Tyler Burd

Professor Lago

English 1100

15 September 2013

“Happiness vs. Sadness”

 Happiness and sadness are polar opposites of one another. Both are emotions that are highly unique. Happiness is felt during a moment of triumph or joy. On the other hand, sadness is felt during a moment of failure or pain. These emotions are experienced every day because we will have successful moments and failures, whether they are big or small, every day. Failure and success will respectively bring out sadness and happiness. Happiness cannot be truly understood without sadness, and success cannot be understood without failure.

 Failure and failing to overcome obstacles In Mark Kingwell’s essay, “In Pursuit of Happiness”, Kingwell lists several definitions of happiness in his essay. For instance, The New English Dictionary defines happiness as, “state of pleasurable content of mind, which results from success…” Success obviously brings happiness because of the fact of the pride in accomplishing something. Failure on the other hand will bring on disappointment and sadness. Without ever truly experiencing failure how can one truly experience the outright joy from success? If Thomas Edison had gotten the light bulb right the first time would he have felt the same after he finally got it right after the hundredth time. Obviously he still would have experienced happiness if he had gotten it right the first time, but after all those attempts and finally getting it right his happiness must have been exponentially better.

 Sadness is also something that helps people to realize what they have. Being happy all the time limits a person’s ability to see what they have and appreciate the true value of it. Sadness brings out the outlook on life that shows you what you have. While happiness may shadow the true value of these things because of the positive outlook on life happiness brings. Success will only mask previous failures. For instance Lebron James’ failure to win championships in Cleveland have been over shadowed by his current success in Miami.

 Happiness and sadness coexist with one another because without one the other cannot be felt. Happiness and sadness are on the opposite ends of the emotions spectrum and need to be both felt in order to fully appreciate the other because they show the positives of one another. Being happy all the time eliminates the feeling of sadness which is important to experience because it allows the human mind to be able to relate with other people. People who do experience sadness occasionally, are able to relate to other peoples sadness and be able to give them sympathy. Extremely happy people may have a hard time sympathizing with sad people because they may not be able to emotionally be able to understand what the other person is feeling.

 Being able to be successful comes from a lot of trial and error that will most likely come from lots of previous failures. These failures will bring sadness. It will not necessarily bring depression like sadness, but it will still bring sadness in a way that exemplifies that you did not succeed. Without these moments of failure how can we learn? Much in life can be learned by simple trial and error methods. As a baby we learned to walk by attempting it over and over. During these attempts we would fall over and over again. Sometimes we would cry when we fell, but eventually we would get up and try again. Then finally we would walk, and finally be able to move around independently.

 Neither happiness nor sadness can truly be explained because of the fact that happiness and sadness are unique to each person. Not everyone can truly relate their happiness to someone else’s' happiness because what makes two people happy may be different. Same with success. Some people for instance may see success for example by completing a round of golf by scoring an even for the course. While another person may see success by scoring under even on the same course. The person who scored under even on the course may actually see scoring equal as a failure. He or she may feel that their skill level should allow them to score under and not even, and if they do score an even they may see it as a failure. Failure and success are constant changing variables because each person has their own expectations based on their own prior experiences. Happiness and sadness act the same way. Certain results from a test or a game may make one person happy and the other sad. Without these emotional results it would be hard to understand how people view their successes or failures.

 Failure and sadness allow us to connect with people on a social level. Failing at a big moment in life like, missing the wide open shot with the game on the line in basketball, allows us to sympathize with people who go through the same failures. Sympathy occurs when you feel someone else’s misfortune. Sadness and failure are two examples of personal misfortune. The basketball example for instance, illustrates the fact that after the missed shot, failure, the resulting emotion would be sadness. Now if the person would witness something similar they would be able to sympathize with the other person who failed. They would be able to understand why they feel sad after their failure. Without sadness certain social interactions such as sympathizing would be lost.

 Sadness and happiness are necessary emotions in life, but without sadness we would lose vital social interaction skills. Failure is similar in the way that it allows us to understand what people are going through.