

American Studies

U.S. History

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Right to Pursue Happiness

Currently, in America, we have been living on values set in the past. The founding fathers wanted everyone to have the opportunity to be successful and to pursue their version of happiness. That vision of what makes each person happy is different for everyone. Some people believe that their happiness is dependent on wealth, possessions, education, or success. Regardless of what the individual vision is, each individual should have the opportunity to pursue their happiness. With all the opportunities that are available for Americans, we are not living up to our core value: to pursue happiness.

During the beginning of our country, the pursuit of happiness was all about having peace and living as an independent country. The American Revolution was fought for gaining independence from Britain and establishing peace throughout the colonies. Many colonists felt that the pursuit of happiness should involve equality. Still today Americans feel that equality means that people will be happy. Right now with the Black Lives Matter movement, many people would argue that as a society we are not reaching equality for all. The black lives matter movement started in 2013 and has recently become a focus in our nation for equality. The movement first started demanding a change regarding violence and systematic racism (ABC news). The movement consistently gains momentum as events occur against Black individuals. Hopefully, with the exposure and public support, this movement will make the push for equality

occur faster than before. Equality for everyone has not been achieved, but since the beginning of our nation, it was improved, just at a slow pace. It is not perfect and the work is not done, but we are working on living up to this core value.

Another part of the pursuit of happiness is peace. After the American Revolution America solidified itself as an independent country from every other country and felt that they can be a peaceful country. In America right now we are continuing to focus on this core value. Peace for our country can mean two different things right now: peace within our own country and peace for our country with other countries. Within our country citizens are trying to be peaceful among each other, which has been difficult as a conflict is always occurring in our nation. Our nation is struggling with being respectful of other people's views and many are choosing to take action themselves. Recently, a young man decided to take the law into his own hands and killed two people during a protest. Kyle Rittenhouse is seventeen years old and murdered two people and some are considering him a hero (Mitchell). There are two very different viewpoints on this situation but it should be simple, he killed two people and that is not part of our nation's value of being peaceful. The strength of our country is that America was looked at being unified and having the same goals, but right now our goal for a peaceful country is not occurring.

America is working towards each citizen finding their own happiness. This goal is different for everyone, but with constant focus and dedication, it can occur. Our nation has given people more rights and opportunities over time, but it still not enough. As we continue to focus on making sure each individual follows our nation's core values then happiness will be achievable for everyone.



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