



Local 698

East Detroit Federation of Teachers
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A Union of Professionals

October 2010 Newsletter

Seven Science-Based Strategies for Happiness

In our continuing effort to focus on our Pursuit of Happiness remember that Happiness is understandable, obtainable and teachable. There are strategies for happiness as found at Pursuit-of-Happiness.org. This is a new web address. To refresh your memory, here is the list: 1. Communicating 2. Caring 3. Exercise 4. Getting in the Flow 5. Spiritual Engagement 6. Cultivating Strengths and Virtues 7. Positive Thinking: Optimism, Savoring, and Gratitude.

Extra **American Values**
Campaign Extra

Two Concepts for Happiness

educators and it is a difficult chore to remain happy and enriched with all the pressure we face. Last school year the EDFT began to offer a campaign to promote happiness amongst our staff both personally and professionally. It was, and still is, my goal to have our staff incorporate some professional development to help us not only use happiness skills in our lives, but help our students find it as well by imbedding it into our curriculum. This year I will continue to share with you the wisdom I have found at this web site and other sources to help us be a source of happiness within our homes

Pursuit of Happiness is sponsoring a free webinar on the science and philosophy of happiness on Saturday, November 6, 2010 from 9:30 am to 11:15. It will focus on new discoveries in the science of happiness, their concrete implications for student well-being and performance and strategies to integrate these new insights into existing curricula. It is scheduled to run from. You can register at <https://www3.gotomeeting.com/register/721320982>

and in this community. Here is the first installment of the year!

In the history of philosophy, we can easily distinguish two kinds of happiness. One is *hedonism* derived from the Greek root *hedone*, meaning “pleasure,” and *eudaimonia*, best translated as “human flourishing.” The idea of hedonism was first introduced by the Greek philosopher Aristippus who argued that the only intrinsic good is pleasure, by which he meant positive enjoyable experiences, not merely the absence of pain. This concept inspired Epicurus, who argued that while pleasure is the ultimate good, it could be best obtained not by indulging in excessive desire but rather by living a virtuous life. The notion of *eudaimonia* as happiness was originally put forward by Socrates in Plato’s dialogues, who says in the *Meno* that “everything that the soul endeavors or endures under the guidance of wisdom ends in happiness.” (88c) This concept was more fully developed by Aristotle, Plato’s pupil, who defines *eudaimonia* as “a life of virtuous activity in accordance with reason.” (1097b22) For Aristotle, the ultimate good for a human is different from the good for an animal because we have different capacities or potentialities. We have a *rational* capacity, and if we exercise this capacity we will perfect our natures as human beings. Pleasure alone cannot constitute human happiness, for pleasure is what animals seek while

human beings have higher capacities than animals. The goal is not to annihilate our physical urges, however, but to channel them in ways that are appropriate to our natures as rational animals. This distinction between the physical and moral natures is eerily similar to that between the “lower self” and “higher self” as described by the Chinese philosopher Mencius.

When we compare Epicurus and Aristotle, we see some interesting similarities and differences. While both philosophers agree that virtue is necessary for producing happiness, Epicurus holds that virtue is merely a means of producing happiness, whereas Aristotle maintains that virtue is an essential part of happiness. For example, both philosophers would argue that having good friendships is essential for producing happiness in your life. Epicurus would say that it is because of the positive feelings that such friendship brings. Aristotle, however, would say that friendship is intrinsically good, since it brings out the best characteristics within you, for example, the honesty and generosity that results from being a good friend.

This is an example of the work done at this site. It is an intellectually stimulating conversation. Let me know what you think.