

THE HAPPINESS SHIRT (PART 1)

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STIMULUS

Once there was a king named Giphad. He ruled over a very peaceful yet powerful kingdom. All was perfect in his kingdom. Except for his son, Jonash. The king's son was very unhappy for no known reason. He would always sit in his room staring blankly out the window over the lands, frowning.

The king addressed his son: "What on earth has upset you, Jonash? Why are you so sad?" "What has made you so miserable?"

The young prince only shrugged.

"Are you hungry? Do you want some food? I will bring you all your favourite foods!"

"No father, I'm not hungry. I'm just sad. I don't know why." Said the young prince.

"Are you bored then? Do you want some friends to play with? I will bring you all the other children from the town and you can all play together in the gardens.

"No father, I'm not bored. I'm just sad. I don't know why." Said the young prince. The king nodded and walked off wondering what he could do to help his unhappy son.

Enquiry opportunity

If the class is new to philosophy make this your first enquiry as it gives the children opportunity to contribute safely and practice using the ball. It will also get them thinking about the many different ways to be happy.

Starter Question (5 mins):

- ✓ Why might the King's son be unhappy?

Note some of the suggestions and then continue the story using them as examples, e.g. if one of the children said "A football will make him happy" then use this in the next part of the story (see below). This should hopefully make the children feel that the story is theirs, as they have added to the prose.

Stimulus Continued

The King blurted "A football then! I shall send to the palace and they shall bring the finest stitched-leather-bladderless footballs money can buy!"

"No, Dad" Responded Jonash, "I don't need a football. I'm not bored. I'm just sad. I don't know why" He finished with a nonchalant shrug. (Continue with other examples the children may have provided, or make up some of your own).

Then, King Giphad had an idea! He needed some help so he invited all the best doctors teachers and philosophers to his castle and said to them "My son is unhappy. Sad. Miserable! What can I do?" Even these wise men needed some time to formulate a plan to save the king's son from his misery. So they took their leave went away for a week and a day.

The doctors looked at all their medicines and wondered what can we do to make the King's son happy?

The teachers read all their books and wondered what can we do to cheer up the King's son?

The philosophers discussed ideas with each other, wondering what can we do to stop the king's son from being so unhappy?

On the eighth day they gathered again to attend the King Giphad in his castle. Just one of them stood and said "Sire, we have thought over your problem and I think I speak for all when I say... it's a little bit tricky".

Task Question:

- ✓ What would make them happy?

Nested questions

- ✓ Do you need X to be happy?
- ✓ Is X enough to be happy?
- ✓ Should we be happy all the time?
- ✓ Is happiness important?

✓ What is happiness?

I explore the things that make you happy creating a list of the things that make people happy on the board. I usually build quite a big list and then ask "Is there anything on the list that you could not have and still be happy?" . It encourages a critical engagement with their ideas. Asking 'Do you need X to be happy?' also encourages lots of good counter-examples and They begin to see the dilemma and understand that questions like 'What makes you happy?' or 'What is happiness?' Are not as simple as they previously thought.