

### **Happiness class discussion questions.**

After your students have learned about their satisfaction with life on BeyondThePurchase.Org you can lead them through a discussion using these popular topics:

- How important is it to study happiness? Should the psychology classes focus on “the good life” and how to improve well-being as much as negative traits and illness? What advantages could be gained from the study of happiness?
- What was the most recent situation or activity in which you experienced the most happiness? What made that situation or activity different from a mundane task and how was that situation or activity different from a negative experience (besides the emotions experienced)?
- What is the difference between enjoyable and altruistic activities? To what extent does each make you happy? From which do you personally derive the most happiness? Why?

Here is an interesting way to discuss the Satisfaction with Life scale. First, your students need to take the survey on BeyondThePurchase.Org. Then, you can provide some background to your students (also see the PowerPoint available on BtP). You should let your students know:

The Satisfaction with Life Scale was developed to assess satisfaction with people's lives as a whole. The scale does not assess satisfaction with life domains such as health or finances, but allows people to integrate and weigh these domains in whatever way they choose. It is not a long measure (it is only five items long), but the scale's reliability and validity has been tested in many settings and countries and found to be high.

**Discussion:** Satisfaction is distinct from happiness. Also, your students' scores on the Satisfaction with Life Scale may be different depending on what they have experienced recently. Have them discuss what they have been doing lately. Do they think that these recent activities impacted their assessment of how well their life is going? Have them talk about various goals they have been pursuing. What might be interesting to talk about is that their current happiness might be high (e.g., they might experience a lot of daily joy and very little stress), but if they are having a hard time accomplishing some of their most important goals (e.g., not doing well in a class, not getting a job or into their desired major, etc.) they might be experiencing lower satisfaction with their life.

Also, it is important to know that sometimes students might disagree with their scores or the feedback we provide. So, give your students time to read their feedback pages, and then discuss their feelings about their scores. Did they score as high or as low as they anticipated? Why or why not? In answering the questions, did the class come up with any themes as to why their scores might be different than they expected? What can the students do with the information they learned from this exercise? How can they improve their current life satisfaction?

Finally, we always tell students there are many ways to measure happiness and you may consider encouraging your students to compare their self-reported happiness to their implicit happiness. That is, they might enjoy completing the [Implicit Happiness IAT](#) as a different way to measure happiness. Also, if they register with BtP using the “Login with Facebook” option they can take the [emotions in your FB updates](#) study, where we analyze the emotional content of their Facebook status updates. We find that having students complete all three surveys at the same time provides a lot of discussion about how best to measure people's happiness.