

Lesson Name:

Understanding the Happiness Research

Student Objectives:

- Learn the happiness research and why it matters.
- Reflect on the different aspects of happiness and the effect on their long-term happiness levels.
- Find hope in the 40 percent of happiness that they can achieve through thoughts, actions, and behaviors.

Educator Preparation:

- Chart paper or dry erase board, and markers
- Journal Prompt Graphic Organizer

Introduction:

Today's lesson is going to be an introduction to happiness. What is happiness? How do we get more of it? How can we wake up excited to live each day?

Instruction:

We are told that having “things” brings us happiness. If we have more toys, nice clothes, a swimming pool, etc. you’ll be happier than those who don’t. Or, if you are super-smart at school or a really good basketball player, then you’ll be happier than those who aren’t. If you have lots of money or really cool friends, you’ll be happier. But this is actually wrong information.

Those kinds of things don’t make you as happy as you think they would. We know from science and research that even if you don’t have those things, you can be just as happy as others.

Here's what science/research says. Fifty percent or about half of your happiness is genetic, which means it comes from your mom or your dad or a mixture of both. Some people are born in this world just to have a happy disposition.

Ten percent and only ten percent of your long-term happiness comes from your external circumstances. Things like how many toys you have, how many friends you have, what kinds of tennis shoes you wear. All of that only counts for a very small portion of your happiness. Super-small!

But guess what? All of us can learn to become happier because 40 percent, or almost half, of your happiness comes from the kinds of thoughts you have, the kinds of behaviors you do, or the kinds of actions you take in your life.

Interaction:

I want you to think about that for a moment. What are your thoughts about this pie chart? Do you think that having toys or cool friends or being a super athlete would make you a whole lot happier? What are your thoughts—knowing that you know this isn't true. Those things don't make you a whole lot happier!

Closure:

So in today's lesson, we talked about the happiness research and why it matters. We learned that you have control over 40 percent, or almost half, of your happiness. We will learn more about the things that do make us much happier in more lessons to come.

Activity:

I would like for you to fill out a few journal prompts about what you have learned today. Please the attached Google Doc/PDF.