

Reject Hedonism and Raise Antifragile Kids

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SUMMARY

The discussion emphasizes that the pursuit of happiness should not be based on ephemeral goals or pleasures, but rather on enduring purpose and meaning in life. Research suggests that focusing on meaningful activities leads to greater happiness, while avoiding negative emotions can hinder emotional growth and resilience.

- *Happiness is not a race to achieve goals; it should be rooted in enduring meaning and purpose.*
- *Hedonism, or the pursuit of pleasure, often leads to less happiness and is ephemeral.*
- *Engaging in meaningful activities increases joy and fulfillment.*
- *Functional emotions theory posits that all emotions, including negative ones, serve a purpose and contribute to personal growth.*
- *Teaching children to endure and cope with negative emotions prepares them for life's challenges.*
- *Antifragility suggests that experiencing adversity can strengthen emotional resilience.*
- *Snowplow parenting, which aims to eliminate obstacles for children, can hinder their emotional development.*
- *Research shows that parent training can effectively reduce children's anxiety without direct therapy for the kids.*

why is the chase for happiness not like a race to nowhere because as soon as you don't if that's um if you're setting Happiness by a goal of getting something getting things are ephemeral I mean this isn't just science this is like like philosophy and and religion and spirituality for the past like the history of human wisdom let me boil that down for you if I may let's do it but no but to put a scientific uh candy cat on

but I will put a little scientific candy cat there's this great actually when I went to the University of Rochester there was this um there's a lot of there was a lot of work coming out of there on um on sort of this this Theory these theories about meaning making in life and there's this idea it's called UD demonism yeah which you might know in contrast to Hedonism where really the thing that makes this is like emonic

happiness is this Aristotle is this Aristotle I think it was Aristotle yeah and the thing here is that you're not basing happiness or or self on something that you can achieve but then is eventually going to go away you're basing it on these more enduring purpose meaning anchored kinds of things so um and they do research on this all the time where they ask people even in in in Daily diary studies um how much time did

you spend today you know um being generous to someone or thinking about goals that really matter to you or you know think you know it's just kind of anchoring yourself in purpose not even a grand one just something that gives you meaning in life outside your little self and then you ask people well how much time did you devote to heathenism you know uh amplifying pleasure and avoiding pain whether that's like going to a party or doing drugs or sex or whatever

it is and you ask people and what some of this research finds is Hedonism it sometimes predicts like less happiness but often doesn't predict anything you're just doing it it's certainly not bringing you happiness but maybe it's not making miserable who knows ephemeral at best ephemeral at best but every time you are spending more time focusing not on what I need to feel good but rather what why am I on this planet or what's something that's really meaningful me to

me to do today joy skyrockets and it's it's just I I just think it's something that you that's enduring and it helps us move beyond the concerns and for kids today uncertainty the American Dreams crumbling maybe they're maybe they don't have stability in other areas we need to help them find that purpose you mentioned a concept this notion of a of functional emotions the functional emotion Theory and I understand that you've got uh you know I think maybe you

said that was it appraisal and action Readiness or that these there's these two concepts so break this down for me because you know we've got these goals for fulfillment you demonic or otherwise we want to live a meaningful life we want our kids to have some kind of success yes whatever that means whatever that means you know because we can't there's no here's the definition of success that doesn't really exist but we have pretty good like

80% definitions Havey family live a long life be healthy yeah um but where does this functional theory of emotion fit into that path for us and what are these tools how do you understand this I I think the first thing that comes to mind as you ask that question and connecting with success is that the only way we can help and support our kids in feeling good in finding success finding their meaning is to help them feel bad is to

help them feel the bad emotions is to help them endure them is to help them know that it that actually these are the TR these emotions that you're feeling now are not things to be destroyed but are the training ground for you to learn to persist in the face of adversity to cope because life is going to throw you things so so I feel that um with functional emotions this idea that no emotion is bad that we need the

emotions that we parents can then take a stance of you know I need to actually prepare my kids for these feelings not protect them from it this is a big theme Here we did this film with uh Lenor skenazy the the world's worst mom about letting her kid take the subway when when he was nine like Izzy and um and being called the world's worst mom on the media for doing that we're here in New York City I think in some ways this

might be the capital of snow plow parenting which is to say not merely being a helicopter but also having like a forward Advanced troop to like make sure there's no obstacles to getting into columbia you're in you're in kindergarten and how am I thinking how are you going to get into Harvard when you're when you're like picking your nose and finger painting in Canada they call it curling parents which is so fantastic if you know curers that's

right they're because they're sweeping and right so what you're saying is like the opposite so why is that important why why you know let's imagine for a second that I'm skeptical of you which I'm not but let's imagine I'm like no I want to help hey I've made I've been successful I can help my kid why shouldn't I help my kid yeah

so why why not um scientifically scientifically uh there is a concept called antifragility which I'm sure you've heard of yeah um

that's one good place to start there's so many I mean that there's so many reasons but that's one so an fragility as you know is this idea that um not only can we be resilient and bounce back from adversity but when we're antifragile we actually grow stronger because of it so it's this Nim Nicholas TB idea that he was you know he's like economics and business but really humans are antifragile on so many levels so the

immune system is antifragile because if you don't throw germs and bacteria at it it will never learn to mount an immune response will be The Boy in the Plastic Bubble which you and I know from Our Generation Um and for those that watch sign F goog go Bubble Boy it's great it's a great episode um and muscles are antifragile right unless you stress and strain them they'll atrophy you'll never grow strong now you also don't go from never working

out to working out for eight hours at the gym right at the same time so there's this idea that when you're antifragile you build that strength our emotions are antifragile and that's the key interesting okay I've never I haven't really thought of it this way yeah so if never feel an emotion or aren't allowed to because you're protected from it you will never have the training ground to actually build the skills to regulate that emotion to

cope with it to endure it and you will start to design your whole life around never feeling those emotions because you won't have the skills Yeah you mentioned earlier and um and Dr Ortiz said I talked about this quite a bit in our conversation with him uh this avoidance behavior just like you end up avoiding life I'm just going to avoid all the things that are hard which means I'm going to avoid all the things that are

worth doing that's absolutely right cuz once you cut off one you know limb of emotion like the the the horrible feelings you're going to start cutting off Joy you're going to start cutting off possibility and so that's why we need to and again it's doesn't mean we have to you know throw them into the deep end that like going from zero to 10 hours in the gym rather it means that we're partners with them that we

actually scaffold and support them there there's this great research coming out of the yell child child study center you might have heard of um there's a treatment that Ellie libowitz and his colleagues have developed called space it's called supportive parenting for anxious childhood emotions and we know that for for anxiety disorders and kids the gold standard is cognitive behavioral therapy and they do like six to 12 weeks and they're in the and they're you know they're learning all these new skills um

It's very effective what lioz and colleagues did is to give the kids no therapy and just give the parents therapy and it was essentially parent training where they taught parents to stop being snowplow parents and it's not just snowplow because I don't even mean that in a derogatory way really what an parents of anxious kids do is we worry about them and we try to protect them and so when they don't want to go to school because they're so

anxious we're like that's okay it's been hard and I want to um so what space does is it teaches parents to slowly and gradually support them in getting to school and maybe that means going to the bus one day and coming back home and then maybe you just go to the principal's office one day and then you come back home and then you're building slowly to being able to sit in a class and then eventually get there that's

what the parents were taught for 6 weeks and they looked at the kids anxiety levels pre- and post and kids who received no therapy but their parents got space had clinical reductions in anxiety dis I mean they literally went to subclinical levels of anxiety at the same rates as if they'd gotten therapy themselves and parents felt less anxious so they felt better too if you like this clip you should check out the full video and all the other great content we've

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