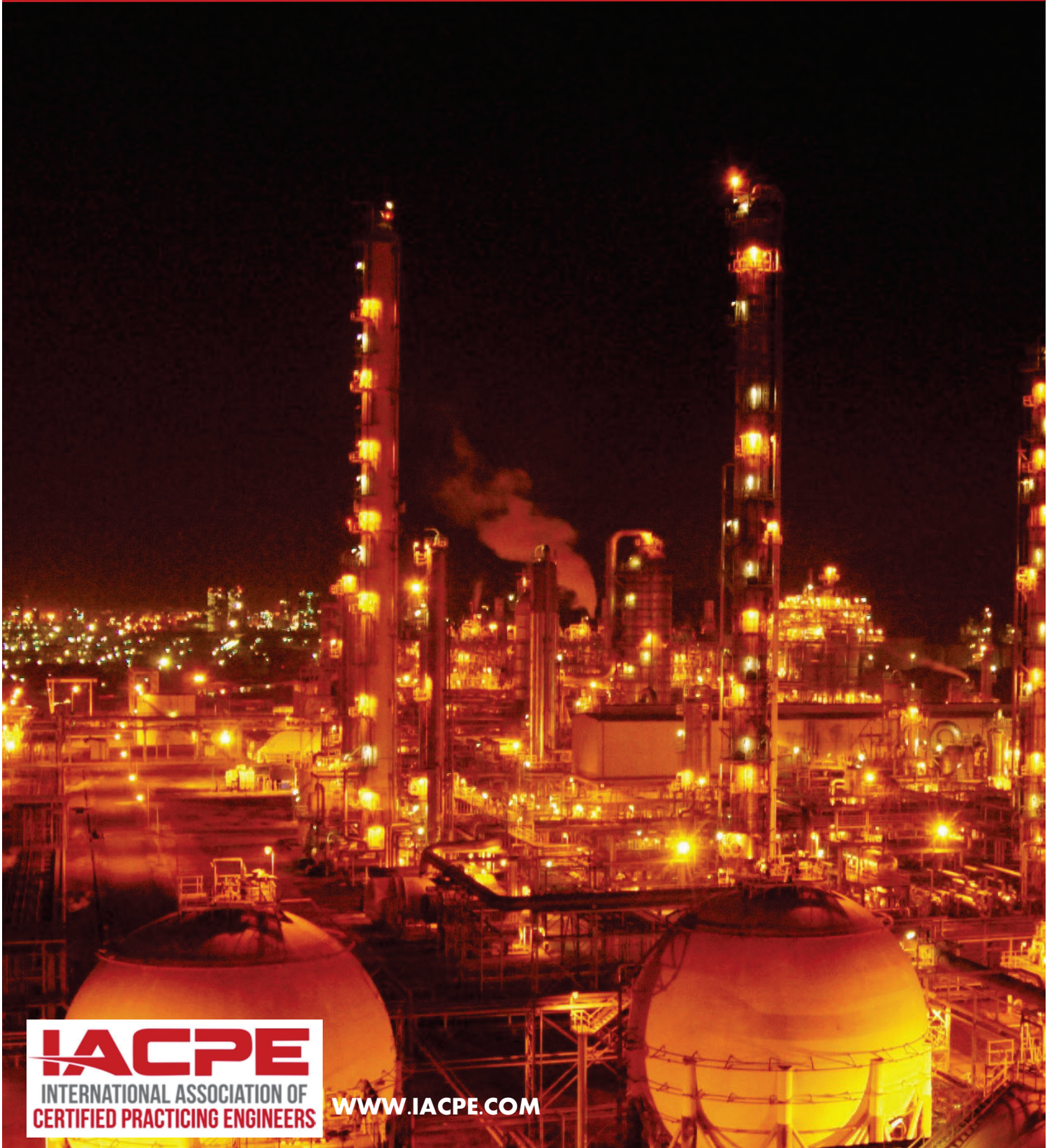


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Stages of Happiness

Karl Kolmetz

Happiness

Happiness is the combination of at least three parts, enjoyment, satisfaction and meaning.

Enjoyment is not pleasure, that is an animal concept. Human enjoyment involves people and memories to make something lasting, and this is uniquely human.

Satisfaction is the joy that comes from accomplishing something hard with struggle, this is a human concept.

Meaning is the significant that your life matters.

Research that looks at identical twins separated at birth and are tested forty years later shows that 50% of their happiness is genetic, so your mother did make you unhappy. This is important to understand because the same studies show 50% of your tendency to abuse alcohol is also genetic, but you can change that proclivity to zero by not drinking. Habits are important if you know yourself.

The next 25% of happiness is circumstances, life's ups and downs will affect your happiness, and many people think this is everything. The job, the family, the vacation but this is transitory. This will change as you go through life.

The next 25% of happiness is good habits. This is 25% of your happiness that is under your direct control. You can improve your circumstances and control your genetic proclivities. There are four things that can control your habits: Faith, Family, Friends, and Work.

Faith

For happiness faith is a path that will transcend yourself, to pay attention to things larger than yourself. We need perspective for each of us to get small and the universe to get large. We need something to get small and not let the narcissistic world think of ourselves as large and take over your soul.

Family Life

Families have been under attack for several generations. Long term studies show the happiest people are in long term relationships. Many people sacrifice long term happiness for short term pleasure. The failure of relationships are affairs, selfishness and pride. Easy to let short term issues result in long term unhappiness.

Friends

There are many types of friends. There are real friends, deal friends and worthless friends which everyone has.

Real friends are people that you have long term connections with. They have been honest with you, kept their word and not taken advantage of situations. It is very hard to find real friends and you are lucky to have very many.

Deal Friends are people that you deal with in your life. Your work acquaintances and people that you have business dealing with.

Work

Only two things that predict happiness in your profession, earning your success and serving other people. Earning your success means that you are creating value in your life, and value in the life of other people. That means you are being rewarded and acknowledged for merit, hard work and personal responsibility. The only economic system that brings joy to work is the free enterprise system, even with all its flaws.

The essence of dignity is to be needed as a person. The essence of despair is to be managed like a liability, instead of assets to be developed. That is why government assistance programs fail because they treat people like liability instead of assets to be developed. You need to serve in your work and see how you are helping other people live better lives.



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Declining Happiness

Since 1990 there has been a continually decline of happiness in every survey. There is a lack of the four things of happiness. There is a decline in faith, they are not building relationships, they are not building friendships, and they do not have a vocational since of their work.

Also contributing to the declining happiness is the social order change. Our current social order now values where you obtained your education, more than your knowledge, more than your values, more than your work ethic. Over fifty percent of the people in the elite workplaces went to the same 34 elite colleges. Many organizations only hire their managers from the same elite college that have very liberal values.

So hard work, knowledge and values no longer will get you the best jobs in many organizations, leading to many people rejecting the new social order because it is based on connections instead of merit. There is general unhappiness with the new social order.

Stage One – Selfishness Equals Unhappiness

The default state of humanity is me first and every child is born with this trait. The innate tendency of humans is self-interest. They must be taught to share as part of their development. This is where we all start. An infant only wants immediate gratification, and this is not a sustainable lifestyle. The long term of me first is failure. Sustained self-centeredness ultimately leads to failure.

Many members of my family are still in stage one.

Stage Two - Family Sharing and Some Happiness

Family sharing is essential. We learn to share with our family knowing that they are some of the only people that will support us in hard times. They can depend on our help, and we can depend on theirs. This is a very important theme in Asia, but we seem to have lost this in the USA, we now depend on the government, to the detriment of our family units.

Again, many family members look for help but provide very little in return when needed.

Stage Three – Sacrifice for the greater good

Sacrifice is fundamentally essential to the foundation of civilization. Civilization, being inherently social and future-oriented, necessitates individuals to forgo their immediate

personal interests for the benefit of the community. Maturity and wisdom involve the ability to prioritize long-term goals over present demands. This entails the sacrifice of self for the future and for the greater good of the community. Such sacrifices have historically contributed to the abundance of wealth and freedom observed in Western Civilization.

When a child makes a friend, they learn to share. I have a turn, then you have a turn – the sacrifice there is that it is not always my turn.

Western Civilization was fundamentally organized around a sacrificial altar within the church. The church served as the focal point of the town, and the town, in turn, was central to the state. Sacrifice played a crucial role in the development of Western Civilization. It is voluntary self-sacrifice towards the highest possible end that is the foundation of civilization.

Today many organizations are teaching that individual identity is more important than the greater good, which is leading to social fragmentation and ultimately leading to less abundance of wealth and freedom.

Very few people reach stage three and those that do are highly respected and despised at the same time.

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