

The Difference Between Success and Happiness

Do you know the difference between success and happiness? At first look it would appear that if you have success you'd automatically be happy, but it isn't necessarily true. There are many very successful people who are not happy. We just need to look towards celebrities – musicians, movie stars etc. to see that this is true. They are insanely rich yet are plagued with self-image, relationship and chemical dependency problems. There is an old saying that money can't buy happiness; it is so true.

So what is the difference between the two? By one definition "Success is getting what you want; happiness is wanting what you get." So can you have happiness without being successful? Yes, you can. In most cases, success is measured by the material wealth one has where happiness is measured by purpose and the difference a person makes in the lives of others. That is one reason why volunteering is so rewarding. While one is not paid in money, they are paid in the happiness derived from the work of helping others.

A question commonly asked is "Can you be successful if you are happy?" That answer is yes too. To make it clearer let's use this scenario. A person wants to be a neo-natal nurse, not **just** a nurse. Her life's goal is to save babies' lives. Her whole life has been driven by this goal. She becomes a nurse first and then goes on to specialize in neo-natal. Once graduated and working as a neo-natal nurse, she is at peace with herself and has achieved success *as she views it*. Everything she did in between making the decision to be a neo-natal nurse and actually becoming one was her sole focus to achieving happiness and to her, success.

We mentioned purpose, but let's examine the difference of what it means between one who seeks success and another that seeks happiness. The success seeker views purpose as having wealth, power and fame. The happiness seeker views purpose as being rich in character, having peace of mind and enjoying good health and meaningful relationships.

One problem with success is it is much like an addiction. Once the person achieves it, they must set their goal higher to get even more success. As a result, their goal is a constant moving target of always wanting more. While they may enjoy a fleeting happiness, it soon wears off and they are on to the next goal. The person that achieves happiness on the other hand, is satisfied (and enjoying) what they have – things are not measured in dollars – health, peace of mind and great relationships. There is no reason to seek out more, just maintaining what they have.

So it is possible to have happiness and success, but not necessarily success and happiness. The two are vastly different and in many cases defined in the eyes of the beholder.