

2021 International Essay Contest for Young People

[Youth Category – Honorable Mention]

## **What is Life?**

(Original)

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Growing up, I realize that there are lots of things we never understand, no matter how many years we put on or how much experience we accumulate. One of those things is “Life”.

I was struck by the ambiguity of my own life, and the Life itself. Such ambiguity left nothing on me but the fathomless void following me around like an inescapable shadow. The shadow that was trapped in a cage. The cage in the form of my own world. The cage of my ambiguity and my curiosity. For seventeen years living in this material world, I have never known the exact meaning of my own life, or the Life in general. Life is everything, and at the same time, it is nothing. Here in this material world, I am alive. Or at least there is a part of me in existence that is living this so-called “Life”, and that is what gives me this intensely real feeling of being alive. Reality and I exist simultaneously. At this present moment, I am still and probably will be pursuing the answer to the question about the meaning of life.

I do believe that I am certainly not the only existence in this world that was troubled by this vagueness of Life. Just like everyone living and existing on this planet Earth, I am a part of a society. I am one of the “People”. People. People walk on the streets, go shopping, make breakfast, go to work and back to the streets to get home. And they think – that is if they do think – that this cycle of actions is the meaning of their lives. Sometimes I am just like them. They are a group of existences defined by the most ambiguous term “People”, and I am just an anonymous being in this group. But there was other times when I found myself being swallowed by my own void, the void that I once ignored by considering the meaningless cycle of actions as the meaning of my life and my existence. Conquering my void is overcoming my existential crisis. I face existential crisis when I am at school, when I do homework, when I have a shower, or when I am on the verge of sleep. In other words,

it happens randomly, without advance notice. Perhaps it is the human nature to find the meaning and purpose to their lives until they fade into nothingness. However, the more I think about it, the more abstruse it seems. That is just how it is, and there is nothing I can do about it. Instead I accept and enjoy it. I accept that void as a part of me, a shadow that is inseparable. I accept the vagueness and ambiguity and absurdity of life. I take the existential crisis as an opportunity to think, to get away from the mediocre cycle of life, and to get the utmost feeling of being alive. To be alive is to continue finding meaning. Maybe that is the answer to the question that I was obsessed about. Maybe the meaning of my life is the pursuit of meaning itself.

Beside the question "What does life mean?", we human beings have to find answer to another question: "How to live life to the fullest?". How can we cherish and invigorate such a thing that we are unclear of – a thing that we do not know and may never know the real meaning. Considering that the act of pursuing meaning is what makes our lives meaningful, then my own method of cherishing life and living it without regret is to "live the moment". "Living in the moment", they say, enjoying the feeling of being alive, enjoying what is happening now and living for today. Live your own present, find your own meaning, and fight your own battle. And that is how I, with a seemingly unfillable void, can cherish life in the pursuit of meaning.