

TELEOLOGICALITY AND HAPPINESS: EUDAIMONIC RESPONSE TO THE 21ST CENTURY CHALLENGES

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We would like to focus here on the 21st centuries challenges from the perspective of an individual experience of a person and to demonstrate how the contemporary eudaimonic interpretation of happiness can be helpful for an individual person facing those challenges.

Atomization, social isolation, interaction difficulties in multicultural and multi-religious societies, crisis of identity, globalization, robotization and computerization, rise in unemployment – these and many more challenges cause discomfort in different dimensions: social, mental and physical; that is they impact functioning of the overall society as well as mental and physical well-being of a person. Therefore, they need to be managed at two levels: a scale of a state management [1] and a scale of an individual person's efforts [2]. Although, there are external social and economic factors that an individual person cannot neither change, nor influence on, problems occurring in an individual experience of a person facing those challenges cannot be solved from within by the state, government, any organizations or associations alone. In the 21st century a person is exposed to crisis of identity, lack of sense of belonging, a high stress at work and emotional burnout, a demand to adapt quickly to fleeting circumstances and acquire new skills and qualifications. Efforts of a person herself are required to handle those challenges in her personal experience.

Teleologicality (“telos” – goal, final end, result) implied in the eudaimonic interpretation of happiness provides a person with tools not merely to handle those challenges but also to make her happiness sustainable. Along with other authors [3; 4; 5; 6; 7], we define happiness as a life-long process, as flourishing throughout self-development, as a **meaningful life directed towards a goal** [8, p. 28-29, 100-101]. Goal-directedness is a functional specificity of our prefrontal cortex. It includes planning, forecasting and expecting. The point is – and for this reason we claim that happiness is to be learned – that either a person can focus on anticipating negative scenarios of the future, or a person can have difficulties with long-term planning at all. In both cases a person is unhappy and vulnerable to the external challenges. In the first case, negative scenarios become all-embracing in person's mind, supersede any constructive thoughts and make a person unable to work efficiently and react adequately to different problems. In the second case, a person with long-term planning difficulties

feels lost and is unable to set her priorities in her own favor and distribute rationally and effectively her resources (time, health and money) in a lifelong perspective.

Happiness described in terms of teleologicality means that a person anticipates a positive scenario of her future that enables her to focus here and now on her priorities and to take responsibility for her own success; it motivates her to work efficiently and to distribute her resources rationally. Goal-directedness provides a person with emotional resilience and sustainability of happiness. We describe eight types of goals of a different scale that enable a person to learn planning starting from the most simple and reachable goal and moving towards more complex large-scale goal [8, p. 50-62]. A happy person who is aimed at her goals manages stress easily (since she evaluates events from the perspective of her long-term plans and filters out irrelevant and trifling factors) and is more cooperative with others (since the majority of goals require other people's assistance). Therefore, teleologicality of happiness promotes social connectedness of a person and a sense of belonging (creating startup teams, interdisciplinary and international projects, groups of interests, volunteering groups etc). It implies that **instead of pursuing happiness a person should pursue her goals and be happy along the way**. Teleologicality induces person's search for her own direction (in relationships, work, hobby etc) within the diverse world of values. Consequently, it promotes person's creativity and responsibility for her own success which are crucial in the face of contemporary challenges when one needs to be competitive in the labor market and paternalism becomes a relic of the past.

To conclude, as it is clear from the arguments above, interpretation of happiness in terms of teleologicality (goal-directedness), on the one hand, entails mental and physical flourishing of a person, and therefore, on the other hand, conduces to the civil society development by nurturing creativity, work efficiency, self-responsibility, social connectedness and cooperation.

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