**My Philosophy for a Happy Life: Sam Berns**

[**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36m1o-tM05g**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36m1o-tM05g)

What does it mean to be happy?

It's an irrefutably difficult and commonly asked question that no one can seem to answer. Maybe happiness is just a quixotic idea that's only there to give people hope, an idea without any realistic potential. Perhaps happiness is only there to comfort those with nothing left to use.

We had always thought that it was next to impossible to be sure what happiness was exactly- that is until we watched the charismatic seventeen year old Sam Berns who remained positive and optimistic despite his Progeria- an illness that causes symptoms of premature old age. The short inspirational speech given by Sam Berns on how to achieve happiness proves that happiness isn't just a mawkish sentiment that's impossible to find. No, Sam Berns proves that happiness is simple decision one can take, it is about choosing your attitude and never giving up.

There are five things that he initially teaches us to overcome the mendacity that was fed to us about happiness being short and fleeting, never quite able to land in anyone's grasp completely.

The first thing that we learn is that ***we have to throw away our lackadaisical and negative attitudes and focus on what we can do rather than what we can't***. Whether these feelings are inadvertent or not, we have to rise above the feelings of worry and anxiety and worthlessness and learn to appreciate ourselves.

We have to stop hating ourselves for what we can't do, and start loving ourselves for what we can because being able to appreciate ourselves is one of the most important things to learn to do. Once you start to see that, happiness starts to become much more achievable than before.

Of course, I'm not saying you should ignore all your problems and flaws- no one's perfect after all. However, rather than ignoring and shoving that side of you away, you should learn to accept and embrace it.

Secondly, Sam teaches us ***to surround ourselves with people we want to be around***. Being happy is pointless if you're happy alone, so the next question to ask ourselves is, what kind of people do we want to be around?

Obviously, people who denunciate you and make you feel bad about yourself aren't people that should be labeled as your 'friends'. If you have to hide who you are and what you're really feeling, then those people aren't worth being around.

Sam says that him and his close knit of friends "see each other for who we are on the inside" and that his friends and family impose a "positive influence on my life".

Those are the people that are worth appreciating. The people who make you feel good about yourself- whether it be your mentor, friends, family, or your community.

Thirdly, ***we have to keep moving forwards***.

What he's ultimately trying to say is that people should strive to make their lives richer by finding something to look forwards to everyday. It doesn't have to be anything big. It could be looking forward to meeting your friends after school, or watching a certain movie- small things like that.

The point is that when you have something to look forwards to, your life becomes more euphoric, replacing all the torpid and indolent feelings you might have had before. The increase of activity decreases stress and anxiety and makes you feel more lighter and at ease.

Knowing that he was going to get better and looking forward to a time where he would feel good again, helped Sam keep moving on. Even though he had to be brave, and even though he faltered and had bad days, he realized that being brave wasn't supposed to be easy and he believes that's the key to moving forwards.

"*Around here, however, we don't look backwards for very long. We keep moving forward, opening up new doors and doing new things, because we're curious... and curiosity keeps leading us down new paths*." -Walt Disney's Meet the Robinsons

Fourthly, ***there is strength in optimism***. Keeping an open and acute mind leads to prosperity and happiness. Optimism isn't just for idealistic people, it's vital for keeping a blithe and happy life style.

It doesn't matter if you're wrong, hoping gives you a kind of strength you normally wouldn't have and it's okay to continue hoping no matter the amount of obstacles and hardships in front of you because that's what it's for. When you hope for a brighter tomorrow, it helps you get through all those hardships because you want to be there to see it.

Last, but not least, ***giving up is not an option***.

One of the most basic and simplistic ideas that the media has been trying to teach children for centuries. Never give up. You never really think about what that entails and what that means until you hear someone like Sam Berns talk.

Never giving up means having an iron will. It means wanting to go on. After all, it's incredibly easy to find a way to quit, but finding a way to continue on? Now that's hard.

Looking back, the moments in which I was truly happy was due to the following variable above combined. All of my childhood memories that were filled with laughter and a faint, soft nostalgic feeling were due to being surrounded by the people I love and my own ability to believe in myself. I think, that that's what true happiness is.

**Lessons learned:**

* Optimism can go a long way
* Never give up
* Choose your attitude
* Identify your core competency and set your goals accordingly
* You can make a positive difference
* Concentrate on what you can do instead of what you can’t do
* Appreciate what you have

**Can you do it?**

* Are you willing to strive to achieve your goals and to prove yourself?
* Can you do something when everyone thinks that you can’t?