

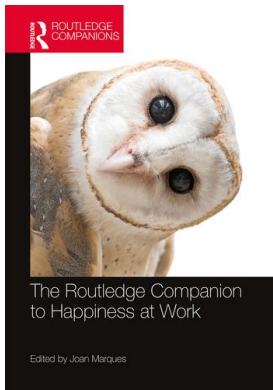
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## The Routledge Companion to Happiness at Work

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### Happiness and the Arts

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# HAPPINESS AND THE ARTS

*Theresa Billiot*

### Introduction

Imagine you are an artist looking to host a watercolor workshop. You post social media advertisements to recruit participants. The first few responses reflect excitement toward signing up for the workshop. You find supportive and positive people expressing their excitement to attend. However, the internet can be a scary place. Soon to follow, you see a flurry of demeaning posts. Examples include people challenging your qualifications on teaching watercoloring and talking negatively about on how learning watercoloring won't pay the bills.

Experiencing antagonistic behavior from others can create self-doubt that preys on one's mind, leading to lower levels of well-being and shaping future behaviors. For example, self-doubt can pivot one away from studying or working in the arts to ultimately entering a field that doesn't bring joy to them. In addition, uncertainty toward being creative can instill anxiety and fear. For instance, we are often asked to become inventive, such as by brainstorming new ideas to solve a problem. Yet, what do we typically hear from others? "I'm not creative." This self-rejection can stem from people believing that creativity is not part of their identity, or maybe it stems from people putting their guards up because they are trying to protect themselves from being labeled as a failure if they can't come up with a new idea.

Our self-concept toward being creative can be traced back to earlier time periods and to other environments. Take, for example, the kindergarten classroom setting, where we engage in creative projects such as drawing, painting, and coloring. Even if our teacher tells us we have great promise to be creative, we naturally compare ourselves to others (Festinger, 1954). Through these comparisons, we might think our art projects aren't as good as those by the other kids in the classroom. Maybe, unfortunately, there is another student who laughs at our work, which negatively impacts our well-being.

The classroom is just one environmental example. It may be an accumulation of environments and outside agents that ultimately impact our creative confidence. For instance, doodling is a type of art form used to channel negative energy. We doodle to alleviate boredom or to relieve stress. But then we are told to stop because we are perceived to not be listening. Because we stop doodling, we temporarily suppress positive emotional states such as joy and bliss until we find another expressive route (Kaimal, Ayaz, Herres, Dieterich-Hartwell, Makwana, Kaiser, & Nasser, 2017).

Whether internally and/or externally, we all experience negativity in our lives. If we feel adverse emotions or think pessimistic thoughts, we should creatively express this negativity on some level.

If we don't channel our difficulties, we can build up destructive emotions and thoughts that will lower our overall well-being.

Because the arts are so broad, this field gives us a plethora of outlets to channel our difficult situations that can make us better, stronger, and greater. Why? Because the arts can evolve us both cognitively and emotionally.

But what happens if disdain toward the arts represents the cultural norms for some people? Are we unknowingly impacting one's overall happiness by stopping their self-expression? What if one feels that creativity lies deep within them, but they are afraid to bring it out due to fear of rejection? These questions emphasize the importance of continuing substantial dialogue on the value of the arts. However, common ground needs to be established in order to gain traction.

So, where do we start to have this conversation? The starting point needs to be focused on using universal themes. Why? Because universal themes represent human nature; it can be generalized to a broad range of demographics. Happiness is universal. Although we seek happiness through different means, happiness is a basic human desire. The arts are also universal. Everywhere we go, the arts surround us. From listening to music, watching TV, playing the piano, looking at movie posters, reading a book, and to getting tattoos, we consume some version of the arts each day. By interweaving these two universal themes, we can push forward with our efforts to increasing the number of supporters to embrace the arts through happiness.

However, art consumption varies among groups. Not everyone embraces the opera. Not everyone embraces hot-rods. While high-brow and low-brow art may separate us, storytelling can be found in all types of art forms such as music, video games, TV shows, fashion, movies, dance, body art, and so forth. Thus, this chapter will explore the art of storytelling because of its universal acceptance and powerful ability to connect us with dissimilar people.

In this chapter, we are also prepared to address the naysayers toward the arts. For example, business-oriented individuals may shun the arts because there is a notion that the arts simply don't pay the bills. If you can't pay the bills, then how can you be happy? However, we will use examples of how the arts play a vital role in businesses because it boosts employee creativity that drives innovation—a highly-desired trait to remain competitive. We also assert how the arts in business can elevate employee well-being, resulting in improved synergy and creative performance. All of these positive effects can have an impact on job security and pay raises, which help to pay those bills.

Therefore, the three main parts for this chapter are the following: (1) transform audiences into art advocates by psychologically and sociologically connecting the arts to happiness, (2) explore how the art of storytelling leads to happiness, and (3) provide a rational argument on how the arts and happiness can be leveraged in business environments to develop viable assets.

### **Transform Audiences**

Do you recall the last time you heard one of your favorite songs playing? Maybe it was a song that took you back to your younger days? What was your reaction? Did you have a flashback to past events? Do you remember feeling energized when the song started to play? Did you temporarily forget about your worries about the day? Did it help you let go of your anxiety toward the future?

Music is just one example of an art form that gets you into a zone. In this zone, you focus on the present moments, while temporarily letting go of regrets of the past and the anxiety toward the unknown future. So, what exactly has happened to you? Well, your favorite song positioned you into a state of flow. Meaning, you became so immersed in the song that you didn't think about anything else.

Positive psychologist Dr. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1997) refers to this as the flow theory, where individuals undertake an intense focus due to high involvement with an activity. According to Csikszentmihalyi (2016), there are eight stages of flow: (1) complete concentration; (2) clarity of goals and feedback; (3) transformation of time; (4) intrinsic rewards; (5) effortless and ease; (6) balance

between challenge and skill; (7) losing self-consciousness; and (8) feeling of control. The arts provide an extensive range of activities that can trigger each of these stages required for optimal flow to occur. Let's examine each stage by exploring another type of art form—a child coloring.

*Complete Concentration.* Imagine a child diving deep into the activity of coloring books. By using crayons, the child moves from filling in the pictures to switching among crayons as they color different objects and characters. With this activity, the child presents continuous fluidity in their movements. This child is engaged in complete concentration.

*Clarity of Goals and Feedback.* The goal for coloring is pretty clear: color away! While some kids strive to stay within the lines, some kids love to express themselves by coloring outside the lines. When a child presents their coloring book to others, they receive praise and feedback on his or her accomplishments. A child can also look at their own work and experience pride and joy toward their art.

*Transformation of Time.* Coloring opens the door for the child to undergo a transformation of time. Meaning, a child becomes less aware about what time it is because they are focused on the coloring activity. The child enters into a deep state of flow. Therefore, the child loses themselves during the process. As a result, coloring feels timeless.

*Intrinsic Rewards.* Coloring also sparks flow because it provides intrinsic rewards. For instance, a child stimulates new ideas, moves, patterns, and connections while coloring pictures. These new behavioral patterns advance the development of a child's creative and analytical learning. In addition, the child engages in flow with coloring because it helps to alleviate boredom. Thus, the child is experiencing immediate intrinsic returns. This type of flow engagement leads the child to feeling positive affections and creating energy to engage in the activity again.

*Effortless and Ease.* Since flow requires activities to be effortless and with ease, a coloring activity allows for flow to materialize. In other words, a child coloring doesn't experience any level of strain because the activity isn't demanding. Coloring is a smooth process, guided by the child's intuition. The child makes coloring decisions from the selection of colors available.

*Balance Between Challenge and Skill.* Since the child has self-efficacy to color, this activity will not likely create undue anxiety or stress to complete because the child believes he/she has the ability to perform well in this task. Thus, this experience meets the criteria required to establish flow. More broadly speaking, the diversity existing within the arts opens various activities for people to experience flow.

*Losing Self-Consciousness.* Coloring involves complete involvement. The coloring activity is in unison with the child because they become highly involved with the activity.

*Self-Control.* When a child is coloring, he or she is in a relaxed state. They are not bothered by outside distractions. The child feels like they have control over their actions with the coloring activity.

Csikszentmihalyi (2016) also asserts that immersion in flow is the secret to one achieving happiness. But how do we define happiness? In the next section, we explore happiness through the constructs of perceived control, perceived progress, connectedness, and a larger vision. Specifically, we connect how these constructs bridge the arts toward happiness.

## Perceived Control and Perceived Progress

We begin by exploring how the interrelationship between perceived control and perceived progress stems from one's self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997), which can impact flow, and, ultimately, happiness. Meaning, a person's ability to engage in flow is based on how they approach goal-oriented activities (Bandura, 1997). The arts provide a plethora of activities for consumers to engage in perceived control and perceived progress. One example is how an aspiring ballet dancer with "higher self-efficacy takes greater ownership" (Billiot & Steyn, 2013, p. 4) of learning the intricacies of complicated dance moves. This translates into creating higher levels of perceived control (Cook & Chater, 2010) of their dancing performance. When the ballet dancer reaches a meaningful goal,

he/she can enjoy increased levels of satisfaction because they elevated their dancing skills. As the level of perceived control increases, the ballet dancer is highly likely to engage in more dancing challenges. For instance, the ballet dancer will seek higher desires, such as becoming part of The Paris Opera Ballet company.

However, self-efficacy is impacted by levels of perceived progress toward goal accomplishments (Bandura, 1997). Staying within the context of ballerina dancers, as performers become successful with obtaining short-term goals, they develop perceived progress because they witness their career moving forward, especially while having perceived control of their dancing activities. This perceived progress develops confidence and increases happiness (Billiot & Steyn, 2013; Hsieh, 2010). Moreover, dancers with high self-efficacy have a lower probability to develop adverse feelings because they have a stronger perceived control over their emotions (Billiot & Steyn, 2013; Cook & Chater, 2010). However, if ballet dancers feel constricted and constrained within activities, they can experience a lack of perceived control and perceived progress (Billiot & Steyn, 2013; Frazier, Keenan, Anders, Perera, Shallcross, & Hintz, 2011), resulting in negative effects on their happiness (Billiot & Steyn, 2013; Hsieh, 2010).

To increase perceived control, the arts provide a platform where social modeling can occur. Social modeling involves one observing similar people complete the same tasks and reach goals successfully (Bandura, 1994). To use an example where a child learns how to draw a house, he or she can observe other children in a classroom engaging in the same activity. This child can increase their self-efficacy because they notice other kids completing the task of drawing a house, which instills beliefs that they also possess the same abilities to successfully draw a house.

To increase perceived progress through the arts, and to reach higher levels of happiness, it is imperative to activate social persuasion. Social persuasion helps others to increase self-confidence (Bandura, 1994). In other words, people are influenced by others through positive verbal encouragement, rather than disconfirming artistic capabilities to succeed with completing tasks. Evidence of social persuasion can be seen at creative art workshops. For example, beginner groups in a watercolor workshop can develop their own style and receive immediate feedback through group critiques. All workshop participants can collaborate and encourage others within a creative atmosphere. During this process, participants can improve their skills and gain higher motivation. Such encouragement can socially persuade individuals to become advocates for the arts because it boosts individual self-esteem, thereby providing perceived progress and individual happiness.

### **Connectedness**

The next construct that bonds the arts with happiness is connectedness. Connectedness is delivered through the arts by bringing dissimilar people together to develop and foster inclusive environments. Furthermore, to be fully connected, diverse individuals and groups seeking an inclusive environment need to center around a common goal (Oyserman, 2006). In the arts, this common goal is innovation.

Thus, inclusivity drives innovation. Meaning, to become inspired, we need to learn from those different from us (i.e. opposing cultures). For instance, a hip-hop artist can learn from a country musician one day, then learn from a jazz player the next day. Thus, the arts broaden the talent, ideas, and knowledge that can be shared and learned from each other. These different genres are indicative of how the arts promote inclusion because it embraces the different forms of self-expression, accepts various perspectives, and provides opportunities to emotionally connect on different levels. Therefore, the arts are vital sources for innovation.

Since inclusion attracts diverse individuals, the arts are fertile ground for engaging people from a broad range of demographics and psychographics into meaningful and challenging activities to induce happiness. By creating a more connected society, the arts can develop and strengthen social

relationships, which are an important driving factor for producing happiness because it makes people feel like they belong—a Maslow's (1968) Hierarchy of Needs trait. These connected societies induce happiness because social relationships serve as a self-esteem booster.

In addition, inclusion expands the product selection of art forms available for consumption. This expansive collection is important because as a person ages, their meaning of happiness can shift across time (Mogilner, Kamvar, & Aaker, 2011). A younger person can associate happiness with excitement, like dancing to music, while an older person can associate happiness with peace, like relaxing to the sounds of nature. In addition, temporal focus can play a significant role in defining happiness (Mogilner et al., 2011). A person focused on the future seeks excited happiness, while a person focused on the present strives for peaceful happiness. Regardless, the arts provide an infinite number of activities for one to experience excited versus peaceful happiness.

While age-orientation and temporal focus-orientation can serve as segmenting dimensions for the art industry, some artists enjoy a cross-over where they attract all age groups and both types of temporal-focused individuals. For instance, traditional pop and easy-listening artist Frank Sinatra connects with Baby Boomers to Millennials. However, the temporal focus-orientation may vary based on how the listeners interpret Sinatra's songs.

Since people hold different interpretations of art and because a single song can possess multiple meanings, individuals tend to apply their own frame of reference to decode the meaning of musical verses. For example, the lyrics of Frank Sinatra's "That's Life" states:

I said, that's life (that's life) and as funny as it may seem. Some people get their kicks.  
Stompin' on a dream. But I don't let it, let it get me down. 'Cause this fine old world it  
keeps spinnin' around.

Despite the turmoil one may be currently facing, Sinatra provides hope and optimism in this particular song. However, it is up to the listener's interpretation of these lyrics to determine if this song applies to the present moment or to future events. Regardless, this type of connection through music can validate the arts as a trusted source to achieve either excited or peaceful happiness.

### Larger Vision

Larger vision is the next construct related to happiness because it replaces psychological egoism with a higher purpose (Billiot & Steyn, 2013; Martin, 2008.). In this case, a person's focus shifts from oneself to a focus toward helping others. Through these selfless acts, one can experience higher levels of happiness because they are part of something that is larger than themselves (Martin, 2008).

The arts hold a fundamental belief that they allow one to become part of a larger vision. By integrating the arts into the fabric of communities, it can revive a struggling community and create a viral effect for many stakeholders. The city is one stakeholder benefiting from the arts because it can transform outdated districts into entertainment hubs. These hubs can attract tourists, increase tax revenue, build the local economy, and create a unique and differentiated city image. Concurrently, the local business community also benefits from this metamorphosis. With the arts, businesses can attract and retain talented employees and happy customers. In addition, homeowners can develop a feeling of pride because the arts have beautified their communities, which can motivate them to retire in the area. By attracting newcomers and retaining residents, developers are another benefiting stakeholder who can construct additional commercial and residential properties to accommodate for the new population growth. Another major stakeholder is higher education. Since universities do not operate on islands, an arts-inspired surrounding community can spark interest among students to study at these institutions. Furthermore, the excitement that the arts can bring to communities can persuade college students to start their career in these areas after graduation.



Overall, the arts can make a bold impact for various community stakeholders, create economic growth, and develop stronger and more connected neighborhoods. By becoming active with the arts to improve communities, one will live a much happier life because they are engaged in a larger vision through collectivism rather than with an individualistic mentality. Moreover, this higher purpose can create a ripple effect where it attracts others to get more involved in similar art initiatives; hence, helping others to improve their emotional well-being.

### **The Art of Storytelling**

Everyone is a storyteller. We naturally begin telling stories when we are children. When someone asks “how is your day going?”, your response is a story. Why? Because stories contain personal experiences. When you tell someone about your day, you are speaking about what happened to you personally. To emphasize the importance of these individual experiences, someone can be engaged in the same activities as you, but they won’t have the same experience. Thus, each of you has a unique perspective. You each have a unique story to share.

From the cave drawings to the hieroglyphs in ancient Egypt, the way we tell stories has vastly evolved. Today, as an example, if we subscribe to an online streaming service, we subscribe to storytelling. When online users scan through social media platforms, they engage in quick, short forms of storytelling. When we take pictures on our smart phones, we participate in storytelling. Regardless of the method or the advancements in technologies, stories will always be a part of us.

Most importantly, storytelling takes on the characteristics of the flow theory that can lead us to happiness. First, regardless of the story, whether in the form of oral communication, movies, music, paintings, etc., they use aspects, such as descriptive language, aesthetics, and empathy, that can grab our complete concentration—a stage of flow. Second, as audiences hear stories, they become curious and have questions they want answered. For example, as audiences watch movies and TV shows, their curiosity is sparked when they want to know what will happen next, or why this is happening to the protagonist. As the story progresses, the audience may receive those answers, but a good story provides a continuous cycle that keeps raising questions and providing answers. So, when one question is answered, another question is posed. And so forth. As a result, the story is providing feedback to the audience—another stage of flow. Next, effective storytelling engages audiences into flow’s transformation of time because they lose themselves during the protagonist’s journey to overcome certain obstacles. Then, storytelling provides intrinsic rewards reaped from being in flow because audiences find themselves relating to characters, discovering motivation, and feeling positive affections through these connections. Since listening to stories does not require physical activity, listeners engage in active listening with little effort, which produces flow. The storytelling experience is also an uncomplicated activity and can bring comfort to others. While sitting in a movie theatre, audiences lose their self-consciousness and become highly involved with the story’s plot—another stage of flow. While engaged in stories, the audience has self-control of their active listening, and they mentally block out distractions.

The art of storytelling also connects with the happiness constructs mentioned earlier. The digital environment will be used to place this analysis into context. Imagine you are on vacation to the Bahamas for the first time. You grab your camera and capture key moments to document and share your journey with others. Your first picture is a selfie of you walking along the white sand with crystal blue water in the background. You upload this picture onto your social media account with a caption such as “soaking up the sun!” Congrats! You just began your digital story!

With this process, the perceived control is triggered because you have the self-efficacy to take pictures and to share these moments with others. As you post more pictures, such as of the famous swimming pigs in the Bahamas, you are engaged in perceived progress by advancing your story.

Your personal story generates connectedness because it resonates with people on emotional and cognitive levels. Then, the larger vision construct is activated because your story inspires others. Meaning, you motivate others to have the same experience. You help convince others to finally take that vacation they keep postponing.

Storytelling is a powerful art form that can cultivate happiness. One just needs a simple idea to get started. You can begin by asking “what if” questions, such as “what if dogs could talk?” This question begins your story. This question sparks your imagination.

Just let the creative side flow. In fact, let the eight stages of flow happen. Give your life higher meaning and purpose through the four happiness constructs. If you do this with storytelling, you will discover how the arts can bring you happiness.

### **Businesses: Leveraging the Happiness and the Arts**

One main purpose of storytelling is to make people fall in love with your message. But what if your story makes people fall in love with your business? After all, not every business decision is a popular decision. Revising mission statements, restructuring organizations, changing strategies, and implementing new decision-making methods can create resistance among multiple stakeholders. However, businesses can harness the power of storytelling by emotionally connecting with employees, customers, investors, legislators, and communities. If a business can create buy-in from these stakeholders, imagine receiving a higher level of support and improved performance.

Businesses can use stories to create a “theatre of the mind”, where stakeholders actually see themselves within the story. Second, businesses can intentionally integrate various stakeholders such as employees, customers, and investors into these stories. This approach can develop motivation and create a culture filled with passion, energy, and hope. Third, stories act as persuasive pitches that can create brand advocates to spread positive word of mouth about the business. Fourth, business leaders can use stories to produce creative employees and elevate teamwork performance.

Let’s zoom in on the internal culture: employees. Why? Well, as noted in part one of this chapter, happiness can create a ripple effect. Thus, if employees are happy, this can make customers happy. If customers are happy, they are likely to spend more, resulting in investors becoming happy. If investors are happy, more development can occur within the business and community where the business operates. Therefore, the local economy improves benefiting all those who live and work in this area. For these reasons, we will focus on employees in this part of the chapter.

Earlier, we made the connection of how the power of art can lead to creativity. This connection is imperative in business settings because the marketplace has become overcrowded due to technology lowering the barriers to entry. Meaning, it is easy for people to become entrepreneurs through the digital environment. A person can easily create a smartphone app and load content; consequently, the main online streaming apps have a new competitor. In order to remain competitive, businesses must evolve and innovate. Thus, creativity is a must.

However, what happens if your business hires new employees who feel they are not creative? Recall the earlier discussion on how this perceived lack of creativity may have developed from the person’s environments. Another environment that needs to be examined is the college business classroom because most business graduates go from the classroom directly to the industry. In the academic atmosphere, colleges students experience a great deal of stress during different stages of their university studies. Whether it’s balancing their course load with athletics, work, and family, or struggling to cover the cost of attending college, maintaining their GPAs, or doubting one’s qualifications to obtain a job, the level of stress and lack of sleep endured can block the flow of creativity (Khasky & Smith, 1999). Since businesses operate in a highly competitive world, future business students must feel like they have the ability to make contributions such as enhance workplace innovation.



One may point out how stress is a common factor in college and business environments. This point is well-noted and agreed upon. In fact, advertising agencies and marketing firms serve as examples where stress and creativity collide. For example, ad agencies working with global brands can expect a work week of 60 plus hours just for a single client. Working long weekdays and weekends can place a burden on the creative department. Although stress hinders creativity (Khasky & Smith, 1999), innovation still has a deadline because campaigns need to be designed and launched by a specified time period, per client demands.

Therefore, providing outlets to reduce stress is imperative. A growing trend of businesses are implementing various forms of art such as wall art, games, painting classes, and karaoke contests to reduce stress levels. This art-business integration is beneficial because a recent study reveals how a 45-minute art-making activity reduced 75% of the participants' cortisol levels (Kaimal, Ray & Muniz, 2016). In addition, art therapists have long advocated for the implementation of art activities to create positive physiological effects (Malchiodi, 2013).

In conjunction with reducing stress, the arts help to tear down the mental blocks to spark creativity and to expand creative vision among employees. However, creativity is hard and complicated because it can take on a wide range of emotions. For instance, it can take on positive emotions, such as love and joy, negative emotions, such as sadness, or even mixed emotions, such as nostalgia (Kaufman & Sternberg, 2019). Since businesses rely on effective teamwork, employees can strengthen their synergy by supporting each other through the emotional rollercoaster experienced during the creative process of the art activities. As a result, the level of teamwork is enhanced.

Implementing the arts in the workplace can help employees experience flow and the constructs of connectedness, perceived control, perceived progress, and a larger vision. One method used to trigger flow and the happiness constructs in the workplace is ideation. While ideation takes on various forms, such as having team members draw out different ideas and concepts on a wall by using multiple tools, it generally focuses on creating a rich layering of ideas and creating small group collaborations. Ideation also provides employees with artistic control. Each idea is free from criticism, providing a platform for creative imagination because it expands one's mental process by going beyond the conscious part of the brain (Titus, 2018). Ideation reframes the way a problem is viewed, leading one to see the same problem through a different set of lenses. Subsequently, one starts to develop new perceptions. When new solutions arise, employees can deliver results that affect the business, the community, and other broad groups of people. Consequently, ideation through art activities can make one feel part of a larger vision (i.e. larger purpose). Therefore, the process that flows through ideation can improve employee happiness.

However, it is important to point out the common arguments made by those in the business field when it comes to the arts. We address these opposing views in the following paragraphs.

*Temporary Work and Unemployment.* The arts tend to attract a bad reputation among those in the business field. One of the reasons for this is the higher probability that artists will only gain temporary work, such as freelancing, or left unemployed. By not securing stable work, negative perceptions are formed, particularly within individualistic societies like the United States which values the ability to provide a stable income that will support yourself and your family (Billiot & Steyn, 2013). If studying the arts increases the risk of being unemployed, or unable to obtain stable employment, then this assertion can be used to support arguments in favor of studying or working in the business field and rejecting any form of the arts.

However, artists can gain independent freedom by being their own boss through freelancing or contractual work. By taking on new assignments with different media companies, as an example, they can broaden their portfolio, experience, and network. This independent freedom is experienced when one isn't tied down to the bureaucracy of an organization or to a nine-to-five desk job.

*Income Inequality.* Another repetitive argument against the arts is how income inequality leads to unhappiness (Oishi, Kesebir, & Deiner, 2011). According to a Georgetown University study, STEM

and business are the highest paying majors versus the lowest median earnings in fields such as studio arts, drama, visual and performing arts (The Economic Value of College Majors, 2018). Moreover, the current economic climate where students are straddled with college debt makes choosing art as a major an unwise choice. However, cultural consideration needs to be given because Americans are more willing to accept income inequality versus Europeans (Billiot & Steyn, 2013; Frey & Stutzer, 2002). Part of the reason is because upward mobility is perceived to be accomplished much more easily in the United States than in Europe (Billiot & Steyn, 2013; Frey & Stutzer, 2002).

However, upward mobility is not just exclusive to the business field. Those studying the arts can also experience progress in their careers that can take them to higher levels. For example, in the entertainment field, a screenplay writer can advance to other roles such as being an executive producer and a director. Moreover, the screenplay writer can expand his or her resources to begin a studio production company that can film other artists' screenplays.

*Money Buys Happiness.* Adversaries toward the arts have used arguments similar to “if you don't have money, then you can't be happy”. Or, you may frequently hear the question “can money buy you happiness?” People will generally say, “yes, it can”. However, research provides limited support for this assertion. For example, when a person's income increases up to \$75,000 per year, this person will experience improved emotional well-being (Kahneman & Deaton, 2010). However, the person's emotional well-being remains stable when his or her income increases more than \$75,000 (Kahneman & Deaton, 2010).

But why? This stable state may be attributed to the human nature of comparing ourselves to others. In other words, people start to compare their higher incomes to those with even higher incomes (Frey & Stutzer, 2002). This comparison motivates people to financially outperform those with higher incomes. Constant competition can result in people feeling less happy (Frey & Stutzer, 2002). Thus, the “money buys happiness” viewpoint only is a valid argument to the point of a \$75k annual income.

As noted earlier, creativity leads to happiness. Thus, the question should not be “can money buy you happiness?” Rather, the question should be “can creativity buy you happiness?” The answer is “yes”.

*Economic Freedom.* Another key aspect is the relationship between economic freedom and happiness. The groups that experience higher levels of economic freedom tend to be those in the higher socio-economic groups. These wealthier individuals also tend to live longer and experience happier lives (Gropper, Lawson & Thorne, 2011). However, by implementing the arts in businesses, employers can help stimulate creativity among their employees. When employees advance their inventive side, this benefits the entire organization. These creative employees are then set-up to achieve paycheck advancements because they improved their workplace performance and helped achieve business goals. Moreover, these pay increases help one acquire greater economic freedom and perceived progress, which creates the path to achieving happiness.

## Conclusion

Overall, engagement in the arts leads to overall happiness from both the production and consumption sides. When we produce art, we channel our most personal emotions and thoughts. We pull back the curtain, or take off our mask, to allow others to know us at a deeper and more personal level. This approach helps us express the world that we live in and the world that we see. It also taps into the growth side where one can discover his or her full potential, better known as reaching one's self-actualization (Goldstein, 1995; Maslow, 1968).

By consuming the arts, we are also given pathways that lead to happiness. Meaning, we connect with others by learning and exploring opposing worldviews, or we find how someone else's world is analogous to ours. This type of consumption satisfies our human need to increase our intelligence

(Maslow, 1968). As a result, we engage in a chase to gain new knowledge, and the arts provide a diverse stage where we can expand our intellectual capacity from different fields.

Failure to reach self-actualization and to expand our learning can lead toward negativity such as feeling confused, developing an identity crisis, and experiencing unfulfillment. Moreover, we may not discover our purpose in life because we pivoted away from exploring and gaining a better understanding of who we are and those surrounding us. These emotional and mental roadblocks can keep us from experiencing joy and improving our well-being.

Regardless of the field we enter, the arts play a vital role in our personal and professional lives. By diving into the arts, we escape from our daily stresses and negative thoughts. We connect with others and develop social relationships. Sometimes, without even realizing it, we can make an impact at both the micro- and macro-levels. Furthermore, our engagement in the arts allows us to step into the shoes of others, which can increase our empathy—a trait much needed by today's business leaders.

In closing, let the arts lead you toward the path of happiness. Allow the arts to take you to another place and to another time. Use the arts as a platform to confront the negative feelings that have been triggered by external factors so you can improve your self-worth. You will then discover how the arts can bring happiness to you and to those you love and care about.

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