

2021 International Essay Contest for Young People

[Children's Category – Honorable Mention]

A World of Choices

(Original)

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Life is a characteristic that distinguishes the living from the dead. It is a state in which organisms are able to reproduce, grow, metabolize, and respond to changes. However, life has become more complicated than just the biological definition. It is what we choose it to be, and it is what makes the definition of life unique for everyone. To me, my definition of life would be "a collective choice". Life is a probability - an extremely improbable one. The chance of us existing is very low. It takes just the right amount of hydrogen atoms and molecular components to support life as we know it. An improbable probability would then turn out to be billions of possibilities by the choices we make either directly or indirectly.

Life is a multitude of choices we make. We've made countless choices in life: some might be as insignificant as deciding between pizza and steak, while some might be as life-changing as bringing another life into existence or ending it. However, we have two main choices in life: to be the observer or the player in what would be history, what is the present, and what will be the future. We have a choice of being a bystander, letting life's past choices made by others, including ourselves, dictate where we will be. Or, we can be "the captain of our soul", bending fate with our will. These two choices define what happiness is to us and what life means to us. To the prior, life is a stream that we let take ourselves forward. To the latter, life is like a precipice that we have to overcome in order to see the view from the top. In the end, we either follow or lead to make changes to what we believe is wrong. Life is not perfect, because life is a collective choice of billions of people over the history of mankind - and even before that. But this imperfection - the choices we have, the mistakes we make, and the purpose we give - is the beauty of life.

The important question, however, is why. Why are we alive? What is the purpose of life? Some believe that God's given them goals to accomplish. Some might want to live to

explore new things. Some might want to make the world a better place. Though those purposes vary for different individuals, it is something that gives life meaning. Life without a purpose is like rolling a die blindfolded without knowing the result or even what to expect. Living with a purpose, in contrast, is like running a marathon with a spotlight shining right at our faces. We are blinded by the lights - the future; our shadow covers what's behind us - the past; and we only see what is immediately around us - the present. Some are left behind in the shadow of our memories; in fact, we might be the one that's left behind. Sometimes we might fall; a lot of time we might just want to give up. However, we have that guiding light, a sense of purpose for us to follow and enjoy the journey as long as the light still shines on us on the stage of life. By that, we then realize that we are living in the moment, and just by living, we are able to create our own future.

What all life has in common is that it comes to an end. Time is scarce, and its scarcity is what makes it so precious. Life would not have meaning if it transcends time. We would be lost without a destination to look forward to. We would be wandering amidst the dark without the light. Because we live, we see the value of life. Because we live, we have the choice to make things right. Because we live, we must die. And though we die, we will live in the future choices of those who will follow. We live in the choices we make.