

# Foundations

## We Are Responsible for Our Own Happiness

Best for ages 9 and up. **The goal of this is to help children understand that happiness is a mindset.**

*The goal of this discussion is to help children understand that our happiness is not dependent on things or people but is a choice that every person can make. In summation, happiness is a mindset, not a set of circumstances.*

There was a study done in 1978 on a group of paraplegics and lottery winners to assess if happiness is relative to circumstance. The result of the study showed that there was negligible difference between the levels of happiness within the groups, proving that happiness is not dependent on circumstance.

Ask your child to identify something that makes him/her upset. Challenge them to identify any positive aspect of this struggle. Assist your child with recognizing that while we rarely can change our circumstances, we can always control our attitude and perspective.

For example:

**Child:** I hate school. Every part of it, particularly the homework.

**Parent:** I did not like school either. It's something that everyone goes through even though most people don't like it! Can you identify anything at all that is positive about school?

**Child:** 1. Not really. I mean I guess it's good for me if I ever want to go to college.

2. I guess school helps prepare me for when I have job and have to do things I really don't like.

3. It's nice for me that I can spend the day with my friends.

*Note: Depending on the child, there may be some resistance or refusal to engage. Parents may need to help some children along in the process.*

Based on the answer that your child provides, help them recognize that with every struggle comes opportunity. Ask your child if they can think of people who seem to be complaining and then ask if they can think of people who always seem positive.

Explore this further, by challenging the reality that it is unlikely that the positive people have a multitude of great things happening while the unhappy people have the opposite.

It's important for children to recognize that while we cannot control what happens to us, we can ALWAYS control how we react to it. By allowing our circumstances to define us and our happiness levels, we are giving up the small amount of control that we always have; thereby allowing ourselves to become victims of circumstance.



**Building Our Future Today.**