Faiza Khan Script for Ted Talk

Hello, my name is Faiza. And today I will be speaking of the effects of money on happiness. Now, have you ever thought of how money impacts our life? And more importantly, will more money make us happier?

As people, we want to live the life we desire, and money is a part of our everyday lives. It is a facilitated way of trading; and money helps us buy our essential needs, and the things we desire to buy but don’t actually need.

And I know that some people say that money is the catalyst that propels them to feel happy. Others believe that happiness must come from “within” because external factors are not essential contributors to the feeling of happiness, and that feeling spiritually happy is essential. Michael Norton, an associate from Harvard Business School mentions that giving to others creates social connections, which ultimately lead to happiness. This shows that money can buy happiness if it’s spent in the right way. People usually may buy things that they feel buy themselves happiness, but buying for others as well creates even more happiness because it will allow their to be a stronger friendship.

In addition, donations help increase happiness because the person will feel positive about doing a good deed. They are also more aware of others who are less fortunate, leading to gratitude.

However, a higher amount of relative income does not always equal to greater happiness. Money is needed for happiness, because the person needs to have basic needs. After that point, all “extras” may not increase one’s happiness as much. Money and happiness have a positive correlation until the income reaches $75,000. After that, money doesn’t really increase happiness as much.

But I’m not saying that you won’t be a happy person if you have a lot of money. Even CNN mentions that they did a study of this and their research concluded that they found zero unhappy millionaires of the people that were surveyed. And you probably automatically thought to yourself that it’s because of the fact that they can afford almost anything they want.

On the other hand, the American Psychological Association reveals that wealthy people also have concerns. They may not know whether people like them, or their money. In this case, money can hurt how well they can trust someone and their social connections.

And the way someone spends money can also affect their happiness. Research from pbs.org has proven that it is better to spend money for a trip to a different country, or spend it for an experience rather than puchasing a product. The person will get to experience something pleasurable and valuable to them. Buying time for yourself buys happiness, because less stress is involved. For instance, most of you would be a lot happier going to Paris once than going to the mall five times, right? Now, this might be surprising but even though traveling would cost more money, it would be well worth it because the experience you will have will allow to you feel true happiness.

In addition to researching, I’ve also conducted research of my own. I interviewed people of different age groups and found out that most teenagers would want $100 immediately than $150 next month. This shows that they are usually more impatient and therefore want money as soon as possible. The reason behind this is that they want to spend money on items that they desire to buy, and food; and that’s why most teens think money buys happiness to some extent. Teenagers don’t earn money, so getting $100 right away may increase their happiness because it is more valuable to them rather than adults.

I asked my 6-year-old sister if she thinks money buys happiness or if it comes from within and she answered, “Money makes me happy because I can buy stuff.” It’s a simple answer most kids would agree with, but there is a point where more money would not influence happiness. And there were some times when my sister would be sad or have a negative emotion and I would give her a dollar and she would automatically feel happier. She feels proud with that money. And she saves it up to buy things like toys and candy. And that’s what drives them to think it’s very valuable.

On the other hand, adults usually think that happiness comes from within. When I asked them why the thought this, they said it’s because you could be happy and poor, or you could be rich and unhappy. Here, money and happiness does not show a positive correlation. My mom says that happiness comes from thoughts of appreciation for what you have. One example of this is that there are some people who always want more and they are never satisfied and grateful for what they have. Internal happiness is essential because it allows happiness to come naturally, not from external factors. That means that saving money and investing in stocks is not necessarily the most important factor for happiness.

Generally, money can buy happiness; it just needs to be spend it in the right way with the right mind. So spend money for experiences, donate money to others; and more importantly, be grateful for the things you have. Because that will allow you to be a happier person.

Thank you.