JOURNAL 60

Read the blog post and answer the questions at the end.

[Justina Sharp](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/justina-sharp)\_16-year-old fashion blogger and entertainment blogger

**Happier Than Pharrell's Hat**

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Clap along if you feel like happiness is for you!

When was the last time you spent an hour doing something that made you happy? Not something fun, but something that really and truly made you happy? It used to take me way too long to answer this question, which is why I'm now writing this article.

As teenagers in America, we are regarded as stereotypes. People assume we're constantly having fun with our well-dressed friends and we always have money to go to every concert and besides that little irritation called high school, we're really happy and anything else is just "drama." The problem with that stereotype is that A.) it's wrong and B.) it's a convenient cover for serious issues.

Teenagers today aren't happy, and I think a leading cause of that is that they don't spend enough time doing the things that they love. You can spend hours working, but if it's for things you love, it won't be a pain to drag yourself to do it. I have a friend who is a ballerina. She spends long, grueling hours every day dancing her feet into the ground in an effort to perfect every move. It's painful, hard and she's made lots of sacrifices for it, but it makes her happy. You can see it in her face, in her dancing and even when she's tired. Ballet is her happiness.

Of course, this brings up another issue: the legitimacy of someone's happiness. Which would you take more seriously -- someone who spends hours pouring over a classical dance or someone who spends hours pouring over makeup photos? Exactly. Congratulations, you now understand the struggle faced by kids everywhere. It's really hard to enjoy your passion if other people think it's "silly" or vapid. It causes people to self-edit themselves into someone they aren't. Even I do it, and I hate it.

I'm a fashion and entertainment blogger, and I take great joy in it. I just spent my Sunday live-tweeting the Oscars for four hours. I could spend all day going over dresses, watching red carpet interviews, listening to new bands and watching the latest films. I take my job very seriously, and work very hard at it, but for every one person who sees that, there are three up who laugh and say "How is that a job?" Many aren't even trying to be mean, throwing a, "but you're such a smart girl" my way. In anticipation of those cringeworthy statements, I find myself very infrequently saying "and I'm a fashion blogger."

I choose to omit something I am so proud of, because other people think it doesn't take brains. Which rather speaks to their own brain quality, yeah? I usually replace it with "I'm a 4-H All-Star," another title I am very proud of, but one that comes with more connotations of "intelligence" and hard work. They're the flip sides of my life. Both make me very happy, but because I already know the judgment is coming, I don't share it. I'm not the only one. But now, I'm going to be the one who ends it.

Don't ever apologize for what you love. If it makes you happy, do it. Only photograph birds in pine trees, or learn the exact geographical locations of the eight wonders of the world or become the greatest makeup artist Instagram has ever seen. Learn about all the things you're interested in and try every hobby. Don't edit your happiness, because it may help someone else find their own.

**Follow Justina Sharp on Twitter:** [**www.twitter.com/bentpieceofwire**](http://www.twitter.com/bentpieceofwire)

**Write a 100-150 word paragraph that addresses the following questions and your opinion about today’s reading.**

1. **What do you think about the 16-year-old writer’s views on happiness?**
2. **What do you do that really makes you happy?**
3. **Do you take grief for what you’re happy or passionate about? Does it affect you? How?**
4. **What do you think are the keys to being happy and being successful pursuing your passions?**