

October 7, 2010, 4:36 am

# Can Money Buy You Happiness?

By [KATHERINE SCHULTEN](#)

## Student Opinion

Questions about issues in the news for students 13 and older.

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A [Bucks blog post](#) ponders a recent study from Princeton University that found that people reported an increase in happiness as their incomes rose to \$75,000 a year. “Then, the impact of rising income on happiness levels off,” the post says. What do you think of this finding? How much money do you think you would need a year to be happy? Do you think more money would make you more happy? If so, then how, as the blog post asks, do you explain the fact that “there are plenty of people who seem to have very little money and lots of happiness”?

In [“The Odd Relationship Between Money and Happiness.”](#) Carl Richards writes:

Can it really be that simple? Is there a relationship between money and happiness?

I understand that not having money to cover basic needs causes stress. Real stress. But we have seen plenty of crazy (but real) examples of how varied the definition of basic needs can be. Maybe it is more about expectations, desire and constant “wanting” than it is about actual income. We all know people who make more than we do and are still not happy with their income level.

If you believe that happiness can be reduced to a functional equation up to \$75,000, then how do you explain all those stories of people around the world with very little money and a whole lot of happiness?

I have a friend — recently returned from an extended trip to Nepal — who was struck by how little people had and how happy they seemed. Of course she was only there a few weeks and that might not be long enough to draw any conclusions, but you get the point.

The moment we accept the idea that there is a magic income that maximizes happiness, we have to deal with the reality that there are plenty of people who seem to have very little money and lots of happiness.

**Students:** Tell us how much you think money influences how happy you are — or how much you imagine it will determine your happiness as an adult. Is there a certain amount of money you think you’d need to earn a year to be happy? Are there things you think you would need to own to be happy? How content are you with your life right now? To what extent do you think that comes — or doesn’t come — from having the material things you need and want? Do you know people who seem to be happy yet have very little money?

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**Students 13 and older** are invited to comment below. Please use only your **first name**. For [privacy policy](#) reasons, we will not publish student comments that include a last name.

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From 1 to 25 of 45 Comments

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1. October 7, 2010 8:07 am [Link](#)

I am not rich. We have enough money to be secure about things. But money does not make me happy. I will admit that the feeling of being able to provide money for other people that are dependant on you, or being able to spend in almost any area of interest will make to pretty happy, it is not my source of happiness. I do love money and it's a great thing to have, but unfortunately after you reach that 75,000 dollars a year mark, you become the exact opposite of happy, and you start to become greedy and stuff.

— *matt*

2. October 7, 2010 8:08 am [Link](#)

I think that money does not influence your happiness, what makes you happy is everything else like your family, your pets, friends, and of course, your significant other. Happiness is not about money, but about your life and how you live it; if you are happy with making a lot of money then that might make you happy because you love your job. There is a certain amount of money that everyone should make so that they get their basic necessities so that they can be on the road to happiness. I am one hundred percent content with my life right now. I think that everyone should be content with the life that they are living because it's your life and you should love it no matter what happens.

— *Hannah*

3. 3. October 7, 2010 8:09 am [Link](#)

I know for a fact that money doesn't bring you happiness. If you have a large amount of money, then your worries increase. The fear of being robbed, or killed for your money goes up. If you have a lot of money, than you usually have to work very long hours, or even be in a really stressful job. Most jobs that are not as stressful, but yet make a pretty good sum of money are state trooper, military, and nurses.

Once I leave for basic for the United States Marine Corps I know that I will love to do what I am doing.

Money can't buy you happiness. It can't buy our personal relationships, or anything of the other. It usually just adds stress. The amount of money I'd like to have would be just enough to buy a house, car, and enough to live on. No need for big fancy Cadillac Escalades, or Lamborgini Avalo's. I'd rather be happy with the people I have in my life, than have all the money a person could ever want.

— *Cory H*

4. 4. October 7, 2010 8:11 am [Link](#)

Happiness can be bought by money, but only between a certain amount can. If you have to little to pay for the things you want that doesn't help you out at all, if you have to much money and the only thing your doing is worrying about it that isn't worth it either. Probably between 55,000 and 100,000 Salary is the happy medium. But it doesn't always depend on the money sometimes the person can make it different. The person can be happy as can be on 20 bucks a week, and still make it. The money has to support your life style to make you happy also, not just your night outs, dinner, and a movie. I get paid minimum wage, but as long as I have enough to put gas in my car and go out to eat or something im fine. I don't need the finest bentley in my driveway.

— *Tyler*

5. 5. October 7, 2010 8:12 am [Link](#)

I actually watched an episode of Courage the Cowardly Dog yesterday, that touched on this topic quite thoroughly. There was a man who was miserable, so he made Doom Booms (bombs that made you unhappy & depressing) and with his Doom Booms, he was bombing every town. He did not bomb the president's house, because he wanted three billion and a third dollars. When he got this money, he still was not happy and continued to bomb things. But Muriel, Courage's owner, made Happy Plums. Happy Plums are plums that Muriel makes from a special secret recipe that make you happy. Once the madman ate some of the Happy Plums, he was happy. Therefore proving that money cannot buy you happiness, but Happy Plums can.

— *aspen*

6. 6. October 7, 2010 8:14 am [Link](#)

Money doesn't give me any happiness, the only reason I need it is so I can buy the basic needs to survive. The thing I need to be happy is my guitar, and I know plenty of people who have nothing or very little, and they're happy with it and accept it. People take a lot for granted everyday and don't even think about it, that's why a lot around us is in chaos 95% of the time. If people recognized their mistakes and they learned to appreciate everything the world would be a better place, but you can't change some people. I believe love is the only thing that can bring you true happiness.

— *anthony*

7. 7. October 7, 2010 8:14 am [Link](#)

I highly believe that money can buy happiness. Well, at least it can for me. I think because I hate struggling with money problems, and having to hear my parents complain about how we need to stop spending so much money, and that they don't have money to pay for this and that. So, from my point of view, money does make me happy a lot. My mother has told me before that I'm a "material girl" because money makes me happier than people, except for my family. It makes me happy the day that I get to wear my new clothes and other stuff, I actually wake up early and in a good mood because I'm so excited to wear them to school. I try to sell some of my stuff, so that I can have more money to buy more stuff. At least until I get my car because then I'll be having to pay for gas, and I will have a job.

— *jackie*

8. 8. October 7, 2010 8:15 am [Link](#)

I believe right now in my life money would make me a bit happier. Only because I wouldn't have the stress of looking for a job or being able to go to college. I am a very happy person, I have a good life with my future husband in less than 2 months! but more money would take all the stress of paying for everything on our own away and let us relax and enjoy our lives more. I agree that there is a link between money and happiness, or maybe an even closer link between money and stress.

— *candice*

9. 9. October 7, 2010 8:16 am [Link](#)

Money does make me happy because it buys things that make me happy. I am pretty sure it will be the same for me as an adult. I would need a salary that can take care of my basic needs such as gas for my car and everything like that. A new car would make me happy and that's really all I need. I am very happy with my life right now. I have everything I need (except a car) and I'm loving it. My family in general doesn't have a lot of money but we are happy with our way of life.

— *jason*

10. 10. October 7, 2010 8:16 am [Link](#)

Yes I think money would make me very very happy. The reason I say that is because if I had a lot of money then I could get everything I wanted without being broke at times and I could help out a lot of people that need it a lot. I think that I would need at least 100,000 dollars a year just so I could be happy.

— *kyon*

11. 11. October 7, 2010 8:17 am [Link](#)

I think it can in certain ways, but not deep down. It only satisfies you for a while then the

feeling goes away. Money can buy you a lot of nice things in life, but it can't buy the best things. The best things would be things like, your family, your kids, the feelings you get just by being around the people you love. The best things in life come free. I believe money can buy you happiness but only a limited one. You could have all the money in the world and still be sad, you need more than just the material things in life.

— *bbt*

12. 12. October 7, 2010 8:20 am [Link](#)

Money can't buy you happiness, but sometimes money helps. Maybe you have a passion for something like cars. You need money to buy a car. Money can't buy you happiness in your social life you have to do that. I guess it really depends on the person if money can buy happiness or not.

— *miranda*

13. 13. October 7, 2010 10:03 am [Link](#)

Money can buy me happiness because if I have the money then I can buy all the things that make me happy. Well I mean this is a hard decision because if I had to choose between money or my family I think I would choose my family but at the same time I want to buy things that make me happy so I'm not really sure about it.

— *geron*

14. 14. October 7, 2010 10:05 am [Link](#)

Well they say money cant buy you love and what not but if you go to the hood or something you can find love for about 20\$ Money makes me happy and when I spend it on stuff I like it makes me happy. I get money every weekend, around 100-200\$ sometimes even 300\$ When I get paid this much I be happier then ever. But I don't get why people say that money can't buy you love or happiness. I think money can buy you anything. If you want somebody "gone" you can just pay someone and they'll take care of it for you. In today's world everything is about money. But in my opinion money can buy you happiness.

— *erikk*

15. 15. October 7, 2010 10:06 am [Link](#)

Well from my point view, I think money can bring you happiness. I believe this because like sometimes you hear your parents complain that we spent too much. and were having problems with having the bills paid on time and stuff like that's think money makes me happy when like get new stuff and knowing our bill were paid and our family still has whatever we did to live.

— *aaliyah*

16. 16. October 7, 2010 10:10 am [Link](#)

Money can buy you anything you want if you know what to do with it. You don't need to waste your money if you get it you are suppose to save your money for the right thing like to pay of a house, pay of a car, bay your bills for the next year, or you can help with you kids college fund. If money can buy me any thing in the world i would take it but if it cost me selfishness and greed i would not take it because i would like to have money but i would not like to be greedy with it.

— *Kaelyn P*

17. 17. October 7, 2010 10:12 am [Link](#)

Money can't buy happiness. Sure it helps. I like to be able to buy what ever I want when I want and not worry "am I gonna have enough for later to get by?" but at the end of the day you're just left with all this stuff that does nothing but sit there or you wear it. Objects don't have feelings, people do and that what matters to me at the end of the day. Knowing I have family and friends that love and care for me no matter what. I buy clothes, CDs, books, shoes, etc. but it can't cheer me up if I have a bad day or tell me everything is going to be alright like my parents or friends. And it doesn't add to the happiness either. Most people I know that have money aren't happy, they're missing something. And think if they keep buying things the hole will go away, but it won't. But also some are fine with the way things are. So I guess it depends on the person.

**Good morning Angelica – Please, please, please don't type your last name when you post your comments. We're starting to delete student comments posted with last names, and I don't want you to miss out. Thanks! – Holly**

– *Angelica*

18. 18. October 7, 2010 10:27 am [Link](#)

in some cases it can give you happiness but in other ways it cant.

– *Ocean*

19. 19. October 7, 2010 10:27 am [Link](#)

People in these days mistake money for happiness, its not happiness, I mean it may make you happy but its more of.. you earned it with (working, favors, etc).. money can buy you food, cars, houses, and things that you desire, but I dont think money is in the category of happiness.. happiness is on your own term and feelings.. its like for example: I was happy when I got my first car... but when I got ten bucks for nothing I was appreciative but not happy, more like thankful..

– *Macy Anne*

20. 20. October 7, 2010 10:37 am [Link](#)

do you really think that money will buy u happieness then u should find a differnt life because happieness will only come to you if u deserve it so do some thing good and make something of your self.....

– *matthew*

21. 21. October 7, 2010 10:37 am [Link](#)

when i have money it makes me really happy. it makes me happy because i love to have money to spend and to be able to say that i have money. i would also like it if i could get all the money i need for college. i wouldnt be as stressed about it. sometimes i wish that i could have all the money in the world so i wouldnt have to worry about anything. i would be taken care of and i would be happy.

– *ashley*

22. 22. October 7, 2010 10:53 am [Link](#)

Money definitely does not buy happiness. Sometimes it does help to relieve stress about getting food and paying bills and such but money on its own will not get you happiness. Happiness is something people need to find on their own. It is not something that anyone can give you or buy for you. Many times the only thing someone needs to be happy is another person. Money is necessary to live though, and if you are not living you cannot be

happy. I think that for each person there is a different amount of money they need to be happy, but too much or too little will both make a person miserable.

— *Thomas*

23. 23. October 7, 2010 11:46 am [Link](#)

Sometimes but not all the time because I could really want something and be glad that I have it then be mad that I bought it because i spent it on something that I wanted on that certain day that I spend it on and I should of save up and I would have more money than I did before.

— *markese*

24. 24. October 7, 2010 11:48 am [Link](#)

I do not think that money can buy you happiness. In order to get lots of money you have to be strict and have high prices for everything. You would become the most hated person in your town. You may have the money but you will never get the one thing you want most, love. All the money in the world can not make you a man that will be kind. If you want to be happy then give your money away to help other people. Many people do not have things that you have so you should give it to them. If I ever get money then I save it and use it when necessary. I do not have much but if I have a little extra then I will us it.

— *Brittany*

25. 25. October 7, 2010 11:49 am [Link](#)

I believe that money CAN buy you happiness because if you have what you want then you must be happy. Lets say someone wants a new computer but they dont have the money to buy it. They are going to not be happy about it. Now lets say that they actually have the money to buy the new computer that they want. They are going to be thrilled that they can have their new computer and not have to worry about the price.

— *Bradley*

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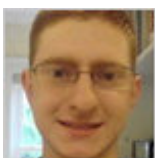


Tenure, charter schools, standards: ed reform is in the news. Teach a lesson or tell us what you think!

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## Comments of the Moment

[“ Being bullied is part of what turns you from a kid to an adult.”](#)

— [endphen](#)

['A Troubling Trend': Discussing Bullying and Antigay Attitudes](#)

[“ Money can buy you happiness. For the first time ever I am going to contradict The Beatles. Money is power and power is money. Yes you can not buy love, well real love anyways, but love really is not happiness. If you have twenty dollars in your banking account chances are you are not very happy with your life, if someone gave you two-thousand dollars you would not be like “Oh I have everything that I need already...”. No this is America, we are greedy, fat, and obnoxious, we are going to take the money and leave you with a meaningless thank you.”](#)

— [Haley R](#)

[Can Money Buy You Happiness?](#)

[“ I would rather be poor and happy with myself, my life, and the people around me than rich and unhappy because I had no one there to support me.”](#)

— [Alex](#)

[Can Money Buy You Happiness?](#)

[“ You could have all the money in the world and still be sad. You need more than just the material things in life.”](#)

— [bbt](#)

[Can Money Buy You Happiness?](#)

“ The thing I need to be happy is my guitar.”

– anthony

Can Money Buy You Happiness?

“ I actually watched an episode of Courage the Cowardly Dog yesterday, that touched on this topic quite thoroughly. There was a man who was miserable, so he made Doom Booms (bombs that made you unhappy & depressing) and with his Doom Booms, he was bombing every town. He did not bomb the president's house, because he wanted three billion and a third dollars. When he got this money, he still was not happy and continued to bomb things. But Muriel, Courage's owner, made Happy Plums. Happy Plums are plums that Muriel makes from a special secret recipe that make you happy. Once the madman ate some of the Happy Plums, he was happy. Therefore proving that money cannot buy you happiness, but Happy Plums can.”

– aspen

Can Money Buy You Happiness?

“ I get paid minimum wage, but as long as I have enough to put gas in my car and go out to eat or something i'm fine. I don't need the finest Bentley in my driveway.”

– Tyler

Can Money Buy You Happiness?

“ Yes I think money would make me very very happy . The reason I say that is because if I had a lot of money then I could get every thing I wanted without being broke at time and I could help out a lot of people that needs it a lot. I think that i would need at least 100,000 dollars a year just so i could be happy.”

– kyon

Can Money Buy You Happiness?

“ Money can't buy you happiness. It can't buy our personal relationships, or anything of the other. It usually just adds stress. The amount of money Id like to have would be just enough to buy a house, car, and enough to live on. No need for big fancy Cadillac Escalades, or Lamborgini Avalo's. Id rather be happy with the people I have in my life, than have all the money a person could ever want.”

– Cory H

Can Money Buy You Happiness?

“ I do love money and it's a great thing to have, but unfortunately after you reach that 75,000 dollars a year mark, you become the exact opposite of happy, and you start to become greedy and stuff.”

– matt

Can Money Buy You Happiness?

“ I'm one of the students of Manhattan Free School. And I can say, without a doubt, that choosing to leave my "prestigious" liberal arts high school to take the reins of my own education at the free school is the best decision I have ever made for myself. I did very well in traditional public high school; academically. This did not mean that I knew myself as a person. My interests and passions were constantly being pushed

aside by teachers and family members, in pursuit of bigger and better grades. The things I loved and wanted to do more of--drawing graphic novels, learning to play the piano, hiding out and reading classics in the library--that was all shoved aside to make room for standardized testing and progress reports. ”

– Leelah

How Would You Do in a 'Free School'?

“ I feel obligated to comment, as I am a student at the Manhattan Free School. The more I read these posts one thing is clear... you guys definitely DON'T go to a Free School. The article in the Times, though amusing was at times grossly inaccurate. You all have blindly formed opinions based on one article in one publication. I don't think any post here has been based on any information obtained from any other source other than the Times piece. Clearly no one took the time to do any further research on Free Schools at all. Had you done so you would have found concrete evidence of an alternative educational system that has been successful for almost 90 years in more than 30 different countries. ”

– Paige

How Would You Do in a 'Free School'?

“ My sister goes to this particular school and it has changed her life. It's not cool that a lot of the students responding think that these students are not prepared for college, because in many ways I think they are more prepared for real life problem solving and life in a higher academic setting than many are coming out of a public high school. The students at the free school are all intelligent, practical, and innovative self starters...Since being at the free school, I've seen her develop into more of herself, and really let her strengths and desires lead her. ”

– Olivia H.

How Would You Do in a 'Free School'?

“ I would love to attend this school. You would have the freedom to learn whatever you feel is most relevant to your life. ”

– Will R

How Would You Do in a 'Free School'?

“ I am one of these "uneducated" and "failing" students that have been mentioned. I attend a free school, and I think there are a few huge mistakes that you all have made. We do learn. We have many classes every day, every one of which is attended by at least a couple of students. It's true, I may spend one day sitting around, chatting with my friends, but the next day I will be learning about Developmental Psychology, or the laws of Thermodynamics. We learn whatever we want to, not just what our full-time staff has to offer. We bring in teachers from other universities, and from the surrounding community; and so far, not once has any student not been able to find someone to teach what they want...In addition, so far, 100% of the graduates of our particular free school have gone on to attend college. ”

– Robin

How Would You Do in a 'Free School'?

“ I go to this school. I take classes there. I take on Independent Study there. I, along with the student body and teachers, make all decisions for the school. Quite frankly,

[the presumption that students at MFS don't learn or that they are somehow less intelligent is insulting. I love going to our school. I can learn about things I care about and the environment at a Free School is infinitely more respectful. Bullying DOESN'T happen in our school. Ever. Generally, when students enter MFS they go through a period of just hanging out, while they learn about themselves, and then they eventually start studying. \(This period is nick-named, 'detoxing.'\)](#) [In a world of dull passionless students, the students who study at our school actually want to be there. When you request/sign up for a class, you actually make a commitment. It's so much more fulfilling to be in a course at the Manhattan Free School, because everyone there wants to be there and time isn't wasted with disciplinary issues and uninterested teachers. ”](#)

— [MFS Student](#)

[How Would You Do in a 'Free School'?](#)

[“ I'd rather go to a normal school, where I have teachers pushing me to doing well and teaching me the standards, and a place where I can be tested on my knowledge & what I've been learning. I do not agree on the best way to learn is direct from our own education. I think that we being at a young age would not be able to focus and really do what we have to. ”](#)

— [Angie M.](#)

[How Would You Do in a 'Free School'?](#)

[“ The balance of freedom and structure that I think would best benefit the purpose of learning is being able to make up your own schedule and set up your time slots, but making sure that someone is supervising that you are actually following your schedule and doing your work. ”](#)

— [Melissa](#)

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We have removed a comma from a sentence in a Times article. Where should that comma go?

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