

NEWS RELEASE

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BLACK DOG INSTITUTE



Happiness and Wellbeing is something that we all strive for in our lives. But how do you measure this pursuit to achieve happiness?

Despite popular belief, money doesn't make you happy, although that research was probably done before the current credit squeeze and the uncertainty about the world's economy.

The term happiness captures a huge variety of positive emotional responses, including such things as cheerfulness, serenity, optimism and joy.

How we achieve happiness is the topic that will be examined by Professor Gordon Parker, Executive Director of the Black Dog Institute and prominent Tamworth identities during a Town Hall public forum on Friday 7th November between 5.00pm and 7.00pm.

In an interview earlier in the week, Professor Parker gave us an insight into his thinking about Happiness and Wellbeing, bringing a fresh look at a topic that has throughout history seen philosophers, religious writers and poets ponder its meaning and how it might be achieved.

According to Professor Parker psychologists have found it useful to distinguish between a hedonic and a eudemonic state. A hedonic state is a transitory state of pleasure while a eudemonic state is one associated with ongoing wellbeing, engagement and contentment.

Professor Parker said that some of the findings from the research he had studied showed:

- 50 percent of a person's satisfaction with life comes from a genetic predisposition
- Marital status, education, religion and income count for just eight percent of life satisfaction
- Older people are consistently more satisfied with their lives than the young
- Married people are happier but that could be because they were happier people to begin with
- Religion has a positive effect on wellbeing

"Ultimately, it is family and friends that are the most important," said the Professor. "We need these interpersonal ties and social support to be happy." Professor Parker said research also shows there is no significant relationship between how much money a person makes and how happy they are.

"Research showed that people for whom money, success, fame and good looks are especially important are less satisfied than those who strive for good relationships with others, develop their talents and are active in social causes," he said.

Professor Parker said it is an interesting topic and that he looked forward to learning more about what drives Tamworth people in the pursuit of happiness.

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