The Road to Happiness

SYEDA SHAMIN MORTADA

What makes our hearts sing? What causes our inner chimes to ring? What are the things that give us pleasure and make us smile? What is the road that leads to happiness? Is it name or fame, money or marriage, friends or family?

Many psychologists believe that there isn't any particular key to happiness but a set of ingredients that are vital. Happiness, it is said, has magical properties. According to Dr. Mahmudur Rahman, Professor and Chairman, Department of Clinical Psychology, University of Dhaka "Happiness can be described in many ways. It is a kind of intense emotion." Professor Rahman adds, "Happiness depends on multiple factors and varies from person to person. To some it comes from personal worthiness. To others it may mean material gain or possessing something valuable. To feel content and satisfied; to feel fulfilled and have a positive state of mind; to have a true meaning in life can give you happiness."

Science suggests that happiness leads to a longer life-span, resilience, good performance and most importantly health; though they are not sure if people are either healthy because they are happy or whether people are happy because they are healthy.

Science suggests that happiness leads to a longer life-span, resilience, good performance and most importantly health; though they are not sure if people are either healthy because they are happy or whether people are happy because they are healthy. However, psychologists have been able to identify some very strong links i.e. if you are happy you are less likely to become ill in the future than those who are unhappy; happy people live longer than depressed people. Some psychologists suggest that happier people also have more protection against things like heart diseases and strokes. Research in the United States has suggested a possible link between happiness and long life.

A new school of psychology, called positive psychology, focuses on the roles of positive emotions, positive thought patterns and positive relationships and their connection to human development. Happiness or a person's well-being can be decomposed into three more scientifically manageable components: positive emotion (the pleasant life), engagement (the engaged life), and meaning (the meaningful life). People who experience high levels of well-being are usually more successful across a wide range of domains be it work, love, or health. It is also said that gratitude, kindness and other virtues acts as happiness boosters. For example it was found that gratitude exercises can do more than lift one's mood; they improve physical health, raise energy levels and for patients with neuromuscular disease, relieve pain and fatigue. Performing acts of kindness like visiting a sick relative, helping a neighbour with household work, baby sitting a friend's child; such acts can give a lot of