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Aristotle's Thoughts on Happiness

In Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics, he claims happiness is based on the “functionalistic conception of human nature” on pages fifteen to sixteen. Aristotle says that happiness is the foundation for humans to properly function and happiness is the result of a virtuous life. Some can say this is true, some can say it isn't. I agree that it is true that happiness plays a huge role in people's lives.

Aristotle had a lot of thoughts about happiness and how it affects an individual's proper function of everyday life. Proper functions for humans would be dealing with nutrition, which results in growth. Other functions are to feel emotions as well as understand different concepts thoughts and ideas - which is called rational activity. In a journal written by Paula Gottlieb titled Aristotle Nicomachean Ethics, she writes on page forty-seven “Aristotle says that everyone agrees that happiness is doing well, but they disagree over what doing well is.” She also writes on page forty-eight, “Aristotle divides the human psyche into three parts: the rational part; the appetitive part, shared with other animals, comprising feelings, appetites, and sense-perception; and the nutritive part, shared with plants, and containing capacities for nutrition, growth, and reproduction.” I think this part really confirms Aristotle believed that human's minds and bodies are really the sources of happiness and if they live a good and healthy lifestyle they will be happy.

A possible objection I found while reading this section comes on page fifteen of Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle writes “If we take a flautist or a sculptor or any artist - or in general any class of men who have a specific function or activity - his goodness and proficiency are considered to lie in the performance of that function; and the same will be true of man, assuming that man has a function” - while reading this it contradicts itself as people don’t need to have all skills to be happy. No one can be good at everything, but everyone can be good at one thing. Happiness also shouldn’t rely on skills as it should be how they feel overall mentally and physically. If someone is not happy in their headspace or environment they should change how they are living their life. To counteract that objection, Aristotle writes on page sixteen of Nicomachean Ethics - “the conclusion is that the good for man is an activity of the soul in accordance with virtue, or if there are more kinds of virtue than one, in accordance with the best and most perfect kind.” I think this is a positive statement because everyone is great at either multiple skills or even just one. These skills can make people super happy and can possibly bring them success to their life as well. In the journal Nicomachean Ethics written by Paula Gottlieb, she writes “... he thinks that our ultimate goal in life is happiness ...” I agree that everyone wants to be happy because no one wants to feel sad and they want to feel happy about what experiences they have gone through in their life and feel happy about what they’ve accomplished as well. It’s a really important thing to remember that no one should just focus on one goal throughout their entire life. Aristotle writes on page sixteen of Nicomachean Ethics, “One swallow does not make a summer; neither does one day. Similarly neither can one day, or a brief space of time, make a man blessed and happy.” This is another reminder that a day is a day but a

collection of days can be a season. Meaning growth doesn't happen overnight, it happens over a period of time. Happiness is a constant journey for everyone.

Works Cited:

- Aristotle, et al. The Nicomachean Ethics. Penguin, 2004.
- Gottlieb, Paula. "Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics." Central Works of Philosophy: Ancient and Medieval, edited by John Shand, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005, pp. 46–48. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/j.cttq92zz.7.