

Happiness Is... (conversation lesson)

level: upper-intermediate (B2) +
time: 90 min

class: one-to-one
skills: reading, speaking, listening

Warm up

1. Tell your students that your today's topic is happiness and *put the cards* from worksheet 1 on the table face down. The student picks the cards one by one and 'translates' the quotations about happiness into ordinary English, using their own words.
2. Then, ask: 'Which one do you like best? Make your own definition of happiness!'

Measuring happiness

3. Write *GNH* on the board and ask your student if they've ever heard this. Can they guess what the letters stand for? If not, give them a hint: 'Have you ever heard of measuring happiness?' Elicit that GNH stands for Gross National Happiness. You can find more information here: <http://www.grossnationalhappiness.com/> and if you have time, you may want to discuss that in more depth with your student, e.g.: 'What do you think makes 91 % of Bhutanese so happy? What do you think of the idea of measuring happiness? Why would countries' governments want to do such a thing? What do the results tell us about the countries?'
4. Let the student write a list of *Top 5: the happiest countries* in the world and ask them to explain why they put them on the list. Then, compare to the first 5 of this list: <http://www.forbes.com/pictures/mef45ejmi/the-worlds-happiest-and-saddest-countries-2/>
5. For each country, ask them to explain what they think makes them so great to live in and then read the texts together and check if their ideas were the same. Are there any surprises?
6. Then, ask how well they think *the Czech Republic* did and check here: <http://prosperity.com/>
Look at it's ranking in the sub-indexes below and discuss if the figures seem adequate to their experience of life in the Czech Republic.

Happy to work here

7. Ask your student if they think measuring happiness could work in the office, as well. If they think so, ask them to prepare a list of questions they would ask in *the happiness questionnaire*.
8. Take the questionnaire, check for mistakes and then ask the questions to your student!

What makes a good life?

9. For homework, your student can watch this TED Talk http://www.ted.com/talks/robert_waldinger_what_makes_a_good_life_lessons_from_the_longest_study_on_happiness and write one statement they agree with and one they are surprised by.

Cooler

10. Set a *One-Minute Talk challenge*. Your student has to talk about 'happiness' for one minute with no preparation or breaks. Explain that the aim here is to improve their speaking fluency (ideally, they should know all the vocabulary they need by now) and mistakes are not important. Do not correct their mistakes in this activity, just provide feedback on their fluency.

'The secret of happiness is not in seeking more, but in learning to enjoy less.'

Socrates

'Happiness is like a butterfly; the more you chase it, the more it will escape you. But if you turn your attention to other things, it will come and sit softly on your shoulder.'

Henry David Thoreau

'Anyone who is happy all the time needs to see a psychiatrist.'

Anonymous

'Happiness is the meaning and the purpose of life, the whole aim and end of human existence.'

Aristotle

'If you want happiness for an hour, take a nap. If you want happiness for a day, go fishing. If you want happiness for a year, inherit a fortune. If you want happiness for a lifetime, help someone else.'

Chinese proverb

taken from Cutting Edge 3rd ed. Upper-Intermediate