empathy & love. The nascent mind tends to see only black and white: as if brief happiness is bad, and only long-lasting happiness is good. Guide them to feel both freely and intelligently. Blend this theme into the frustrations of ordinary events.

If you have time, have the kids illustrate key scenes in the story.

ASK:

Can you feel excited and not happy? Like just eating a sweet for sad consolation.

Can you feel excited and happy at the same time? Like getting something from someone you love.

Is excitement like happiness?

Which is best, stimulation or love?

Can you feel happy without excitement? Just sitting and doing nothing and still feeling deeply happy?

Is half a piece of cake better than none at all?

Can you feel joy and thirst at the same time?

Can you eat something tasty and still be unhappy?

Can you be happy even if you can't always get what you want?

(Can you, not would you! And yes, play the Rolling Stones song for them, if you want.)

Discussion Prompts:

- the Latin word for "heart" is "core". (Core <-> superficial, et cetera)

- "Core" is the root of courage, as well as encourage.

- Would you rather have a dollar now or a nickel a day forever?

- Perhaps even invite the students to reflect upon the following proposition of Socrates and how this might relate to this "core" consideration:

"Shallow men and women live

that they may eat and drink,

whereas truly happy men and women eat and drink

that they may live."

-- Socrates of Athens, 469-399 B.C.E.

**True Happiness:
How to Write a Simple
2-Point Paragraph**

To prepare your students for the following writing exercise, review the descriptors of the two kinds of happiness from the Venn Diagram on your whiteboard. In one circle, point to a telling quality of short-term happiness and say, “If short-term happiness is HIGH Happiness, then long-lasting happiness is _(pause and then say:) DEEP; (continue as ye will:) If deep happy is in the CORE, high happy is _____.” ETC, and “They both _____.” Go on and on like this, evoking various qualities in the distinction

short-term <-> long-lasting
High <-> Deep
things <-> family
Brain <-> Heart
Object <-> Relationship
Like <-> Love
Get <-> Share
fake <-> true
Outside <-> Core
sweet
smile
happy

Pre-WRITE: Use the following pre-write to demonstrate to the kids how to write a simple 2-point paragraph. Modify the sentence form according to the subject and the students’ abilities. As a class, quickly co-create an example (two colors/two foods/two _____) using the prompts below .

The two points/things/ideas I want to talk about are _____ & _____

Thing “A” is _____ and I think/ it is important because _____

Thing “B” is _____ and I think/ it is important because _____

Idea A is similar to idea B _____ . (repeat?)

Point A is different from to B _____ . (repeat?)

Both A and B _____ . A _____ , but B _____ .

Examples/Concluding remarks: _____ .

With the demonstration concluded, have them WRITE:

Tell the kids they have to write at least 7 sentences about the two kinds of happiness, using the kinds of sentences above and crafting a two-point paragraph.

True Happiness: Writing Samples

Samples of my (5th grade) students' work in this lesson:

The Two Kinds of Happiness by Nick

I want to talk about two things: high happy and deep happiness. Deep happiness is like friends and family. High happy is like when you eat a ice cream; you like it, but it's gone in minutes.

I will give you some examples of both. Deep happiness is a feeling that lasts a long time... like being around your family and your friends. Then high happiness is money, food, and things. But what you need is love. Would you want money or not to be hugged again? You would feel terrible.

So not all the money in the world can beat love. So it's not like a new piece of jewelry. If you can buy it, it is not really happiness. It is like a story I am reading in class. All his life this guy was receiving happiness and now he is unhappy all the time. So you can't buy or receive happiness all the time, but you can give it anytime.

Sierra's Compare/Contrast Assignment

I would like to tell about High Happy and Deep Happy. They are very similar in ways ... let me explain. High -Happy is something that you have and use it once or for a while and then after you use it, it's happiness gone. Example: I ate my ice-cream today, but once that the cone was eaten it was gone. Deep Happy it is just like High Happy, but lasts longer! Example: I saw my dad yesterday and when I had to leave he gave me a huge hug, I can still feel the happiness of that same huge hug.

So you see there are two ways to discuss happiness. Change the world: ask people what kind of happiness they are talking about. There are ways that you can discuss High Happiness and Deep-Happiness First, I will say that Deep Happy is something that you can feel in your heart and will stay there forever. High Happy is when you get a toy and you play with it and once you grow out of it, it's gone. If you have fun by High Happy it's OK, but you should really be happy from Deep Happy, It lasts forever. So as you see there are two kinds of happiness, but I'm not quite done. You can be happy in many ways, but please I beg you to please appreciate Deep Happy.

THE TWO KINDS OF HAPPY By:David

There is high happy and deep happy. High happy is like winning the lottery, deep happy is like sharing the lottery with your family. Deep happiness is better than high happy because if you are high happy then you become selfish and only want things for yourself. You are deep happy when you want to share with people and you will feel happier. Deep happy is about a lot of love, and high happy is like for your self and little else. Deep happy is from the heart. High happy you can hurt someone's feelings by being selfish. When I get a present, I am high happy, when I say, "thank you," I am deep happy. High happy doesn't last forever, and deep happy last for a very long time.

High Happy and Deep Happy by Sergio

High Happy and Deep Happy are types of happiness. High Happy comes to you but only lasts a short time. For example when you get ice-cream you love it but when it's all gone you don't love anymore. Deep Happy is in your heart and it does not come and it lasts for a long time. High Happy last for a couple of minutes but Deep happy last for your lifetime. For example, you love your mom but when you get in a fight with her you mad at her, you still love her no-matter what. High Happy is similar to Deep Happy and Deep Happy is similar to High Happy. High Happy is cool, Deep Happy is great. With High Happy you think you like it but with Deep Happy you know you love it. If you think you love it, that's High Happy, and if you know you love, that's Deep Happy. It's important to realize the difference, like the Beatles said, "You can't buy love."

All You Need Is Love By Samantha

Do you know what deep happiness is? Deep happiness is when you care about people in your life. High happy is like candy- first you love it then when it goes away you are sad. High happy is when you are all about money & things and not about people. They are the same in ways: by being sweet & happy. They both give you a smile. With deep happiness you have heart, but when you have high happiness you have it in your brain. In deep happiness, you are great, but in high happiness, you are good. With deep happiness you have long lasting happiness but if you spend too much time with high happiness, you will miss your old simple life. With high happiness you have to buy things, but in deep happiness you could share something from your family. With deep happiness, you are in heaven and with high happiness you are earthly. High happy is fake and deep happy is true. High happy comes to you and deep it is from you. Deep happiness is found in love and high happy are objects. All you need is love because family is better than money.