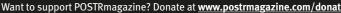


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For our readers who don't live in Belgium you can find the 2015 In Rev people found so offensive they had to go on twitter to express their well meant anger l http://2015.der Star Wars: The Force Awakens grossed \$ 529 million in its opening weekend worla hat at least made some execs at Disney very ha

NOT SO F.A.Q.

#17

HOW'S LIFE? DOES THE THOUGHT OF HAPPINESS MAKE YOU **UNHAPPY?**

WHAT, DO I SEEM DEPRESSED? HOW MUCH FOR YOUR **HAPPINESS?** HAVE YOU DONE YOUR **USTRASANA TODAY?** DID WE BURST YOUR BUBBLE? HOW MANY DEPRESSED **PEOPLE DOES IT TAKE TO SCREW IN A LIGHT BULB?** WHO'S YOUR PERSONAL **MENTAL COACH?** IS THAT A WARM GUN IN YOUR **POCKET?** DO YOU REALLY WANT TO LIVE FOREVER WHENEVER? HOW ARE YOU MAKING THE WORLD BETTER? HOW MUCH RENT DO YOU PAY FOR A ROOM WITHOUT A ROOF? ARE YOU HAPPY NOW?

EDITORIAL ARE YOU HAPPY NOW?

Vell, are you? After this eye-wateringly orutal year of 2015, can you sincerely ay that you feel happy? If you do, then e envy your apparent blissful state psychotic delusion in the midst rampant xenophobia, all-round adicalizing (of either religious or therwise insane nature) and the now outine back-and-forth rhetoric of rone strikes and suicide attacks, nass shootings and fear-mongering. aise your hand if you feel happy, just o we know who you are, you comsively ignorant egomaniacal luna ic. Frankly, your proclaimed happiess makes us question not just vour sanity but your innate sense of moral

f you want to keep your alleged hapess intact, you'll probably want to stop reading this magazine right here This isn't for you. You should go Google that video of the big dog adopting the kitten. Get a Playstation and escape nto the online realm and mingle with the other mentally 12-year-olds. Or i hat its below you, grow into a funconal member of society, subme rself head-first into what er path you hap<mark>pened to lan</mark> d ignore everything else that t directly touch on the fringes o

precious, insulated bubble of life

ever particular brand of escapis os vou smiling. The secret to chord ing over the existential abyss <mark>: you n</mark>ever lo<mark>ok down.</mark> emergence of h opiness is evi nce of the brutality of nature. Th that evolution had to come duced biocher an internally p ocktail (one part dopamine, ty serotonin, d one part pixie dus ep you feeling good somehow im that the reality which catalyzed

particular evolutionary trait migh have been s<mark>uch a happy and laid</mark> back place to be<mark>gin with. After all, who</mark> eeds anti-depressants when everyhing is going h<mark>unky-dory? The purs</mark> happiness is the engine behind hu nan achievem<mark>ents and an import</mark> chanism in the survival of the species<mark>; yet at the same tim</mark>e it is nature's ad<mark>mission of its own vis</mark>cer ll patterns. T<mark>he sort of happiness</mark> that from concept like justice umans gain and love does not just reward the individual, it facilitates life for the entire roup and such, it is an important catlyst for an<mark>y kind of positive progress</mark> e're trying to make. But keep in mind t your individual happiness is not pensable to the species at large – Now, we are not known for debating along regular lines and we won't start We are not here to debate the ro's and con's of the idea of happiof its pursuit. We are here find out the very nature of the conept itself: what is its importance on evolutionary scale? And - barring ntric arrogance that connity in its current form to e evolution's end-product, tuned to perfection - how does that an behavior to this verv usly we won't be trying t exactly what makes you ince you are a human indihappy, vidual <mark>and as such might be s</mark>ome kind c; an anomalous aberration of atur<mark>e, a statistical freak b</mark>orn in the ionary margin for error. After are professionals in search of evolu all, v the truth, not sensation-hungry shock sts who will point their mind's eye at whatever is repellent in human nature and document it for the enter-<mark>ent of those who</mark> are equally ively stunted. We are here to recurring pattern that i e<mark>vident in all the wa</mark>lking, talking, t that this end (on ng and lying permutations of the <mark>) was on</mark>ly to be attained the underlying ot making it the direct end. Those y are happy (I thought) who have ir minds fixed on some object ula to the myriad of human dys <mark>it</mark>y arguably h ot of merits when it comes to d er than their own happiness[. oment of self but when trying g thus at something else, the <mark>tand others, it</mark> is probably w ness along the wav[....] A focus on what brings us toget <mark>1et</mark>her you are happy, and ead of what sets up apart. Tha cease to be so. ing you are still even trying n Stuart Mill, the utilitarian and anyone or anything exc f, you self-cent

THE REAL

Piémanson trailer trash.

at any time on this pitiless planet.

be a difficult trip, I thought to mysel

There's your moment of happiness,

nd it's gone again. This was going to

le peacefully cruising the Autoroute

Soleil and already consideri

elf somewhat a refugee. Althou

useful for connecting the gray and

dull parts of Europe with the beauty

of the south, the Motorway of the Sun

really is the main getaway for millions

of Western European refugees, trying to escape the dullness of life for a few

weeks. Just to catch a glimpse of all the

beauty in between and eventually to

repose at the long sandy beaches

THE HAPPINESS BUBBLE

dependent on the individual's outlook

and a final 10% being determined by external conditions. You can make of

IGNORANCE IS FRAGILE

THE HAPPINESS INDUSTRY

The pursuit of happiness is a big and that what you want. The US Surgeon ucrative business. Anti-depressants, General claims that "happiness is a illegal drugs, self-help workshops, perspective that everyone can create" spiritual guru's, everybody and their which is just as easily said as saving grandmother are either selling or buythat everyone can work out and get ing. Simultaneously, psychologists healthy and fit: it is true at its core but worldwide are still sweating over pieit neglects to address the wide variety charts and double blind placebo tests of humans who are either unwilling or unable to deal with the fact that life trying to figure out what exactly it is that they're supposed to be looking for. is in fact not a movie you can watch Nobody can really seem to nail down from the comfort of your couch; some rrefutably – what the winning formula proactive participation on your behalf for happiness is, which is probably is most likely required. Still though, what grants the concept itself its spirihaving deficient neurotransmitters in tual connotation and elusive aura of your brain can not simply be dealt with existential mystery, like some cosmic by "getting your shit together" and secret that lies waiting for whoever is science has only started scraping the blessed enough to discover it in some surface of the genetic realm in search dusty scroll. Another option - one of answers. Stav tuned for further often explored by various charlatans developments and in the meantime: in courses which range from 12 steps keep your chin up, buddy. to multiple daily sessions depending on exactly how not-happy you are - is So if you're wondering why you're still feeling happy after all the murderous that the basic formula for happiness is simple, it's just you who can't seem to bloodshed and other assorted affronts get it right, which means you are dysto your sense of human decency, then unctional in some way or other. Pos don't worry: you are probably not a sible treatments include anti-deprespsychopath. You might be among the sants (generic or brandname for that lucky few who are just genetically preauthentic happy experience), electrodisposed to be happy, blessed with convulsive therapy, adopting a stray lengthy 5-HTTLPR genes – the kind dog, escaping mindlessly into religion, that transmits serotonin which helps sex and/or drugs or maybe you could you keep that frown upside down. try to get your shit together, you loser. Apparently, only 10% of your overall Isaac Newton wrote calculus at the happiness is determined by outside of 21, what have you done lately that events. Let's take a closer look at exmakes you think the world owes you actly what makes up that 10%: since a hug? Maybe lower that supremely the arrival of the internet, the entire entitled bar of yours and try to make world is basically at your fingertips. a positive contribution instead of sit-News from all over the world makes it ting around crying over the subjecinto your sphere of awareness within tively poor hand that you've been dealt a matter of minutes and demands a in life – think of all the poor people in place in your ever-growing frame of developmental countries who have no reference. Now we've all seen the hands at all. news; the headlines are usually not dominated by news of the happy

Anti-depressants sales in the US, UK, variety, mainly because nature is Germany, Italy, Spain, France and brutal and mankind -being nature's favorite child- excels in the very brulapan themselves were good for an estimated revenue of 11.9 billon dollars tality which has made it the dominant in 2011, up from 10.5 billion in 2004, species. Arguably, the world has gotwith an increase in sales of generic ten a lot smaller and people have a brands. That means that chemically lot more information to deal with than carpet-bombing your brain into happy in the decades before, let alone the oblivious submission has become days before mass media. Keeping in mind that all that information about not only more popular, it's becoming cheaper as well. At the same time, the the outside world only accounts for self-help industry in the US was good 10% of your happiness, it makes sense for a reported income of 9.6 billion that an individual in a modern society dollars in 2014 - to put that into per would look at the bloodbath surroundspective, the estimated sales of Happy ing him and wonder about the sanity of Meals in the US is good for 2.5 billion his own sense of happiness – and even dollars on a yearly basis and you don't about whether or not he should feel exactly think of McDonalds as a niche guilty for feeling happy. Well, worry no rket These are not small and they don't paint a very happy ently nature has hardwired you to give picture: even if all these pills and only 10% of a fuck about the outside 5-five week workshops are actually world making people happy (something that is difficult to prove to say the least), the fact that we need them in the first place is an indicator that life in the so-called developed countries might not be as carefree as we like to think. Global figures are difficult to obtain and it doesn't help that happiness is a primarily Western concept which has a lot less importance in for example Fastern Asian cultures but try explaining that to the 36 million Chinese who suffer from depression – of which only 10% choose to accept treatment for said depressions.

let him drive to school by car at the know much about the brain and the mature age of 13. His father, when meticulousness of its workings but we know enough to realize that the term questioned about this practice by the principal of the school, decided that brain damage is never a sign of anythe best way to fulfill his parental thing good. The hemispheres of your duties and set a positive role model for brains are not like a pair of kidneys: vou need both of them - intact. So it his pubescent son was to threaten to stands to reason that this vital piece buy the entire school and sack aforementioned principal. It should then of hardware, this factual pinnacle of evolution as we know it – which is kept come as no surprise that in 2013, at age 16, young Ethan was arrested after inside the skull, essentially the body's going on an alcohol-fueled rampage safety deposit box - is a finely tuned in Burleson, Texas; he was illegally instrument of Darwinian artillery, not a driving on a restricted license (due to frivolous box of toys and gadgets. This is the organ that brought us to the top an incident on a parking lot involving a naked, passed-out 14-year-old girl of the food-chain, a cunning weapon the year before) with a blood alcohol with which we have enslaved the other content three times the legal limit for species and all the collected plantlife adults (and additional traces of Xanax) and turned them into our food, mediwhen he lost control of the steering cine, clothing. The human brain is the wheel and plowed his father's red pickinstrument with which we managed up truck into a group of bystanders. The crash killed four people and injured 11 more. If that is already enough of a horror story, then the punchline is sure to shock even more; Couch's defense lawyers argued that due to his excessive wealth. Ethan was unable to grasp the consequences of his actions.

to see inside of atoms and outside of our galaxy and before long, it will enable (some of) us to make the entire universe our bitch. It represents the razor-sharp cutting edge of the entire evolutionary process and most likely our entire sense of self-awareness is only a byproduct of its complexity. And, projecting the established evo-The judge agreed and Ethan Couch received 10 years of probation and an lutionary patterns into the future, it is the organ that will allow us to evolve additional treatment in North Texas State Hospital, a state-owned health into whatever is supposed to succeed facility that charges his parents \$ 1,170 humans on the evolutionary chain, an per day. Or at least it did, because in organism that will arguably resemble December 2015 Ethan Couch (now at something like the human concept of a god – who will then effectually have the mature age of 18) and his mother were arrested in Puerto Vallarte. been created in Man's image. Take Mexico after a judge had issued a that, religion. warrant for Ethan's arrest due to him

violating his probation - a cellphone video showing Ethan playing beer happiness is pong had led to the warrant. Howevonly a facilitator er Ethan Couch's life progresses, the option of a happy end seems to be put in place by evaporating and that tragic cherry on top of this entirely cluster-fucked cake nature to ensure might be the only thing that enables that we keep Ethan's lawyers to keep him out of jail. arowing instead

Happiness has been described as the satisfaction of needs, which is a forof stagnating. mula that sounds abstract and fairly nondescript at first glance. However, human needs can be broken down - something which was famously Now serotonin and dopamine are colloquially known as the neural agents done by psychologist and all-round

human-lover Abraham Maslow in which provide us with our sense of his now famous pyramid of needs. happiness and reward, essentially re-He proposed that human happiness functions on different levels, with physiological needs forming the base of the hierarchy and self-actualization (the pinnacle of individual human development according to Maslow) at the top. Maslow stated that in order for an individual to reach the higher stages of

fulfillment the bacic n

be answered first. Later in life, Maslow

inforcing behavior that is positive to not just the single human organism but the species as a whole. They enable us to feel happiness and thereby grow as individuals and as a society; but this is not exclusively the case in humans. Serotonin and dopamine play vital roles across the entire food-chain,

brates to plants and insects, generally

fulfilling the same roles as they do in

humans: reinforcing positive behavior

which is beneficial to the organism. So

human beings - especially in these

statistically peaceful times - are in

fact the first ones to have the luxury of

even grappling with this evolutionary

mind-fuck: our basic sense of hap-

organisms to inverte

'Twas the night before Christmas, and all was quiet. Except on social media and spread fear, others use it to create of course.

HELLO FROM THE

DARK SIDE

In Belgium, the public broadcaster had just released its 2015 year-inreview video, and unsurprisingly everyone was up in arms about it. I mean, how could everyone not have been? With global warming in full effect, a right-wing government raising taxes like Dubai erects high-rises, soldiers showcasing the Riot Gun fall/winter collection in the streets of Brussels, and Justin Bieber reportedly now also being taken seriously by hipsters, who wouldn't be genuinely concerned with

Tower and the Charlie Hebdo shooting,

arguably the first breaking news story

of the year, before heading into othe

terrorist territory, inserting some ob-

bligato refugee footage, a plane crash

here, cops shooting black people there

(i.e. the United States of America), and

pausing for a brief moment with that

time Charlie Sheen crashed an EDM

party while uttering the epic one-liner

'Who fucking died?'

With how some use it to fight wars hypes and fake an urgent sense of togetherness. Of the three billion people who saw the new Star Wars movie on opening day, thirteen percent knew Chewbacca is a wookiee - yes, with double 'e', you iidiot! - not Kirstey Alley having a really bad hair day. The other eighty-seven percent were really just there so they could check in on Swarm, use the hashtag #volo, tweet something with a lot of exclamation marks and snap the first ten seconds of the opening credits. Most of them also posted something on Facebook, but at was mainly to of the fact that they have a very, very The audiovisual masterpiece - if ever there was one - starts with the Eiffel social life

EER AND LOATHING IN THE SOUTH OF FRANCE

A DYSTOPIAN PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

I was in the field again. Somewhere near the French coast more exactly plowing the sunlit desert of self with a lit<mark>tle beach spade. Anxiously plantin</mark> delicate seeds of positive thinkin al<mark>truism and unadu</mark>lterated freedo n the hope of harvesting the sweet st of emotions from the start un <mark>ne very end of this</mark> trip. My search <mark>fo</mark> piness led me to the largest a one of the last wild camping spots o uropean soil. In the course of it <mark>ossed borders </mark>you wouldn't w <mark>o cross today, s</mark>logged my way <mark>c</mark> of overcrowded *aires* along the hi way and wandered around in desola



<mark>le. Th</mark>at's \$2.7 billio

Still though, having deficient neurotransmitters in your brain can not simply be dealt with by "getting your shit together"

THE HEADSHRINK'S MANIFEST

Breakthroughs in the field of genetics have raised even more happinessprovide an adequate buffer to account related questions than we already for spending on personal experience had, once again demonstrating the that enrich the experience of life like credo that the more you know, the traveling, clothing, narcotics, seeing more vou realize vou have been a your favorite band or the occasiona empty barrel echoing with ignorance leather-clad choke & spank session in all your life. Instead of cracking open the safe comfort of a BDSM-dungeon the genome and finding inside four whatever your personal taste. Above flasks containing the human 'humors' that mark, life circumstances and as defined by the Greeks, our scienpersonal outlook became more domitists have stumbled on a code consistnant in determining a person's mood. ing of 23 chromosomes that contain Which means that money can only buy you an estimated \$ 75,000 worth no less than 3 billion base pairs. The of happiness; after that, it's up to fact that nothing in the previous sentence means anything to you should you and as we mentioned before, y ht be some kind of weirdo, fit fo already point out the mind-bendir complexity that goes into hard-wi on to what professionals refe to as the looniebin human beings, that least dominant of dominant species. But even if our me

nd women in white lab coats are vet ome up with the supergene that **DEATH BY AFFLUENZA** s, some questions have been par-So, you spoiled little brat, if a mi ly answered – for the time being, at <mark>lion dollars does n</mark>ot cut it, what more st. Psychologist Sonja Lyubomirsky 💿 do you want? A question which could laims to have determined that about arguably be asked of affluenza-afflicted o% of human of happiness is geneti-ally predetermined, with 40% being ents so rich and cool and carefree they

added the level of self-transcendence as the highest level of self-actualization. achieved by giving oneself to a Now since human minds have a lot of goal greater than the individual, either through altruism or spiritualism. different aspects to them, the human sense of happiness is multi-faceted He further stated that all the needs in its nature; we have inherited our continually play a role in an individunrimal sense of happiness from our al's sense of satisfaction at all times. evolutionary ancestors, which means that all of us (*not all of us) still feel content when eating, fucking or sleeping. However, on top of the classic mix of survival-related instincts, we have been blessed with the curse of selfawareness, a trait that has exponentially expanded the number of ways in which a human can feel happy (or unhappy). This implies that a human spend it on. being can not achieve total happiness through the satisfaction of survivalrelated needs alone, something that is described in the Easterlin paradox,

AND THE UNIVERSE **CREATED GOD IN 7** named for economist and USC profes-**BILLION YEARS** sor Richard Easterlin whose research **OR: ALWAYS LOOK ON** established that even though high incomes correlate with happiness, in-THE DARWINIAN SIDE OF creased income does not correlate with LIFE increased happiness on a longer term. In fact, a study by the Woodrow Wilson School of Princeton University con-As we established before, there are no ducted by psychologist Angus Deaton spirits or gnomes or little Pixar-animated and Nobel-prize winning economist

stereotypes in your head that determine the state of your feelings. If you were Daniel Kahneman pointed out that an increase in salary only changed to crack open a human skull (pro-tip: people's deeper satisfaction in life don't) then you wouldn't find a merry not their day to day mood - up to an _bunch of Aladdin-styled genies, you income of \$ 75,000 per year. Big surwould uncover around 1130 cubic rise: \$ 75,000 should be enough to entimeters of neurons, glial cells and unhappy people, there will be desperensure not only basic survival but also blood vessels. This is the bloody mess that runs the show in your life and it is evolutionary footnote stands out quite an absolute masterpiece of design and engineering. Now you and me may not happy, or none of us are going to be.

with one need usually dominating the piness is nothing new, but our person's behavior at any given time. self-awareness has made us conscious Maybe somebody with a psycholoof how we feel and it has exploded the gist's degree should have told Ethan number of possible permutations; Couch (or more likely his shit-forlike a fragmentation bomb that scatbrains-parents) that money doesn't tered our once simple, sensory-based buy you happiness if you have abbliss into an infinite number of shards solutely no constructive (let alone of happiness, there for us to piece altruistic or spiritual) idea what to together into an image of a healthy, happy human being. And even then that happiness is only a facilitator put in place by nature to ensure that we keep growing instead of stagnating which also explains why there is no limit on the number of permutations of self-actualization. So why didn't nature just program all of us to be happy, all of the time? Why are we burdened with these feelings of

ate men doing dangerous things." The

obviously: either we're all going to be

ip with Robert Crumb led to the creation of the self-publi

of Pekar's native Cleveland. The first issue of American Splen

let's just say Harvey Pekar wasn't famous for being a 'happy gu

ok series American Splendor. The comic documents daily life

Wait! What? Unless we were all faking it, we were pretty fucking happy in 2015, and also pretty vocal and

unapologetic melancholia, as people in more romantic times called depression, anxiety about it. and whatever else unpleasantries of the mind. We asked the ephem eral ghost of Charles Darwin, who replied that "the human potential for Well, yeah. Duh! 2015 was also the happiness is matched by the human year in which hordes danced to crap potential for unhappiness, which in beats, bought tickets to see the new itself implies that as long as there are

Star Wars movie seven months in advance (only to discover all good seats on opening night were already sold to bigger nerds, who got them eight months in advance) and decided Adele deserved to break album sales records, five years after the last sixteen-year-old was able to correctly make out a CD. You really feel ISIS and that public broadcaster, who obviously also picked Adele's Hello to underscore the year's most brutal images, went a little overboard in 2015?

Hello from the dark side. You must have called names a thousand times. To tell him to tell you he's sorry fo everything that he's done. But when he called you never seem to be home (probably because you're watching that new Star Wars movie for the seventh time in IMAX 3D).

I mean, look, we all came together last year to mourn the victims of certain terrorist attacks. Yes, we were picky about those attacks - we don't go shopping in Yemen that often, so that's understandable - and we didn't always agree on the right way to mourn. Should you have allowed Facebook to French flag your profile picture? It was one of those tough philosophical questions you just had to address, because there was someone firing off IMPORTANT newspaper editorials at you if you did, and MORE IMPORTANT blog posts if you didn't. Either way, you were screwed - BIG TIME. But we also came together last year

to listen, watch and rave in unprecedented ways. That too was 2015. With all of its shocking news footage, rather poor taste in music and subver sive coitus interruptus – sleeping with a number of porn stars, indisputably made Charlie Sheen appreciate the Latin language – the public broadcaster's year-in-review video was the abso lutely perfect summation of everything that happened in the twelve months prior, and people's reaction to it made it even more spot on. If it had been broadcasted on CNN, MoMA would have already added it to its permanent

That's what people did before social media came along, back when there were no easy and quick answers for big problems: think.

Mind you, not that there is anything wrong with that. We live on social media. We (news) feed off it. And for every time The Independent headlines 'It's Official: Staying Off Facebook Makes You Happier', Time finds proof that 'Being On Facebook Can Actually Make Us Happier'. Since both are bas ing their articles on research conducted by universities in desperate need of funding or a simple raison d'être, it's highly likely neither claim is true. Although there probably is something to be said for 'Staying Off Instagram Makes You Less Hungry', 'Being on Snapchat Can Actually Make You Realize How Boring Life Is Without Emoticons' and 'Without Any Social Media Account Whatsoever This Article Would Have Already Been Finished Four Hours Ago'. True, I would have had substantially less to write about, but I might have actually put more thought into it Because that's what people did before social media came along, back when there were no easy and quick answers for big problems: think. No time for that now though.

To be clear: I'm not saying it's a bad thing to speak your mind – online and offline. Saying that would either make me a hypocrite or a very bad person. Think [Dart Vader x Darth Sidious]² + the guy who played Anakin Skywalker in Episode II and III. Yes, that bad. What I am saying is that it might not be a bad idea to not always do it immediately. Like you've only got three more hours to live and, apart from saying goodbye to your loved ones and buying a \$1,429 bottle of champagne with your credit card, you desperately still need to comment on that year-in review video. "Are you kidding me?! Did you even bother to listen to

what Adele sings about? Don't you think it's a tad inappropriate to have Charlie Sheen say 'Who fucking died after watching a billion people die?" Let's face it: if you actually spent as much time thinking about that last sentence as writing it, your brain may have stumbled upon a little thing called 'irony'. Was it in good taste? Not really, but neither is a black fly in

your Chardonnay, and you didn't write Alanis Morissette an angry letter in the '90s, now did you? Social media has made us come together in ways that were unimag nable less than ten years ago, but in

order to find some balance, we may need to look for some distance again and get off each other's back for a year. If we keep - Instant! Instant Instant! - reacting to every little post, tweet, snap, pic and vid like our online reputation depends on it, we will have learned nothing from Grand Master Yoda - "if once you start down the dark path, forever will it dominate

arable. Enjoy it for a minute, but d nd that danger is lurking beh v corner, ready to take your hap vay. Next time you want to avoid ng hours and hours in a traffic highway that sells no beers, ng away painfully slow from excks while fire helicopters <mark>ig over y</mark>our head, you might want own liquor and bag lunc <mark>night rel</mark>ease yourself from stre



ing salt pans. Only to disco in awe what I could only define a (something that came close to) happiness. Welcome to the weird village o Piémanson beach, isolated behind a mystifying industrial zone with lakes as pink as the many indwelling fla mingos, where the Rhone is debouch ing in the Mediterranean sea and heavy sandstorms alternate with tiger mosquitos to scourge the people's naked bodies.

Who in the world is going to charge me for being happy, Disneyland?

The mind is a swirling barrel filled with a mix of unpredictable emotions. On day you might wake up feeling like happy camper, the nex<mark>t</mark> you find your self somewhere in a corner, crying like a little baby. It's often unknown what exactly triggers the different moods that are constantly boiling up in the human brain. In this case the mental tate I'm looking for is called happiness, whatever that means. It's the one thing we all long for but we don't quite know how to reach. And once eached, how do we maintain these ighly enjoyable feelings? Countless aspects and parameters are to be considered while empirically researching and analyzing the concept of being happy. So how in the heck would I write a closing field report? If I wanted to find it, I had to make sure all the elements were right. I won't even start about the many approaches and defiitions of happiness. Somewhere in <mark>e huge pile o</mark>f religious, philosophi-

HAPPY Indeed I should be able to do whateve I want to do, with whoever I want to, yet without paying too much, given the magazine's budget. After all, hap piness is an emotional thing so it's supposed to be free. Who in the world is going to charge me for being happy, Disneyland? So whatever was supposed to transpire would have to do so with a minimum of costs. My girlfriend received a tip about a scenic beach in the heart of Camargue Natural Regional park that is allegedly

a gigantic free camping spot, stretchcal, biological and psychological crap, ing out over a distance of more than



<mark>e beach is</mark> swarming with h often wheelless or nct), motorhomes, tents a er seemingly improvised con <mark>ns that</mark> can be used as a h<mark>ome. T</mark>h eral beach village bec<mark>o</mark>

second residence for a diverse bunch of people – approximately 3,000 to 5,000 people are gathered on the <mark>beach -</mark> who have only little <mark>in common</mark> They can't afford to spend their holi-<mark>day an</mark>ywhere else, yet ar<mark>e determine</mark>c to make the most out of it. It sounded to me like a perfect location to settle for a few days. Moreover because the existence of this beach of freedom and its community is threatened, even though it operates almost completely without any form of governmental authority. Every season can be the last one, as the French government is plan

ning to clear the entire area and trans

form it into a polished and profitable

tourist spot. Some locals scheduled

another manifestation on August 8

to protest, so we packed our bags with

ties and took off on a 2-week-journey.

attle outfits and other basic necessi-

ses suc<mark>h as food and b</mark>everso we could stay healthy and . We dec<mark>ided to travel by ca</mark>r, the ate vehic<mark>le of freedom.</mark>

We were ready to blend in with the inhabitants of Piémanson, who are as much a bunch of freaks as they are adorable.

> After all, don't you tend to be the happiest when you're going on a holiday, released from your shitty job and all the daily grind? I'm not much of a happy guy myself, simply because I don't allow myself to be. I'm aware of the fact that anything can go wrong

of the Mediterranean sea, the same ocean that took thousands of lives in the past few years alone, all in their personal search for happiness. Many of the zombies I was traveling with used the only repose they had to brutally trample each other in order to spend too much money on carcinogenic snacks at a gas station. While

simply trying to buy a cold drink, my happiness would already be trans formed into some kind of a temporary state of mind wherein life is some



vo<mark>ur closest relationsh</mark>ips an<mark>d tak</mark>i

emotionally.' Thank you Hai

guys, that pretty much encapsulates it

all, but allow me to take the acid test.

PARANOID IS THE NEW

a<mark>re of yourself physic</mark>ally, f<mark>ina</mark>r

FRATERNITY arrived in Salin de Giraud, the last <mark>age b</mark>efore reaching our final destition. After buying our last groceries we crossed the final 12 kilometers o small road, twisting through a wide, eemingly abandoned industrial zone that consisted of immense salt pans and pink lagoons. The wild flamingos and var<mark>ious other wad</mark>ing birds at close range were a welcome change from the navhem we had experienced on high<mark>way before. Feelings</mark> of stress a nger made way for increased lev oy and excitement as the favela rism was looming in the distan ling down in the French suns history of this remote piece

ch somewhere between the cit Montpellier and Marseilles be the 1970's when locals set up their nps with no rights or deeds. Thing /ed from that premise and noways thousands of campers from all Europe get together as soon as solve blend in with the inhabitants e beach opens in May. looking for a <mark>que form o</mark>f freedom they can't find

d unnecessary evil.

LIBERTY, EQUALITY,

<mark>/here els</mark>e. The population, ranging from young families over hippies As the world turned – which becomes and hobos to alternative youngsters and older people, grows quickly and sets up a temporary village until the beach closes again in October. Some of the visitors might only stay for a few days, many others will make this atypically wide Mediterranean beach their home for an entire summer. The only bar in the wide vicinity is a beach shack which stands crookedly in the center and bears the name Chez Rita. It sells bags of ice, beers, lemonade or n awful bite and has no toilet. Crap! As I turned the car in the direction of the beach it got stuck in the sand after a kilometer or so. But we were here to be happy, not to panic and worry. Besides, the absolute lack of facilities would be compensated by the large freedom we had there. We set up our

tent close to the surf and were ready

Piémanson, who are as much a bu of freaks as they are adorable.

rather visual after laying a few days on a beach staring up into the sky - we got used to the simple lifestyle in and around the many motorhomes, huts and caravans. Always respectful for nature, the people equip and decorate their homes with plastic sheets, pieces of wood and whatever else is constantly drifting ashore. I was amazed to see how so many humans managed to get along so well without any sign of authority. The parties that spontaneously pop up everywhere at night, the seven naked grandpas trying to push a camper back on the track, the fairylike improvised infrastructure erected by persons unknown, the fireworks at night. I can't remember exactly how many times I saw the sunset or a shooting star when my inebriated



HQ that I had probably found happither out and cook everything up on their camping fire, with sand. iess. Was it after a completely naked Italian woman with a "Be Happy" Piémanson is the last free beach of ttoo stepped up to me and offered Europe, and hence, lives under the me a plate of spaghetti? Or when one threat that every year could be the last of the dozens of friendly locals with a one. The local authorities are trying to 4x4 voluntarily towed my car all the restrict access to the beach. Unfortuway back to a more accessible spot nately on the day of the manifestation. the infamous and merciless wind also after being stuck for two days? Or maybe the moment I met Henry, a visibly known as the Mistral popped up. Apart seasoned alcoholic who rambled the from a few hundred peaceful demonbeach all day with a tower of plastic strators - observed by some heavily cups and a bottle of whiskey, offering armed police - nobody seemed willevery single beach-goer in the immeing to fight for the preservation of the diate area a shot. 'It's just a cheap, beach. Most people where busy enforcing their summer camps against normal bottle I got in a supermarket', he'd sav after I asked him what dethe upcoming storm which – as everylicious spirit he was about to put in body seemed to know except for my my system. Then we'd stare over the girlfriend and I – would make the sea level rise rapidly. Eventually it would Mediterranean sea ignoring it's brutal destroy our home and make the last randomness for a few seconds, toast night at Piémanson a living hell. Of the cup and carry on with our hedocourse happiness isn't some place you nist lives for the time being. All these bizarre events sure made Piémanson can travel to at any given time. Hapa mythical place, where people who piness depends on what makes you mind decided to text the magazine's don't have much to share, help each happy and that's all you should know.

collection. It still should vour destiny, consume vou it will" 2015 was, clearly, marked by excess – and you will be denied entrance to the in violence, mourning, entertainment, next Star Wars movie. No, really. Plus: public opinion and, subsequently, you'll also make that other grandyear-in-review videos. Turning that master angry again. "Freeze! Rock!" video into a sobfest would have simply

been a flat-out lie. Unless we were all So in closing, and to summarize what faking it, we were pretty fucking happy can only be regarded as an important in 2015, and also pretty vocal and unwork of philosophy for the digital age: apologetic about it. Yet in the same think, and not only shall you be a lot happier, you will also find much greatyear, in which we put our emotions about just about everything bluntly on er joy and subversive pleasures in display, we also constantly criticized year-in-review videos and other monuothers for not being sensitive enough. mental works of art. As a bonus, you'll A lot of course had to do with social also be less of a nag. media, and its megaphone qualities

rical composition which has been the subject of many interpretations. One of the n ous old master prints, it has sometimes been regarded as forming one of a cons oup of Master Prints with his Knight, Death and the Devil and Saint Jerome in his S