



THE HAPPINESS SHIRT (PART 2)

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. King Giphad had tried to lift his son's mood but had just didn't know what would make him happy. So he sent for the wisest people in the kingdom.

In the time that King Giphad lived, the most respected thinkers were doctors, teachers and philosophers. So King Giphad commanded that all the best doctors teachers and philosophers attend him at this 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 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... However," the speaker continued. "We have given the matter close thought. In order to help your son you must find a happy man. A man that is happy through and through." The king raised an eyebrow at this. "I must find a happy man!?"

"Yes, and when you find the happy man you must trade his shirt for your son's shirt, then all will be well."

"So I must find a truly happy man, take his shirt and give it to my son? Will he be happy then?"

Task Question:

- ✓ Will the happiness shirt make the king's son happy?

On occasion they will unanimously agree that it won't work. I often have to use the imaginary disagreeer technique (see Teaching Strategies): "A child in my last class told me that it would work, what was his reason?"

Stimulus continued

The king agreed and dismissed them. He called in his best soldiers to the throne room, and told them to go out and find for him a truly happy person. He sent them to the all four compass points of his kingdom North, South, East and West. The king charged them with finding the happiest person alive. A person who is truly happy.

After one whole month of anxious waiting the first soldier brought a man from the north. The person to be shown before the king was a very rich man who lived in a big, beautiful house, he had the best car in the world and all of the games you could ever want. "Are you happy?" The king's asked him.

"No, my king, I am not happy." replied the man.

"Really!" the king exclaimed. "Why aren't you happy?" "Because, my king, I do not have anyone to play my games with me. I live alone and I miss all my friends that I met at school."

A week of further worried pacing around his chamber then the king heard of the arrival of a soldier from the east. The second person to be shown before the king was a very popular man, he had lots of friends and they all lived on the same street. "Are you happy?" The king's asked him.

"No, my king, I am not happy," replied the man. "Really!" the king exclaimed. "Why aren't you happy?" "Because, my king, I am always worried about what my friends are doing. I worry when they don't play with me. I worry when they are playing with someone else. I get angry when they accidentally break my things."

The king was disappointed that he couldn't find a truly happy man and after a month and a week of waiting with two disappointing candidates, he was in desperate need of fresh air so he went for a walk in the gardens. Whilst the king was walking in the gardens he heard a noise coming from his left. As he drew closer the king realized that it was the sound of someone whistling, happily. He followed the noise until he found a young man lying on his back gazing up at the many clouds in the sky. "You there! Boy! Tell me why are you whistling such a happy tune?" "Because I'm a very happy man"

The king beamed at this answer. "You're the one! Quickly! On your feet, boy!"

He grabbed the youth and ran back to the men and his camp. "My son is saved! My son is saved!" He turned to the young man and gestured warmly: "You, boy, may have from me whatever it is you wish. But I need...I need..." The youth looked at the king strangely. "You need what?"

"My son the prince is dying and only you can save him. Come closer." The king grabbed the youth, smiling his brightest smile and quickly began to unbutton the youth's jacket, then suddenly stopped. His arms drooped to his sides. The happy man wore no shirt.

Disappointed the king again 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?"

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?

After three days the teachers, doctors and philosophers came to the king with a plan.

"Your Majesty," They said. "We have given the matter a lot of thought. In order to help your son you must find one of your own shirts that your son has never seen and pretend that it is the shirt from a truly happy man. Then when you give this shirt to your son, tell him that it is a happiness shirt."

The king, unsure of the idea, got one of his old shirts (at this point produce your own white shirt), gave it to his son and told him that it was a happiness shirt and that if he wore it he would then be happy. The son took the shirt "Really, Father?" He asked eagerly. "Yes, of course, son." The king replied and with that the boy put on the shirt and the most amazing thing happened... he was suddenly happy.

Task Question:

- ✓ How does the shirt work? Is it a happiness shirt?

These two questions I think are rich enough to encourage philosophical dialogue but please add any other nested questions from your own enquiries.

FURTHER ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

You can ask children to try on the happiness shirt and to act as if they are happy in it, or demonstrate what it looks like to be happy in the happiness shirt.

Nested questions

- ✓ How do you show other people you are happy / sad?
- ✓ If you act happy does it mean you are happy?
- ✓ Does smiling help you feel happy?