

Can money buy happiness?

Among many desires and wishes that people dream of, "to be happy" is rather popular. Another common goal is "to be rich". At some point in our materialistic age, these two wishes became closely associated and produced an eternal dilemma. Can money buy happiness? Should we prioritize financial gains over immediate pleasures? These questions cause debates and internal dialogues as they usually require a very peculiar combination of life achievements to find a definitive answer. It is also challenging to formulate a universally acceptable definition of happiness. What is excellent for one person may not be that exciting for another. In my opinion, money can not buy happiness, but it can facilitate many vital and pleasant processes enabling people to reach and maintain that positive state.

Happiness is such an ephemeric notion that one usually describes through positive feelings of excitement, mood elevation, or pick joy. Each person has individual indicators of this state. Some associate it with champagne bubbles inside, others with the lightness of a cloud. Interestingly, people often make wrong predictions about what will make them happy. The anticipation of pleasure causes the influx of so-called "happiness hormones" into our bodies that we often attribute to the object of our desires. Unfortunately, the actual feeling of happiness is fleeting and maybe even dull compared to the previous excitement.

Moreover, the causes of that feeling are vast and vary from hugs to million-worth sportscars. From the physiological point of view, there is no difference between the scale of joy based on how expensive the cause is. For example, a luxurious shopping spree and the taste of a homemade meal after a long absence can bring the same level of content. Instead, the emotional cost, the number of efforts, and relevance in a specific time and place are decisive factors in feeling happy.

Curiously, a belief that money can buy happiness comes along with the common opinion that the most important things in life are not things. Many writers, poets, and popular self-help psychology books argue that people tend to name family, friends, and experiences among the factors making them happy. Probably, most of us could recall dozens of days when we were the happiest that came at no cost. Another example comes from many happiness research projects looking for fundamental well-being causes. They show that nations with lower household incomes certify to higher content and happiness levels than people from more developed economies. These examples prove that people naturally feel joy and happiness for many reasons, regardless of their financial state.

On the other hand, we can not ignore the fact that we live in a material world ruled, among others, by economic principles. Therefore, even the most intangible sentiments rely on financial means too. Safety, health, personal development, and exploring the world all become more easily accessible with money. Someone winning a lottery might not be truly happy for a very long time. But someone needing money to cure a beloved family member would be much happier if they won a lottery.

It is also much easier to enjoy the beauty, education, and emotional connection with family and friends when there is no need to worry about making a living. Money provides freedom and peace of mind, eliminating practical problems of finding food and housing. The released mental energy can be directed to more enjoyable activities, thus bringing more satisfaction in life. Ironically, people with higher financial security often get too obsessed with worrying about their money and miss the opportunities to enjoy life.

Happiness is a delicate matter that is unique for every person. Ways to feel it can be generalized in several categories but at core are individual too. Human physiology and psychology at the origins of the

state of happiness are complex and more intricately than it may seem. Believing something as straightforward and prosaic as money can ensure such a complicated feeling as happiness means underestimating the complexity of human emotions and mental processes. However, a rational analysis suggests that money brings opportunities and freedom to divert energy from menial tasks to enjoyable actions. That, in turn, could make one's life full and satisfying.