

Reading

Is there a secret to happiness?

A Everyone is looking for happiness, but no one seems sure how to find it. For a start, happiness is different for everyone. For some people, it might be having a job, but for others, their job might make them miserable. Most people don't want to be lonely, so being in a relationship should make them happy, but some relationships cause misery. Some people move across the world to find good weather; others can't stand the heat.

B A recent study has found that people in long-term relationships generally are happier. Things like laughing together, holding hands and hugging someone definitely bring happy feelings. The study also showed the importance of having friends that you get on well with, and of being confident in your appearance – people who believe they're attractive can be happier than those who actually are attractive but unhappy.

C Childhood is usually the happiest time of our lives, when we play innocently with our toys and friends, and trust our parents to be the responsible ones. Although we're often less happy and satisfied as adults, we usually get happier again after we're 50 or 60 years old. So it's not all bad news.

D We can do some things to improve our satisfaction with life. The study also reported that people who were active – by keeping busy as well as exercising – were happier than those who weren't. And by helping other people, through voluntary work or other kindness, we help ourselves, as the study showed a link between helping others and personal happiness. Going out for dinner and not travelling too far to work seem to help as well.

E Our attitude is important. We must keep busy, believe we are attractive, love our friends and family, and help others. We can't control everything in our lives, but these things will help.

1 Read the text and choose the correct answers.

1 The author says that happiness ...

A is impossible to find.

B depends on the person.

C is not possible if you're alone.

2 According to a recent study, ...

A friends are more important than relationships.

B attractive people are generally happier.

C long-term relationships usually bring happiness.

3 As we go through life from childhood to old age, ...

A we get happier and happier.

B our happiness goes down and then up.

C we have no control over our happiness.

2 Read the text again and answer the questions in your own words.

1 What is an example of a big change that some people make in their lives to try to be happier?

2 Why are we happiest when we're children?

3 Why does the article mention voluntary work?

4 How can we change our everyday lives to become happier?

3 Find words and phrases in the text which match the definitions.

1 unhappiness (paragraph A)

2 find unbearable (paragraph A)

3 lasting a long time (paragraph B)

4 the way someone looks (paragraph B)

5 connection (paragraph D)

6 way of thinking (paragraph E)