

2021 International Essay Contest for Young People

[Youth Category – Honorable Mention]

The Ocean

(Original)

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Some things in life seem pretty intricate to describe in mere words. The loving touch of one's parents, the draught gently hitting one's face as they witness a glorious dawn. Yet, we often miss the bigger picture. These things do not just capture the quintessence of the beauty in life; they exemplify the beauty of life. I often view life as a vast, ethereal ocean: an ocean that has depths far more profound than what any of us are capable of understanding in its entirety. However, it gives us glimpses of its beauty and terror, which eventually harmonize in an ever-enigmatic yet alluring unity.

As Socrates had so eloquently put it, "The unexamined life is not worth living." In our daily tedium of moving on with our careers, fussing over exams, and binging on Netflix, it is but a natural phenomenon that we do not try to delve deeper into the fundamental nature of our existence. But we all do reach a point where we seek to understand what gives purpose and value to our lives truly. For me, life means an incessant pursuit of truth. Truth, in my opinion, forms the very essence of goodness. Knowledge, beauty, love are all much more valuable when they are coming from a heartfelt and genuine source. The story of each individual and human civilization as a whole seems to be an eternal quest towards seeking the fundamental values which can give meaning to our existence. However, the reason why I emphasized pursuing the truth is that I believe that truth and meaning are intertwined with the dynamic evolution of humanity. The purpose of life isn't some abstract entity floating in some distant realm. It is our shared experiences as unique individuals that determine our ultimate value—the journey we all embark on towards discovering ideas and sources of beauty that aid in creating a more humane society for all sentient creatures. This pursuit of goodness is a necessary truth with regards to contributing to our happiness, and the better ways we can find to find these fragments of goodness, the closer we shall get to reaching our truth.

The single most significant moment of my life which forced me to confront the prospect of facing an existential crisis was an apparent epiphany I had about life having no real purpose. Like many teenagers, this sudden thought one bright Sunday morning left me feeling confused and petrified. It was then that I began my quest towards finding the effulgent light of meaning. The realization eventually hit me that there was no absolute "logical" formula to discover the value of life. Instead, it began clear to me that the perspective we had towards life was a vital factor in gaining a better insight on the nature of our existence. The opulence of material comforts is never enough to give us absolute joy. It is the depth of our relationship with our community and living in harmony with nature that can be a more potent source of positivity.

At its most kernel level, life remains mystifying. We are both its objects and subjects. There is a lot that we have learned that has enabled us to develop new technologies and further the cause of societal progress. However, our tunnel-visioned approach of materialism and consumerism as being the engines of growth has resulted in the dilution of many core values. Human relations with each other and other non-human animals have been dramatically harmed as we continue to immerse ourselves deeper into the evanescent relationships of social media and the internet. The "age of information" is turning into an age of misinformation at an alarming pace, as various nefarious social forces attempt to manipulate the masses to support their agendas. In such times, we must hearken back to our inherent unity as fellow humans and the vigour of contentment. As beings fortunate enough to cherish life, it is our moral imperative to not give into divisive propaganda and help those in need. We are not merely individual lakes in chaos. We are a part of an eternal and immeasurable ocean in this vast cosmos.