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"Happiness is not having what you want but wanting what you have," according to James Stewart. Although scientists now understand the roots of depression more clearly than they used to, happiness still remains a mystery. Recently, however, some interesting discoveries have been made.

Those who say they are happy, for example, tend to be less self-centred, less hostile and abusive, and are less prone to disease and general ill health. Interestingly, the affluent are not notably happier than their less-well-off counterparts, and seemingly, no particular time of life is significantly happier than any other. Even though some people see life as a tragedy, when questioned, most people said they were generally happy – painting a much rosier picture regarding people's general moods and dispositions.

Research has shown that people have two basic reward centres in their brains that are stimulated by two different chemicals which cause happiness. The first, dopamine, is triggered by activities like exercise,

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relaxation and the quieter pleasures. The second comprises a set of adrenaline-type chemicals which are triggered by exciting or frightening activities. Dopamine provokes a response of passive happiness, while the second set of chemicals provokes a high-energy state of happiness, the feeling one might get from public speaking or mountain climbing.

While understanding the chemical process behind happiness is important, it does not explain why only some people are consistently happy. The answer may lie in people's perceptions of happiness.

One of the reasons we have such a problem with happiness is that many confuse it with a life untouched by anxiety, rage, doubt and sadness. The belief that happiness means that nothing ever goes wrong is naïve; in order to be happy, we must know not how to avoid disturbing events, but how to deal with them.

The key to coping with life's unpleasant aspects, while remaining content, comes from an everyday practice which Mihaly Csikszentimihalyi calls "the flow". He describes "the flow" as the state one is in when doing something completely absorbing. It comes when one is pushed right up to the limit of one's ability, but not beyond it. "People can get a feeling of flow from dangerous sports like mountain climbing or driving fast," he says "but it can also come from something relaxing like painting or reading a good book." The point is that it's an activity you do for the pleasure of doing it. You are not looking for praise or reward. What is important, is to keep your brain busy if you want to be happy. The professor explains, "If you leave someone on their own with nothing specific to do, most of their thoughts will be worries." People tend to think about all the things they want and haven't got rather than how good their life is. It seems the key to happiness lies in having an active and challenging lifestyle.

The scientific study of happiness will help us understand how to build a world that improves human well-being and self-esteem, and how to get the most satisfaction from their goals and circumstances.

1. Studies have shown that happiness _____.
 - A. is positively influenced by wealth.
 - B. is not influenced by wealth.
 - C. is negatively influenced by wealth.
 - D. does not influence wealth.
2. Dopamine is produced by _____.
 - A. recreational activity
 - B. fright
 - C. high-energy activity
 - D. pleasure

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3. A common misconception about happiness is that _____.
A. rich people are happier.
B. happy people perceive things differently.
C. happiness implies never having problems.
D. happiness stems from being naive.
4. In reality, consistent happiness lies in _____.
A. not feeling anxious.
B. being able to handle problems.
C. not having problems.
D. not confusing our feelings.
5. What does "it" in the sentence "but it can also come from..." (next-to-last paragraph) refer to?
A. people
B. a dangerous sport
C. "the flow"
D. research
6. According to Csikszentimihalyi, "the flow" is triggered by _____.
A. external reward.
B. doing nothing.
C. challenging others.
D. activities done for personal pleasure.
7. When we are inactive _____.
A. we don't get what we want
B. we try to challenge ourselves
C. we experience more anxiety
D. we think everything is fine

A recent international study has shown some surprising and apparently contradictory results on the question of the priorities parents around the world have when raising their children. While the survey showed that some virtues are universally prized, interesting regional and national trends emerge when parents are asked to rate the importance of various qualities they wish to instil in their children.

Parents around the world seem to agree that good manners, a sense of responsibility and respect for others are important qualities to teach their children. But while West Europeans give all three qualities more or less equal importance, East Europeans and North Americans rate a sense of responsibility as by far the most important, and relegate respect for others to fourth place.

Interestingly, a sense of imagination ranked the lowest priority worldwide, although West Europeans gave the quality of flexible thinking twice the importance any other group did. The Italians stress the virtue of cultivating their youngsters' imagination more than most others surveyed, with the exception of Switzerland. The supposedly staid Swiss prize imaginative youth.

Etiquette-minded Belgians, Spaniards and Greeks placed the highest premium on politeness, while the Danes and Swedes put good manners lowest on the list. The newly-capitalist Eastern bloc countries also rated good manners as relatively unimportant, perhaps because **they** are being confronted with commercial competition for the first time. Together with the Swiss and the Turks, on the other hand, they prized the ability to communicate with others.

The virtues of tolerance and respect for others were most highly regarded in Scandinavia, France, Britain, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Spain. This was not the case in Greece and the former Eastern bloc nations, which rated these as being of lesser importance.

Germans, Austrians and Swedes esteem personal independence, but the industrious French hold the quality of conscientiousness at work more dear than any other European nationals. The responses in the industrialized nations of Sweden and Britain showed, perhaps bewilderingly, that nationals of those countries gave little importance to conscientiousness at work.

Polite Belgians answered that for them, obedience is among their paramount values; this sentiment is shared to a lesser degree by the British, Greeks and Irish. The Italians, according to their questionnaires, ranked this very low.

When rearing their children, the Greeks, Turks and Irish are alone in their emphasis on instilling strong religious beliefs.

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One of the primary difficulties the researchers faced was translating the questions as perfectly as possible in order not to distort the result. "Imagination", for example, can be translated into Dutch as "conceitedness"; perhaps this explains why the Dutch appeared to give imagination a low priority.

Also, some qualities are so ingrained in certain cultures that they are taken for granted, while others are given great emphasis because they are felt to be lacking in a particular society.

1. The survey shows that _____.
 - A. some values are general and others vary.
 - B. no patterns emerged.
 - C. different nations contradict each other.
 - D. there are no clear results.
2. For the North Americans, a sense of responsibility is _____.
 - A. more important than it is for East Europeans.
 - B. more important than respect for others.
 - C. as important as it is for West Europeans.
 - D. as important as respect for others.
3. A sense of imagination is _____.
 - A. most important to the Italians.
 - B. most important to the Swiss.
 - C. important to all except the Swiss.
 - D. equally important to the Italians and the Swiss.
4. Politeness is less important in the Eastern bloc because _____.
 - A. they enjoy confrontation.
 - B. they are competitive people.
 - C. they are still getting used to capitalism.
 - D. they are relatively uncommunicative.
5. "They" (underlined) in paragraph 4 refers to _____.
 - A. commercial competitors.
 - B. the Swiss and Turks.
 - C. good manners.
 - D. Eastern bloc countries.
6. Although their societies are industrialized, the British and Swedes _____.
 - A. are not conscious of it.
 - B. are bewildered by industry.
 - C. do not think hard work important.
 - D. do not think their nationality important.

7. The research was difficult because _____
- A. the researchers made so many mistakes.
 - B. the results were distorted.
 - C. no one knew how to translate certain words.
 - D. it had to be conducted in so many languages.



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Nigel was one of my best friends. In the seventeen years we've known each other, we've done the sort of things that mates do. We've gone out for drinks together, played in a number of sad rock bands together. We've got a history, as they say.

When a personal disaster of catastrophic proportions left me out on the streets with a couple of cardboard boxes and a rucksack, it was Nigel who supplied a sofa and a well-stocked fridge. And when I got married, it was Nigel's plum-coloured Rover P5 Coupe that was waiting, engine purring, outside the registry office.

However, it came as something of a shock when I realised that I hadn't actually seen Nigel for nearly six months. What had gone wrong? It's not as if we'd fallen out. We still worked and lived in the

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same town. We had simply fallen victim to something that afflicts millions of men in their late twenties and thirties. They start misplacing their friends.

Once you and your mates were inseparable. Now there never seems to be enough time to cram everything in. There's work, a home, kids even. In reality, it's getting to the point where it's not so much a question of meeting up, more a question of having a reunion. It's been so long since you got together it's actually becoming embarrassing.

The irony is that you'll continue to insist that these men, whom you hardly ever see, are your closest friends in the world, even though in every meaningful sense **they** now barely qualify as acquaintances. You probably have a closer relationship with the man who collects your ticket at the railway station.

Men seem to need a practical reason to spend time together. Psychologist Dr Malcolm George says, "As men, we very much form our friendships around doing something mutually. But the problem is that the maintenance is dependent on doing the thing. When the demands of career and family kick in, those relationships get squeezed out."

Dr George believes that there is an essential difference in the nature of male and female friendship. Men have a more limited expectation of their friendships, partly because the man-woman relationship is still looked upon as the vehicle for emotional fulfilment. Men's relationships with other men are regarded as having no real emotional content. They serve a function – playing in the football team or whatever. Women actually expect to share their emotional life with their friends – that's the difference.

It seems as though your partner may determine the friends you keep. This may be because people tend to make new acquaintances at work and it's very hard to convert those work friends into family friends. When men launch into a relationship and lose contact with their friends, they make bigger demands on their partner by expecting her to supply all the friendship that's missing.

Most women want men to keep their friends – as long as they can express themselves within these friendships and talk problems over. After all, men's inability to express their feelings is one of the things that makes relationships flounder.

1. When disaster struck, Nigel _____
- A. bought his friend a fridge.
 - B. provided a sofa for his friend's flat.
 - C. allowed his friend to stay with him.
 - D. helped his friend with his boxes and rucksack.

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2. Why did the author stop seeing Nigel?
 - A. They fell out.
 - B. Nigel moved away.
 - C. Other aspects of their lives took over.
 - D. The author got married.
3. Millions of men in their thirties _____
 - A. don't know where to find their friends.
 - B. have disagreements with their friends.
 - C. lose touch with their friends.
 - D. are no longer interested in friendship.
4. Who does "they" (underlined in paragraph 5) refer to?
 - A. people without qualifications
 - B. the writer's relations
 - C. men in general
 - D. people the writer almost never sees
5. Men form friendships that _____
 - A. they maintain by spending time together.
 - B. can be maintained if there is a common activity.
 - C. aren't dependent on career and family demands.
 - D. are mutually satisfying.
6. Men don't expect a lot from their male friendships because _____
 - A. their relationships with women help them with their feelings.
 - B. they are not very emotional.
 - C. they gain happiness from looking after their vehicles.
 - D. football is more important than relationships.
7. A minority of women want _____
 - A. men to stay on good terms with their mates.
 - B. men to speak to their friends on an emotional level.
 - C. men to break off their friendships.
 - D. men to express their feelings to save their relationships.

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