


Study Suggests That Spirituality Is Key To Kids' Happiness

Arjun Walia | [NaturalBlaze](#) | Jan 14th 2014

A professor of psychology at the University of British Columbia, Okanagan, and his colleagues Ben Coleman and Judi Wallace have conducted a study which suggests that spirituality is key to children's happiness. 

(1) Over the past few years, scientists have been able to measure the effect of positive emotions and feelings of joy within our biology, so it is key to find out what best produces these feelings within us. Just to be clear, they define spirituality as internal characteristics; an inner belief system that a person relies on for strength and comfort. Understanding happiness has been subjected to large amounts of research for a number of years. This particular one suggests that the processes that influence happiness are not guided by external factors, but by internal characteristics and qualities.

320 children aged 8-12 were assessed to examine the relationship between spirituality and happiness, from both public and private schools. You can read the full abstract and study for methods used [here](#). The study concluded that children's spirituality, not their religious practices (e.g., attending church, praying, and meditating), was strongly linked to their happiness. The results parallel studies of adult happiness and suggest strategies to enhance happiness in children.

The authors found that the children who said they were more spiritual were happier. In particular, the personal (i.e. meaning and value in one's own life) and communal (i.e.

quality and depth of inter-personal relationships) aspects of spirituality were strong predictors of children's happiness. Spirituality explained up to 27 percent of the differences in happiness levels among children.

Researchers have identified many ways in which spirituality enhances and promotes subjective well-being. One of these ways of enhancing well-being is to increase personal meaning in one's life. Spirituality may produce a sense of meaning that is worth living or dying for.

If spirituality enhances happiness by increasing personal meaning, this may suggest strategies to enhance happiness. For example, strategies aimed at enhancing personal meaning in children's lives may promote happiness. Future studies could have children engage in activities that might promote personal meaning. For example, children might volunteer to help others or record their contributions to the community in a journal. Then changes in happiness and personal meaning before and after these activities could be compared. If personal meaning is critical to happiness, one might see that these activities particularly enhances happiness for those children who showed increases in personal meaning. (1)

Again, spirituality is not just another 'thing' to latch on to, in the context of this article it refers to an inner belief system that a person relies on for strength and comfort.

If we look at the planet today, from the day we are born we are bombarded with marketing, advertising, television and more; our wants and desires are literally programmed into us. We constantly seek external factors for self satisfaction and happiness (i.e., money), but after we acquire these external characteristics we instantly move on to something else outside of us in order to feel happy or fulfilled. This is a result of the mass conditioning we are exposed to throughout our lives.

Have you ever wondered why a majority of people on the planet want and desire the same thing? They want money, cars, clothes and a big house. What happens when nobody wants these things anymore? What happens when nobody truly has a desire to acquire materialistic gains? What happens to an individual when they come to the understanding that nothing external can bring us joy?

It's a process of great transformation, awakening and realization. It's a path towards true fulfillment. It forces one to look within themselves for a feeling they could once only receive temporarily, from 'things' outside of themselves. It also forces one to create a new experience, one that can provide a better experience, one that resonates more with our internal being.

As we grow up, we pay no attention to our inner voice, neglecting it and pushing it to the side. We seem to always be following instructions. This internal voice is the key to joy, it's your intuition, your belief systems, your heart. Many of us haven't even had the time to develop or listen to it, many of us don't even know how because we are told what to believe, how to live our lives and what makes us happy. We are not given the opportunity to examine and explore these things on our own, through our own inner guidance.

Constantly looking for happiness and fulfillment outside of ourselves, or having a certain external criteria for achieving a state of happiness keeps us in a cycle of depression and sadness because these things can never provide us with real feelings of fulfillment and joy. We are always feeling that something is lacking, and that we need to acquire something to make it better. Sure, they may provide something temporary, but in order to vibrate in the energetic frequency of joy more often you will have to find it within yourself, something many of us continue to do, and something that is not easy.

I do not believe that one needs to be, or even can be in a

constant joyful state. There is also a neutral state of peace which can be perceived as a state of sadness by some. This is our natural state, an observer state

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