

**Kate:** Hello, I'm Kate Colin and today I'm joined by Rebecca Byrne. Hi Rebecca.  
Rebecca, how are you feeling today? You look very happy!

**Rebecca:** Yes, I am very happy actually. Spring is finally here and I have to say that the lighter evenings and the sunnier days do indeed make me feel much happier!

**Kate:** That's good to hear because, here in the UK and all around the world, the economic recession is really beginning to make life increasingly difficult for many people. So in today's programme, we're going to talk about happiness and where we are likely to find it, especially when times are hard.  
But before we find out more, I have the question for this week. Which country do you think is the happiest? Is it

- a) Mexico
- b) Denmark
- c) Nigeria

**Rebecca:** answers...

**Kate:** We'll check your answer later, but for now, I'd like to ask you what makes **you** happy?

**Rebecca:** Generally, I'm happiest when I'm just hanging out with friends and family and I like also listening to music, that always makes me happy.

**Kate:** Yes, I agree. I always feel happiest when I'm with friends and family too.

But enough about us, let's listen to the first extract. Can you hear what it is that makes this speaker happy?

**Man**

What makes me happy is slowing down. I think that we live in a very fast, speedy world and we often forget to take stock and take time.

**Rebecca:** He said that '**slowing down**' makes him happy. He mentioned the fact that we live in a fast world and we often forget to '**take stock**'. This means we should slow down and examine our lives, rather than rush through our daily activities as most of us tend to do.

**Kate:** And what does he go to say is the problem with happiness?

**Man**

Well, the problem with happiness is of course that sometimes when you are happy, you are infected with the spirit of the fact that it's going to stop, so sometimes you can't enjoy happiness because you know it's going to end.

**Rebecca:** He says that the problem is that whenever we are happy, we're always aware of the fact that it's going to stop so we can't fully enjoy it.

**Kate:** So, on to the next extract. We're going to hear the words '**contentment**' and '**satisfaction**'. What do these words mean?

**Rebecca:** Well '**contentment**' is when you're pleased with your situation and not hoping for change or improvement. And '**satisfaction**' is the feeling of having everything you need or want.

**Kate:** Have a listen and tell me what is this speaker's attitude to happiness?

**Man 2**

I think it is a very good thing to try and aim to be happy. Happiness is a difficult concept, you're aiming for contentment and satisfaction with a few moments of joy.

**Rebecca:** He says that we should all aim or try to be happy. To him, happiness is contentment and satisfaction with a few moments of joy. **Joy** means 'great happiness'.

**Kate:** Yes, so he thinks that we can't all be very happy all the time. To be contented with a few periods of true happiness should be enough for us. What else does he go on to say? What two things does he think lead to happiness?

### **Man 2**

And for me, like most people actually what the evidence tells you is it's about having good relationships and making time for them, so I'm never happier than when I'm with my wife and child and also having **fulfilling** and **satisfying** work.

**Rebecca:** He says that the things that lead to happiness are good relationships (he says he's never happier than when he's with his family) and the second thing was having **fulfilling** and **satisfying** work. This means to have a job you enjoy and feeling you have a useful role.

**Kate:** What's interesting is that he doesn't mention '**material possessions**'. What does this mean?

**Rebecca:** Material possessions are things we buy, clothes, houses, cars, TVs. There's a common idea that acquiring material possessions makes us happy.

**Kate:** Yes, many people go shopping and spend money when they feel depressed and think that this will make them feel happier. Have a listen to another speaker to hear what he has to say on the subject:

### **Man 3**

Again there's a wealth of evidence about this – above a certain point wealth and possessions don't contribute to happiness. Of course there's a minimum, if you've just lost your job and you can't pay the mortgage, you're going to be miserable. But above a certain level, and it's actually relatively low in a society like ours, money doesn't actually buy happiness.

**Rebecca:** He says that there is evidence to suggest that above a certain point, money doesn't contribute to happiness. Of course, there is a basic level of living for which we need money, for food and shelter but as long as we have basics, having lots of material possessions won't make us any happier.

**Kate:** So there we have it, there is indeed evidence to say that money cannot buy us happiness....an important lesson for us all I think. Let's have a look at some of the vocabulary we came across in today's programme:

We had **take stock**, which means to look at one's life and assess it

**Contentment** means to be pleased with your situation and not hoping for change or improvement

**Satisfaction** is the feeling of having everything you need or want

**Joy** means great happiness

**Fulfilling** is meeting all your needs and expectations

**Material possessions** are objects, as opposed to abstract ideas such as love, happiness etc. And finally, to the question I asked you earlier in the programme.

Which country is the happiest?

**Rebecca:** I said.....

**Kate:** And you were correct– according to various surveys carried out in 2006, Denmark is the happiest country. Puerto Rico and Colombia also scored highly but Britain came in at number 41 so I think we've still got some work to do!

That's all we've got time for. Until next week, have a happy week. Goodbye.