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Humanities Periods 4-5

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**Hedonic Adaptation**

No matter how miserable you are feeling at the moment, if you look back, there have surely been events in your life that have made you happy. But the problem is that happiness doesn’t usually last. Yeah, you think, It’s great that this happened, but it would be great if this happened instead. “Change in experiences temporarily affect happiness, but as people become accustomed to the new situations, the impact diminishes” (Unknown). This is called hedonicadaptation, it is the idea that no matter how good something makes us feel, we drift back to where we started. It feels awesome when a positive change first occurs, but over time, you get used to it all and after a while you just don’t notice them anymore (Heidi Grant Halvorson).

Variety is important. Positive changes that are experienced in a many of ways are likely to lead to lasting happiness.  So you’ll be happier in doing new things, rather than getting stuck in a boring routine. Appreciation is the opposite of adaptation – it’s going out of your way to focus on something, rather than taking it for granted or letting it fade. Appreciating our positive experiences, we turn our mind toward them again and again in joy and wonder, we don’t just make our happiness last, we kick it up a notch. “Happiness is not so much in having or sharing. We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give” (Norman MacEwan).

Everyone at some point has experienced this. I think that we just focus our attention to what makes us comfortable thinking that it will bring us happiness, but instead it does the opposite. Most of us spend most of the time trying to figure out what will make us happy, but not enough time trying to hang on to the happiness we already have. We think too much of what will make us happy instead of enjoying the moment and enjoying the happiness that we already have, “The key to wealth, like the key to happiness, is to not only look for new opportunities, but to make the most of the ones you’ve been given.” (Heidi Grant Halvorson).

Heidi Halvorson G. “How To Keep Happiness From Fading.” *Forbes.* Heidi Grant

Halvorson, 14 Aug. 2012. Web 5 May 2014.