
Truly Happy Require Selfishness: The Eveline In Us All

Happiness- the feeling that comes over you when you know life is good and you can't help but smile. It is a sense of well-being, joy, or contentment. When people are successful, or safe, or lucky, they feel happiness. - Vocabulary.com

Selfish- a person, action, or motive lacking consideration for others; concerned chiefly with one own personal profit or pleasure. - Dictionary.com

Everyone in their life has experienced an "Eveline" moment. Eveline had the almost impossible decision to choose between family or family, and in the end, she decided to stay. Eveline was a story that started with her recalling how good her life was. The story gradually describes how her life gets somewhat worst, wherein she loses a brother and her mother, her father begins to show abusive tendencies and her happy days are no longer. Then, Eveline finds love. She meets a sailor who wishes to take her away to Buenos Ayres, to make her his wife and give her nothing but the best he can. Her father does not want this, and she is also his sole provider despite how he treats her. As we come to climax Eveline is at the dock, torn between the life she wants and her loyalty to her father and the family she has left, torn between her happiness and loyalty. How does one make that decision? Should she have been more selfish with her happiness, her life? In this paper, I will analyze the correlation between not only her but everyone's happiness, selfishness and how we should view this conundrum.

Happiness can take many different meanings and definitions for each and every one of us. In Eveline's case it took the form of all she didn't have growing up and what most women at that time wanted. She wanted to be a 'Mrs', she wanted a life of her own. We all want to be able not to worry about finances, to want what we believe makes life better, to experience that feeling of joy and contentment. Was it so wrong for the leading lady to want that also? In actuality is it wrong for anyone to want to be happy? According to the second paragraph of the first article in the Declaration of Independence 'Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness' was given to all humans by their creator, and I would even go as far as saying we were created to be happy. While it may not be a right for all humans to be happy or achieve happiness, no one should be chastised for wanting that feeling. In the story, we see the drastic shift of Eveline's father go from loving towards her to a relationship of abuse and it appeared to be linked to the death of her mother, his wife. One can argue that he lost his happiness and so his personality and health changed. Happiness has been linked with health for some time now, we even have the saying that "laughter is the best medicine". Positive emotions have even been shown to be connected to a longer life, so that leads one to think that if we deny others the chance to be happy are we actually causing harm to their life?

Often in life, like in Eveline's situation, our happiness is linked to those we are connected to and it may not make them happy. Eveline was weighed down by a father who did nothing but treated her badly, her only living brother had gone on to do what he wanted, leaving her to address it all on her own. She thought about family who was living the life that made them happy yet she still chose an unhappy one for herself. Is it in our nature to put self above all else or those we care about above all else? Many decisions in life have not been made because of how others would be affected, how they would feel and the one who loses, in the end, is the

person whose decision it was initially. In all honesty, it itself is a paradox, "I need to be selfish to be happy? But what about my loved ones?". However, if your loved ones really loved you would they not support you wholeheartedly, once the decision was not self-destructive and contributed to your life in a positive manner. I believe this with my entire heart, that we as people sometimes need to choose what's best for us and not what others think is best.

As someone who had to make a choice between loved ones and what I felt was best for my happiness I can identify with the fear Eveline faced and the dilemma of the situation. There were members of my family who were against my coming to the states and studying, it was really a difficult decision but ultimately I felt that it was what I needed for me and it made me happy. Mentally, it is taxing to feel like you are disappointed or negatively affecting your loved ones, however, you are the one who has to live with your decision or lack thereof. Being entirely selfish is never the answer to anything in this life because as stated by John Donne "No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main;" meaning we can do nothing by ourselves. The idea is to take care of oneself, to choose what's best for you, your health and future.

I'm aware that not every story may turn out like mine wherein the end my family decided to support me and that many of us are Eveline. The Eveline in us stops us from choosing happiness, our fathers may make us feel like we do not deserve any better, to tell us that our decision is all a lie. At the end of her story, she let fear and family prevent her step to happiness, however, I hope those that are their docks of their life-changing decision are a little more selfish and choose to sail to Buenos Ayres towards their happiness.

Work Cited:

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