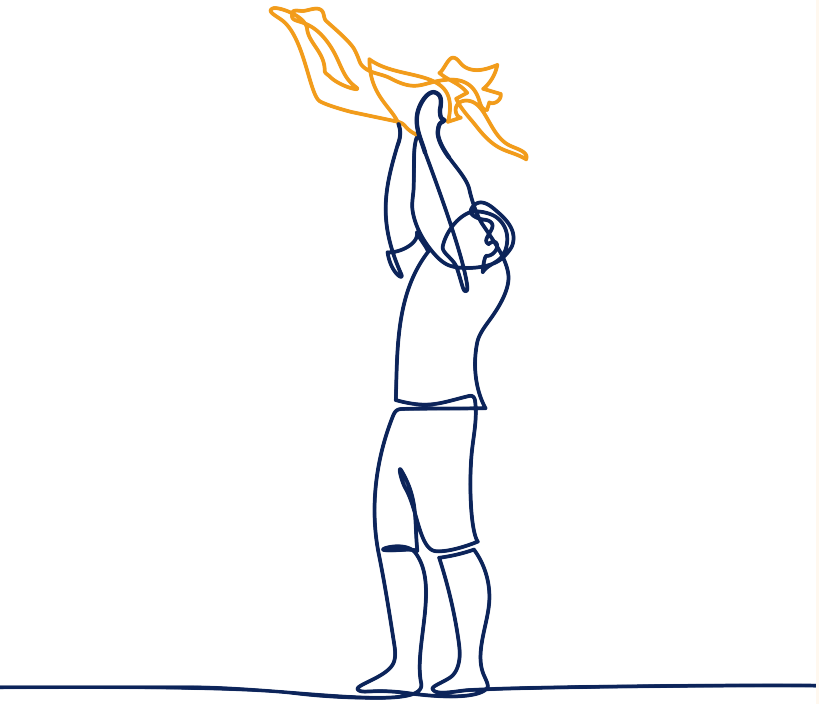

Four Levels of Happiness

Happiness is one of significant subjects we will ever think about – both individually and as a community.

The way we define happiness will determine how we live our lives, what we think is most important, how we treat other people, what we mean by "success" and "quality of life," how we view human rights ... even how we view ourselves as human beings.

A healthy culture defines happiness as Levels 3 and 4 (see the chart to the right). But it becomes unhealthy when most people focus on the lower levels at the expense of the higher ones.

WHAT LEVEL ARE YOU LIVING ON?

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Happiness Level 1

Physical Pleasure & Material Possessions

It is good to fulfill the real needs of our physical bodies. However, if Level 1 becomes our "end" (our main goal), we can become addicted to things and lose focus on what is really important in life. Level 1 should always be subordinate to the higher levels.

Happiness Level 2

Ego-Gratification

It is important that we have a sense of our own dignity and talents. However, if Level 2 becomes our "end" (we seek to advance ourselves at the expense of others), we can become aggressive and arrogant; lose focus on what is really important in life; and harm others. Level 2 should always be subordinate to the higher levels.

Happiness Level 3

Contribution and Self-Gift

Human beings need to contribute to family, friends, and community. However, if Level 3 becomes our "end" (our entire purpose), we can become cynical and frustrated by our own limitations and our imperfect world. Level 3 should always be subordinate to the highest level.

Happiness Level 4

Faith in God's Unconditional Love

Level 4 is the peace that comes with surrendering all of who we are to God, and allowing Him to perfect us in the ways of love, truth, goodness, and justice. When this level becomes the focus of our lives, all the other levels become balanced and healthy.