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There's More to Life Than Being Happy: TED Talk Annotated Resource List

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Annotated Resource List

TED Talk Information

I chose to listen to the TED Talk *There's More to Life Than Being Happy* by Emily Esfahani Smith. While the title gives the impression of a very depressing talk, the speaker focused on another aspect of life that can give people fulfillment: meaning. People are taught that being happy is the ultimate goal in life, but some studies have found that the act of chasing happiness can lead to unhappiness. People that strive for the perfect house, spouse, or job often find themselves more depressed and hopeless because they spend so much time chasing satisfaction. Because of this, suicide rates have risen around the world, and in the United States they have reached a thirty year high. The aspect of life that people are not searching for that causes this depression is meaning. The psychologist Martin Seligman says meaning comes from belonging to and serving something beyond oneself.

The speaker described four pillars of meaningfulness that were necessary for a meaningful life. The first pillar was belonging. True belonging, the speaker stated, came from relationships based on value for who you are, rather than what you are. The second pillar, purpose, comes from using your abilities to give to others. This usually takes the form of work, and meaningful people think of their work in terms of what they give, rather than what they get. The third pillar is transcendence, where the mind disconnects from the self and goes to a higher reality. Some people enter transcendent states by consuming or making art, or by attending religious services. The final pillar was storytelling, the story you tell yourself about yourself. This pillar deals with how you view your life and how you reflect on yourself. People who surround themselves with these four pillars were shown to be more fulfilled, more successful, and lived longer than people who only chased happiness.

Annotated Resource List

Book Sources

Carr, A. (2011). *Positive Psychology : The science of happiness and human strengths* (2nd ed.). London ; New York: Routledge.

This book provides plenty of information about the human mind, as well as discussing the principle of positive psychology. This book cites evidence from numerous supported studies, as well as published scholarly articles. This textbook serves to teach individuals about how human's think and maintain positive attitudes, while also focusing on the uniqueness of an individual.

Robinson, M., & Eid, M. (2017). *The Happy Mind : Cognitive contributions to well-being*. Springer.

This book covers how conscious thinking and other cognitive actions can influence the mental health and well-being of an individual. It is not only a scientific text that focuses on finding fulfillment in life; it provides methods through which people can be more mindful of

their thinking and how it influences their overall moods. This source is important to the topic because it deals with mental well-being and the steps needed to achieve it.

Journal Articles

Kristjánsson, K., & Candland, Douglas K. (2010). Positive Psychology, Happiness, and Virtue: The Troublesome Conceptual Issues. *Review of General Psychology, 14*(4), 296-310.

This article scrutinizes the theory of positive psychology, examining the criticisms of the overall branch of psychology. After examining the criticisms, the article concludes that this branch has strong support behind it, and that many of the field's findings should be respected and practiced. This source is pertinent to the topic because it shows that positive psychology is a legitimate field that has strong reasoning behind it.

Tilburg, W., & Igou, E. (2011). On the meaningfulness of existence: When life salience boosts adherence to worldviews. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 41*(6), 740-750.

This article describes a study in which the researchers tested whether considering the meaningfulness of life increased people's adherence to their established worldviews. This is applicable to the topic because it deals with how considering the meaning of life affects one's outlook and attitude. It shows how changing the way a person reflects on their life can also affect their whole way of approaching life in general.

Reference Sources

Glazer, S., & Liu, C. (2017). Work, Stress, Coping, and Stress Management. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Psychology*, Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Psychology.

This source explains the ways stress arises in the workplace as well as how employers and employees deal with work stress. This is important to the topic because it deals with how people manage to remain positive about the jobs they work. The TED talk mentioned that people who define their work by what they give rather than what they get are happier. This reference provides other examples of ways employees manage stress.

Internet Sources

Dolan, P. (Ed.). (2015, February 04). Happiness research draws our attention to both structure and agency. Retrieved from <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/72405/1/blogs.lse.ac.uk-Happiness%20research%20draws%20our%20attention%20to%20both%20structure%20and%20agency.pdf>

This source presents research on the topic of happiness and finding fulfillment in life. It focuses on how different societies can affect the happiness of their members, as well as their behaviors and values. This is important to the topic because it deals with perceptions of what happiness is, and how different people view the idea of fulfillment.

