

Essay on How Do You Measure Success? Do You Consider It in Terms of Material Gains, Position, Security or Happiness?

I shall consider "success" here as success in the business of living; in other words, how to live a successful life.

For most people, money and material gains seem to be the most, if not the only important thing in life. They go all out to make as much money as they .can. Thousands play the 4-digit lottery, horse-racing and other forms of gambling, both legal or illegal. Yet others work themselves to death, slogging day in and day out for the financial gains promised. Some of them do become very rich indeed. They go around in huge gleaming cars and live in condominiums and flats. They are members of select clubs, wear designer clothes and generally look every inch the kind of successful people so often idealized on television.

Rich, they may be and successful they may seem, no one knows exactly what goes on inside them. They are cases of very rich people who committed suicide. Some shoot themselves, some poison themselves and some starve themselves to death. The obvious thing is that these people are not happy, even with enormous riches. The tragedy of Howard Hughes is an extreme example of a billionaire who died of malnutrition. Shocking it is, but no less true.

I know of a relative who, despite being very rich, has become senile. Money is no longer of any use to him. He does not even know how to look after his basic needs thus causing immense problems to his family.

A rich person is not necessarily a happy one.

In politics, there are many who struggle for power and position. The jostling and back-stabbing that occur in the race for such honors can be read daily in the newspaper. Political parties are plagued by unrest, in-fighting, and dissent. One faction tries to oust another. Some members resign and some cross over to other parties. Without exception, everyone tries to attain a position of some sort, where he can wield the power of some kind and show the importance to some degree.

Sports too are not spared this affliction. We read often about sports officials quarreling with one another. We read too about how some people or teams would go about doing almost anything to win. Cases of match-fixing and bribery abound. Nasty words are exchanged. Spectators go on the rampage. Players quit or are sacked. Why do people behave so irresponsibly? The reasons that I can see are: for power, position, and riches. Fortune follows fame, riches follow power. "To win is the only thing" becomes the motto of the sportsman and officials alike.

The struggle goes on. Sports stars rise and fall. World champions emerge and then disappear with equal speed. Countries boycott the Olympics and other international games. Sport and games have become just like politics. Few, maybe none, are happy.

A world champion is not necessarily a happy one.

In the final analysis, success boils down to only one factor: happiness. If one is unhappy with oneself then no amount of external things can alter the fact. I, for one, consider happiness to be of prime importance. The reason is so simple and obvious. Is it not better to be able to walk safely around in public with only a few sen in your pocket than to be loaded with thousands and be afraid of being robbed? Is it not better to be able to travel freely about

inconspicuously and enjoy all the wonders around you than to sit hidden in an armor-plated car driven around at breakneck speed fearful of possible assassins? Is it also not better to be able to kick the football about for the fun of it than to get all sorts of abuse when you fail to score the match-winning goal?

Finally, is it not better to be able to live each day happier than to be filled with anxieties about how to be rich, or to be famous and in the end find that happiness has eluded you?