

## Happiness is...

I just want everybody to be happy. And since ignorance is bliss, I want everyone to be ignorant. Now hear me out. At first, you might think this is foolish or that I'm joking but take a minute and think about the benefits. What if everyone was happy? It would be a world in which so many more people would get along. We want people to get along. We don't want people to be out there angry and seeking revenge. We don't want folks arming themselves and writing manifestos. We want folks to be content. We want them to be happy. And we've been doing this all wrong. We've tried education and look where it's gotten us. A world of conflict. A world of haves and have-nots. A place where there is great disparity in lifestyles creating jealousy and envy. Those emotions lead to anger and retribution. We don't want that, so why do we keep doing what we've been doing? Why do we keep thinking that education will even things out and we'll all be better for it?

We say that a rising tide lifts all boats. But we are not boats and when you try to elevate everyone's IQ, you find that you stratify rather than create a world full of geniuses. Now all you've gone and done is created the Mensa elites and the Mensa wannabes and the never-will-bes. Look around and that's what you will find. How did this happen? Education. Now think about it. Was the goal to create people who could look down on other people or was it supposed to make everyone Mensa members? How did that work out? It didn't. It created more disparity. It didn't foster happiness. And what do we say about insanity? It's doing the same thing over again and expecting different outcomes.

If we keep educating everyone, we are not heading for happiness. We are heading in the opposite direction. This is what the evidence shows, and we know that evidence-based results are the most reliable. So, why do we keep doing what is clearly not bringing us happiness? I submit that there must be those who benefit from the status quo. Those who like things to be the way they are. Their happiness comes from others' misery. Taking joy from the misery of others is called *schadenfreude*. This is not considered a virtue. Some might go so far as to label it a form of mental illness. And what got us here? Education.

Common sayings have been dismissed as "old wives' tales." That's pejorative. Those sayings represent folk wisdom. They grow out of the shared experience of generations. And ignorance is bliss is one of those bits of folk wisdom. If happiness is our goal in life, then it would be among our highest virtues. Our pursuit should be virtue and the pathway to happiness is ignorance. All hail ignorance and the ignorant for they shall find happiness. The rest of us not so much.

So, we should not discuss anything that might trouble us in the least. That might cause us to engage in self-reflection, we might seek further information, and next thing you know we'd be back to education. This must stop. Surely, there must be those who can lead us to the pathway of blissful ignorance. They are our future.

(In case anyone missed it, this is sophistry. I am trying to stand the world on its head and get you to temporarily buy into and follow along with the flow of the narrative. Ignorance is not bliss, it is dangerous. What you don't know can hurt you.)

Submitted by Bob Rietschel, April 2, 2023  
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