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According to an online dictionary the definition of happiness is “ a state of well being and contentment or a pleasurable and satisfying experience.” With all of the chaos and clutter that seems to fill our lives happiness is a fairy tale ending, something that isn’t real its merely an ending in children’s books or stories created but not lived. There are few pieces of literature that one can turn to for a clear and promising path that will help to lead to happiness, or whatever one may call a well in doubt life that is lived to the fullest potential. Two works of writing in which direct people to a “good” way to live are “Making Sense of Our Lives”, by Paul L. Holmer, and “The Enchiridion” translated by Thomas W. Higginson. Both of these works of art communicate to people on a deeper level with issues such as ethics, will, desire, thought, morals, and emotions.

“Now we have to decide whether we are going to be honest, courageous, temperate, lazy, and clean, and also godly. Eventually there is no one but ourselves to depend on in these matters” (pg 62, Holmer) as said in the quote above the choice is ours. Morality is something that is rooted deep in all of us, however the choice is ours on whether we act upon it. From the section of Holmer titled “ Making Sense Morally” we are presented with two ideological ways of living. One is simple, to live in virtues such as courage, temperance, and justice. The other option is to become a victim of living in vices such as envy, fear, jealous, worry, faint of heart, etc which can cause one to feel as if live is “pointless, a big joke, meaningless”, even despair which is the ultimate evil vice of life.

Following passages from “The Enchiridion” can also have an impact on ones way of life. To ask the question “is my life worth living” is not an answer that a human can come to in regards to themselves or another person. It is not up to us. Similar to Homers “ Making Sense Morally”, I have found a great deal of philosophical ideas and scriptures that can per sway the human spirit to live “good” in the eyes of the maker. The one who ultimately has the answer to the question that I said a few sentences ago. “Demand not that events should happen as you wish; but wish them to happen as they do happen, and you will go on well”( The Enchiridion pg 20) having a plan and being organized is a crucial part of survival, without it we would be come a clutter of events, people, ideas, and nothing would make sense, but it is not to say that we are guaranteed anything in this life, except the breath that we were just given for that means we are living and not to take that for granted.

Death is something that has been pushed away from conversation for years and will mostly likely never be a comfortable topic for people to settle on discussing. Death is a very real part of life; in fact it sadly is the only thing that is definite in life. I may never make a million dollars, I may never be able to drive fancy cars, I may never even be able to hold a child in my arms that I can call mine, which is one thing in life that I deeply want. But one thing I can count on is dying. Leo Tolstoy’s “ The Death of Ivan Ilyich” addresses this issue and brings up a few other topics such as quality of life, morals, and most importantly reflection of self. Both Holmers “Making Sense Morally” and “The Enchiridion” can be seen in comparison to the way Ivan Ilyich lived his life.

Ivan Ilyich was a man who took pride in his work, and cared for the more materialistic things that life has to offer. The beginning of his life fit the consumer’s idea of “ Happiness” perfectly. Money, fame, friends, but none of which were real. After he fell his life drastically changed because he was faced with what we all will face one day, death, but he however did not think it could ever happen to him. Ivan Ilyich went from being a man living a live of vices rather than virtues, which ate away at his soul, but he eventually comes to terms with what is “real” and finds peace and joy before he passes away. He finds and becomes “happy”