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Majoring in Happiness

After years of marriage, and bringing life into the world together, this young couple felt it was finally time to take the next step and buy a house. Society has, for many years, viewed purchasing a house as possibly being the most important decision. Taking time to make such a grand decision is wise. So why is it that, in today's world, society urges the youth to select, with so little life experience, a career for themselves immediately after high school? Often times, an attempt to find something one is passionate about is deemed as a waste of valuable time. Putting those desires aside and labeling them as hobbies is suggested to many, so that they may make the necessary developments towards a lucrative lifestyle. Creating a comfortable financial situation for the self is obviously a good idea, but society shouldn’t lead students to believe that happiness and wealth are synonymous. The advisor in schools today should be able to help guide the thought process of high school students into a more direct path to happiness.

The young men and women graduating from high school all over America, and worldwide, are entering a harsh reality that most are underprepared for. The first step to creating a life one’s adult self will be pleased with is selecting the right major. According to the National Center for Education, approximately eighty percent of college students in the United States change their major at least once, most change their major a total of three times (Ramos). Getting to know the self is essential to selecting the right major. If more students would take the necessary time to get to know themselves better, this rate could be cut in half within a few years.
Traveling is a great way to step out of one’s comfort zone and can help a person realize all the things he or she is capable of. These new experiences will force one to adapt to new ideas and cultures that one may have never before encountered. This new, and hopefully improved, person will have different and deeper felt passions for the life he or she truly wants to lead.

The passions found in these new experiences are a direct link into who a person is. After tapping into these feelings, applying the self will likely seem like less of an obstacle. No longer afraid of hard work, a person will be able to embrace the work due to how much the overall goal of the project means. Truly passionate work will nearly always yield better results. This is thought to be accurate in both work and personal life for most people. A system that is capable of showing students not only how this will affect their work lives, as well as their home lives, could be key in helping create happy humans across our planet. Today, most are taught to believe that life is miserable without wealth. Instead, they should be made aware that the only direct route to being unhappy is living an apathetic life.

On the pursuit of happiness, what are individuals truly searching for? "Wealth isn't going to make anyone truly happy, it can only create opportunity and comfort, not happiness" (Davies). When aspiring intellectuals are convinced that wealth is the ultimate standard of happiness and accomplishment, they suffer great injustice. Putting such importance into something as fleeting and artificial as money can only cause more negativity in one’s life. If placed into the proper career, the importance of money may, in some cases, seem of little importance. However, many people working within their passions find themselves with a great deal of wealth. Some believe that a minimalist lifestyle is a more direct path to fulfillment. They believe once the necessities for life have been met, money offers very little to the quality of life. In place of wealth, they consider being free, selfless, resourceful, and honest of more importance (Becker).
Advising programs that are capable of helping students find a proper balance between these values and wealth would set the youth on a more rewarding way. However, the advising element does not have to stand alone in its efforts towards bettering students. Creating a program that allowed moderately proven students to travel for a semester or more would do wonders. These students could travel by using their student grants and loans. Of course, there would need to be standards for eligibility. The completion of twenty credit hours or more with a minimum 3.0 grade point average, as well as no excessive issues with the law, are mandatory. This retreat of sorts could be set as a short term goal for students who lack the ambition necessary to make good grades. It could also persuade some students who aren't interested in attending college at all. Upperclassmen could be involved in the program by helping supervise these retreats and conducting a few activities amongst the group that are designed to help the underclassmen grow. If a program of this nature was to be implemented, it may fit best as a branch of the foreign exchange program. This would ensure guidance for the students during their travels.

There are many wealthy people in this world who are very content with their lives. They do not feel like something is missing, nor do they feel as though they have failed to live up to their potential. On the contrary, many find themselves in a suit and tie, making six figures a year, yet grasping at things money simply cannot afford. The opportunity to shift the youths' values in our nation is precious, and not to be taken lightly. Advising programs in high schools and colleges across America are putting little effort into helping young adults understand the importance of doing some soul searching and finding themselves. If the focus is shifted from how much money one can make, to how many lives one can improve through doing something one is passionate about, society would be taking one small step towards a better world.
Works Cited

