

On love and happiness

100+ Answers

By Iris W.M. van der Wal

One day I saw the movie *Hector in search of happiness*. In this movie, a psychiatrist travels the world in search of what happiness is, in order to be able to make his patients happy again.

His project fascinated me. At the time I lived in Berlin, surrounded with a lot of different nationalities, and I was wondering if they would give the same diversity of answers as Hector received during his quest. I also planned to travel (to Ecuador) that year and so I figured it would be good time to replicate Hector's search.

That was the birth of this project. I did, however, already have an idea of what happiness was to me and I wanted the project to be a search, like it was for Hector. So, I thought about other questions....

Not long after, I thought about love. It's not a hard bridge to jump since love & happiness –at least in my life– are important concepts¹.

What love is to me... That was a question I did not know how to answer at all. And so, the project really started. A journey of a year and 100+ answers to these two special questions began.

Every answer I received is unique and made me think a little more about these two concepts. Some answers are very long and philosophical, others are short but powerful. It was inspiring to receive so many answers to these two big questions.

I asked these questions in Dutch and in English. I realize that the answers therefore might not be answers to the same question, as language plays an important role in how we interpret a word. I deliberately chose not to elaborate on the questions though, because I wanted to know what people's first association with the words would be. Maybe even to see if language makes a difference regarding the answers or not at all. Since this project is about subjective experiences, ideas of the concepts, with no right or wrong answer, I choose to keep the possibility for different interpretations of the questions.

Enjoy the beautiful, sometimes poetic answers of everyone who participated in this project and be inspired to think about these concepts yourself.

¹ Apparently Hector jumped the same bridge. After I had finished this project, a class mate of mine told me about the second book François Lelord wrote called *Hector and the secrets of love*.



What to you is love?

Wat is liefde voor jou?



What is your definition of happiness?

Wat is jouw definitie van geluk?



Van liefde word je gelukkig.

Love brings happiness.



En ben je gelukkig dan kun je meer liefde geven.

And when you are happy, you can give more love.



Het warme gevoel dat ik krijg als ik bij mijn familie en vrienden ben (en lekker cliché, de lach die m'n mannetje me geeft zodra hij wakker is).

The warm feeling I get when I'm with my family and friends (and cliché: the smile my husband gives me when he wakes up).



**Trots zijn op de persoon die je bent want zonder dat
zal niets je gelukkig maken!**

Being proud of the person you are, because without that nothing will make you
happy!



Love is connection between the soul and something else. That you are connected in a way that there is something, energy. Something that makes you feel that the other person is special. That you don't want to live without this other person anymore because you like to be around this person because of this energy.



A state of not having sorrows and being satisfied with the situation. Living in the moment and not thinking about what else you need or want to have. Just to be glad you have what you have.



**Je aanpassen aan iemand die je liefhebt en daardoor elkaar
en jezelf verbeteren als mens. Heeft niks met seks te maken
of regels die de maatschappij je oplegt.**

Adapting to somebody you love and through that making each other and yourself
better people. It has nothing to do with sex or the rules of society.



**Dingen of mensen die in je leven komen, waarvan je nooit
verwacht had die te bekomen.**

Things or people that come into your life, which you never expected.



It's partly physical. So, what I mean is that I am reaching out my hand at night to somebody and I know that I am finding somebody with my hand, which is from two sides. Knowing that there is someone who will reach back.

It's a link.



Happiness is a feeling of a personal flow which may occur at any time, every day and I think it's very personal. Often you cannot even share it with other people. For me personally it's a personal kind of plan that worked out.. but this is probably not a good example because having a clear idea of a plan or what makes you happy.... This also has the nucleus of being unhappy if the plan doesn't work out. So, I'm probably a person that has a quite clear picture of what he wants to achieve so I can also freak out if it doesn't happen. So, knowing what makes you happy can also make you unhappy.



Voor mij is liefde samen de wereld veroveren.

To me love is conquering the world together.



Je echte droom verwezenlijken.

To accomplish your true dream.



Alles van elkaar weten en toch van elkaar houden.

To know everything of each other and still love each other.



Geluk is een keuze waarvoor je hard moet werken om het te krijgen en te behouden.

Happiness is a choice, you need to work hard to get it and to keep it.



When you feel very comfortable with a person. When you are not bored. When a person challenges you and motivates you, but doesn't give you a heavy feeling, that you have to keep up to something.



I guess very few people or even no one is truly happy. It is more this moment when everything is perfect and the next moment you almost feel sad cause you know it'll be a while before you will feel as happy again. But for me things like busy social and professional life are very important for the general feeling of happiness as well as a couple of meaningful relationships.



Love for me is happiness and sadness at the same time.



**Happiness for me is being successful in my life and around
the people I love the most.**