WORKSHEET 1

HOW TO ACHIEVE HAPPINESS - APPROACHES FROM PHILOSOPHY AND HAPPINESS RESEARCH

EXERCISES

Read texts below and work in a group.

1. Evaluate the text on the World Happiness Report and write a table on the causes of happiness. Distinguish between internal and external causes.
2. Which statements from the World Happiness Report and from the quotations prove that one's own happiness is related to the happiness of others? Underline the corresponding statements.
3. Formulate a conclusion and present it in the plenary.

WORLD HAPPINESS REPORT 2020

(trans. by the author)

THE HAPPIEST COUNTRIES ON EARTH

We've known it for a while, now the World Happiness Report from the Sustainable Development Solutions Network has confirmed it once again: People in northern Europe are happiest in their everyday lives. First and foremost: Finland. The Scandinavian country has already topped the satisfaction list for the past two years, followed last year by Denmark in second place. Switzerland follows in third place, with Iceland and Norway moving down two places.
This year, Germany is holding its own in 17th place, where it was last year. This puts it on the list behind countries such as Israel (14), Costa Rica (15) and Ireland (16). [...]

WHY ARE NORTHERN EUROPEANS SO HAPPY?

If you look at the top five, you'll notice that, with the exception of Switzerland, they are all countries in the north. Above all, the Nordic countries have high incomes, a long life expectancy and a well-developed social network. Although taxes are also high in Finland, residents seem to bring a basic level of satisfaction. The country is safe, stable and has a functioning government, which Finns rate as satisfactory. Corruption is very low in Finland, and the country is socially progressive at the same time. People can make their life decisions very freely and are always secure. Northern Europeans not only trust the authorities, police and judiciary more than people in other countries, but also each other. The ranking is also based, among other things, on the respondents' self-perception.

By the way, Finland is not alone in this. As the Happiness Report explains, since its launch, Finland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Iceland have been in the top ten, with three of them at the top in 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020. And it's not just about Northern Europeans' sense of happiness. The state of democracy and political rights, the lack of corruption and related trust in each other and in institutions, perceived security, social interaction, gender equality and income distribution also seem to work more than well in the European North compared to the rest of the world. [...]

HOW HAPPINESS IS MEASURED

Among other things, the report combines country data with surveys of residents' self-perceptions.
This year's report places a clear focus on how social, urban and natural environments together influence our sense of happiness.
Important factors in measuring happiness include subjectively perceived happiness, perceived freedom to shape one's own life, personal perceptions of corruption, and related trust in the environment and institutions. Income, life expectancy and the social network also play a major role. Negative factors such as worry, sadness and anger are also included in the evaluation.

Source:
Die glücklichsten Länder der Erde, 24.03.2020, internet publication in German at.: https://www.travelbook.de/ziele/laender/world-happiness-report-das-sind-die-gluecklichsten-laender-der-erde
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QUOTES ON HAPPINESS

"Do you want to wander on and on?
See, the good lies so close.
Just learn to grasp happiness,
For happiness is always there."
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, german poet,
1749 – 1832

"If you want to be happy, be!"
Leo Tolstoi, russian Poet,
1828 – 1910

"I teach because people want to be happy and not suffer.".“
Siddhartha Gautama Buddha,
563 – 483 Jh. v. Chr.

"Happiness is the ultimate goal of human action."
Aristoteles, greek philosopher, 384 – 322. B.C.

"Throw off the yoke of superfluity, become rich without money, and you will be happy."
Fénélon, french archbishop and author,
1651 – 1715

"No one can find happiness on earth in the given circumstances who does not bring courage, patience, prudence, and gentleness to overcome suffering."
Julie Burow, german author,
1806 – 1868

"There is no path to happiness. Being happy is the way."
Siddhartha Gautama Buddha,
563 – 483 Jh. v. Chr.

"True happiness is doing good."
Socrates, greek philosopher, 479 – 399 B.C.

"Let each man be the blacksmith of his own fortune." ("Fabrum esse suae quemque fortunae.")
Appius Claudius Caecus, roman consul,
around 340 – 273 B.C.

"The highest pleasure consists in satisfaction with oneself."
Jean-Jacques Rousseau, french-swiss author and philosopher,
1712 – 1778

"Happiness belongs to those who are self-sufficient. For all external sources of happiness and enjoyment are, by their nature, highly uncertain, miserable, transitory, and subject to chance."
Arthur Schopenhauer, german philosopher,
1788 – 1860

"Happiness is the only thing that doubles when you share it."
Albert Schweitzer, german doctor, theologian, musician and philosopher,
1875 – 1965

"When you let go of something, you are a little happier. When you let go a lot, you are much happier. When you let go completely, you are free."
Ajahn Chah, Theravada-Buddhist monk,
1918 – 1992