

1. In line 2, why does the author place the words “makes sense” in inverted commas? [1]

Text	Paraphrased
We are constantly reminded of the importance of leading a happy, balanced life — the kind of life that " <b>makes sense</b> " from the viewpoint of the <b>dominant social order</b> .	<p>A: The author thinks it is logical / rational</p> <p>B: only if we see it from the perspective of the majority / narrow perspective of the prevailing societal norms.</p> <p><b>Both parts must be present.</b></p>

2. Suggest why the author uses the word “cult” in line 7. [1]

Text	Paraphrased
The <b>cult</b> of “positive thinking” even assures us that we can bring good things into our lives just by thinking about them.	<p>The author is trying to convey that this thinking relates to the non-mainstream / minority / relatively small group.</p> <p>BOD: certain groups</p> <p>Not accepted: strong following / extreme PoV (need to specify from whose perspective)</p>

3. From Paragraph 2, explain how we are warned against anxiety. **Use your own words as far as possible.** [3]

Text	Paraphrased
<p>The so-called wellness experts deem <b>emotional agitation</b> to be bad for us.</p> <p>Magazine articles offer tips on how to <b>overcome</b> stress.</p> <p>New Age gurus equate <b>enlightenment</b></p>	<p>We are warned against anxiety by...</p> <p>A: Health professionals advise us that distress / nervousness / tension is not good for us</p> <p>B: Magazines provide ways on how to</p>

with <b>serenity</b>	<p>deal with / relieve excessive worrying / anxiety</p> <p>C: Modern spiritual guides / life guides deem the attainment of inner peace as a sign of wisdom</p> <p>[accepted 'peace' for 'inner peace']</p> <p>* MUST have <u>agents</u> (wellness experts / magazine articles / new age gurus) in the answer, do not need to paraphrase</p>
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4. What is the author's purpose in using the three dots [...] in line 16? [1]

Text	Paraphrased
All of this can make us feel so anxious about feeling anxious that when we catch ourselves getting a little stirred up, even in a good way, we end up suppressing our feelings because we fear that our ardour might deliver us straight into the lair of ... anxiety.	<p>To provide/create/produce an anti-climax / suspense</p> <p>To lead to an unexpected outcome / irony</p> <p>To create a pregnant pause</p> <p><b>[Answers that explain context only are not accepted]</b></p>

5. What point is the author making by the use of the illustrations at the end of paragraph 3 (lines 24-25)? [1]

Text	Paraphrased
Your grandmother died this morning? You are giving a major talk in half an hour? <b>Never mind, we want to see you smile!</b>	To illustrate the need to look happy even if one were aggrieved/anxious

6. According to the author, how might 'ardent but untidy love affairs' be bad for the economy (lines 28-29). [2]

Text	Paraphrased
Simply put, grumpy waitresses are bad for the economy. <b>Ditto</b> for people who opt for ardent but untidy love affairs over the more sanitized sexuality of the marital bed.	<p>A; When one is involved in an affair, one might experience anxiety/ unhappiness</p> <p>B: which might affect one's productivity</p> <p>* No need to explain causal effect between A &amp; B</p>

7. According to paragraph 9, what are the results of the 'intrinsically insecure nature of our human existence'? **Use your own words as far as possible.** [3]

Text	Paraphrased
<p>As a society, we have arguably <b>lost the capacity to cope</b> with this insecurity.</p> <p>we <b>do not know how to welcome</b> it into the current of our lives.</p> <p>We keep trying to <b>brush it under the rug</b>.</p>	<p>A: no longer possess the potential to deal with the insecurity</p> <p>B: we are not receptive to the idea of insecurity / inability to deal with the insecurity</p> <p>C: tend to dismiss the problem / pretend that the problem does not exist</p>

8. From paragraph 10, suggest why the author disagrees that the 'unconventional and problematic lives' are 'less poignant'. [2]

Text	Paraphrased
They have often been deeply solitary, have had trouble forming enduring relationships, have been consumed by their projects to the point of obsession, have plunged into the depths of despair,	<p>A: despite/because of their pain/sadness /suffering</p> <p>B: They are still able to produce noteworthy contributions</p>

<p>have doubted and disparaged themselves, and have had to endure the coldness and sharpness of the world's judgment.</p> <p>Many of the people who have made the biggest contributions to our collective history.</p>	<p><b>Both parts must be present.</b></p>
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9. What is this 'something' that the author is referring to in line 79? [1]

Text	Paraphrased
<p>It is also possible that the more we pursue happy, balanced lives, the more bland and boring, <b>the more devoid of character</b>, we become. It may not be a coincidence that many people these days <b>complain about a sluggishness of spirit</b>. These people go through the motions of life and may even accomplish a great deal in terms of professional ambitions or successful relationships. Yet <u>something</u> is missing.</p> <p>There is an underlying futility to their existence that makes them <b>feel fake, unreal, or not fully present in their skins</b>.</p>	<p>A1: (more) character / grit</p> <p>A2: a (more) spirited life / (more) passion / enthusiasim / zest</p> <p>A3: meaning/purpose in their life</p> <p>A4: authenticity of life / genuineness / true self</p> <p><b>Any one of the above.</b></p>

10. Explain the phrase "a mask that may sometimes dazzle but does not ultimately bring fulfilment" (line 81-82). **Use your own words as far as possible.**[2]

Text	Paraphrased
<p>There is an underlying futility to their existence that makes them feel fake, unreal, or not fully present in their skins.</p>	<p>A: (context) We put up a front / persona / version of their lives / seem / appear</p> <p>B1: which may astound / impress others</p>

Much of the time, they sense that <b>the edition of themselves</b> they display to the world is an empty shell, a <b>mask</b> that may sometimes <b>dazzle</b> but <b>does not ultimately bring fulfilment</b> .	/ admired by others  [Don't accept: shine – too literal]  B2: but it does not bring us any true satisfaction / contentment
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11. Using material from paragraphs 6 – 8, summarise the problems that the author raised about being fixated on the ideal of happiness. Write your summary in no more than 120 words, not counting the opening words which are printed below. **Use your own words as far as possible.**

**The problem with being fixated on the ideal of happiness...**

	Lifted	Paraphrase	Key Idea
<b>A</b>	<b>diverts our attention</b> from collective social ills	It <b>distracts</b> us from the numerous social problems	<b>diverts attention</b>
<b>B</b>	we believe that our happiness <b>is a matter of</b> thinking positive thoughts	We believe that an optimistic outlook is <b>all it takes</b> for us to be happy	necessary condition (internal)
<b>C</b>	we <b>become blind</b> to the ways in which some of our unhappiness might be generated by oppressive forces	We <b>cannot perceive</b> the sources of unhappiness brought on by external forces	<b>blind</b> (external)
<b>D</b>	we become <b>callous</b> to the lot of others (main point)	We become <b>desensitised</b> to other people's plight / we <b>cannot empathise</b> with another	<b>callous</b>
<b>E</b>	assuming that if they are not doing well, if they are not perfectly happy, it is not because they are poor, oppressed, or unemployed (elaboration)	When people are unhappy, we <b>do not attribute</b> it to poverty, oppression or unemployment	attribution error
<b>F</b>	but because they are <b>not trying hard enough</b> (assumption)	Rather, we think that they had <b>not put in enough effort</b>	<b>not trying hard enough</b>
<b>G</b>	Human beings <b>may not be designed</b> for happy, balanced lives	It is possible that <b>we are not made</b> for happy, stable lives	<b>not designed for</b>
<b>H</b>	The irony of happiness is that it is precisely when we manage to feel happy that we are also most keenly aware that <b>the feeling might not last</b>	It is ironic that when we do experience happiness, we are also most acutely conscious of its <b>fleeting/ephemeral nature</b>	duration of happiness

<b>I</b>	Insofar as each passing moment of happiness brings us closer to <b>its imminent collapse</b> , happiness is merely a way of <b>anticipating unhappiness</b>	The end of happiness brings unhappiness / When happiness is spent, <b>unhappiness awaits</b> .	happiness is followed by unhappiness
<b>J</b>	it is a <b>deviously roundabout means of producing anxiety</b>	The pursuit of happiness thus <b>brings us misery indirectly</b> .	indirect way of causing anxiety
<b>K</b>	Take the notion that happiness <b>entails</b> a healthy lifestyle	If we think a healthy lifestyle is <b>necessary</b> for happiness,	(context/example?)
<b>L</b>	Our society is hugely enthusiastic about the idea that we can keep illness at bay through a meticulous <b>management</b> of our bodies	we will maintain our health by sticking to a careful routine of <b>self-discipline and self-control</b>	(idea of self-management)

<b>M</b>	The <b>avoidance of risk factors</b> such as smoking, drinking, and sexual promiscuity, along with a balanced diet and regular exercise	by staying away from the detrimental habits	(avoid risk factors)
<b>N</b>	is supposed to guarantee our <b>longevity</b>	since it ensures a that we live to a ripe, old age	<b>longevity</b>
<b>O</b>	The insistence on healthy habits is also a way to <b>moralise</b> illness, to <b>cast judgment</b> on those who fail to adhere to the right regimen.	As a result, we would think that people <b>brought it upon themselves / only have themselves to blame</b> if they have health problems.	<b>moralise/cast judgement</b>

12. In this article, Mari Ruti argues that a life free of anxiety may not be ideal. How applicable do you find her observations to yourself and your society?

<b>Para</b>	<b>Author's point</b>	<b>Explanation of author's point</b>	<b>Application to Singapore's Context</b>
<b>1</b>	We are constantly reminded of the importance of leading a happy, balanced life — the kind of life that "makes sense" from the viewpoint of the dominant social order.	There is a need to look at life and from the perspective of society, especially what the majority view as normal, to determine what makes a good, happy life.	Singapore's edition of a happy, balanced life is mostly defined in a narrow manner, in terms of academic or career success.
<b>2</b>	In this picture, anxiety is somewhat of an embarrassment: a sign of existential failure — a failure to fulfill our life's purpose. Although the rushed pace of contemporary life makes tranquility more and more difficult to come by, we are still repeatedly warned against the pitfalls of anxiety.	Being anxious about life is seen as negative and a failure to live up to the right principles of living. Our lives may have been made difficult but still we are told that anxiety is not acceptable.	Singaporeans face high levels of anxiety since we are living in a fast-paced, competitive and individualistic society. No one is spared from it as children, teenagers and adults all experience high levels of stress in their lives, which may result in high anxiety levels as well. In the Singapore Mental Health Survey conducted in 2010, it was found that about 100,000 Singapore residents aged 18 and above will have anxiety disorders sometime during their lifetime. Such alarming statistics may be explained by the high levels of stress that both the student and adult population face in their daily lives.
<b>3</b>	Societal scripted happiness makes us compliant citizens as we strive to achieve such goals. It sets the supposed ideal life paths.	Ruti argues that there are preconceived notions of societal happiness which we subscribe to and these guide us to specific life paths that	Ruti is justified in arguing that such preconceived notions of societal happiness exist in Singapore. One of which is the need for one to excel academically to excel in competitive Singapore. The importance of paper qualifications to guarantee a career in the future is stressed to the children at a very young age.

	<p>"Nothing makes us more docile than the societal scripted happiness — such as the idea that marriage is the pinnacle of human life — that guide us to specific life paths while making others (those judged devoid of happiness) seem inconceivable."</p>	<p>would bring about happiness. At the same time, they also render alternative life paths as unhappy and thus possibly unthinkable.</p>	
4	<p><b>When people are fixated on the ideal of happiness, they are distracted from the existence/importance of social problems.</b></p> <p>"... our fixation on the ideal of happiness diverts our attention from collective social ills, such as socioeconomic disparities."</p> <p>"When we believe that our happiness is a matter of thinking positive thoughts, we become blind to the ways in which some of our unhappiness might be generated by oppressive forces, such as racism or sexism. Worst of all, we become callous to the lot of others, assuming that if they are not doing well, if they are not perfectly happy, it is not because they are poor, oppressed, or unemployed but because they are not trying hard enough."</p>	<p>Ruti argues that when people are fixated on the ideal of happiness, they are distracted from the existence/importance of social problems.</p> <p>We become insensitive and even cold-hearted to the situations of others, for we feel that if they are not doing well, it is not because of their poor environmental conditions but simply because they did not try hard enough.</p>	<p><b><u>Applicable to Singapore (Get distracted from society's problems)</u></b></p> <p>With the rise of an increasingly competitive society, Singaporeans get caught up in themselves as they pursue their ideal of happiness; a bigger pay check, a bigger house, a more luxurious car and the list goes on.</p>
5	<p><b>Human beings may not be designed for happy, balanced lives and thus when we are happy, the moment will</b></p>		<p>Singaporeans worry a lot and thus are never able to enjoy fleeting moments of happiness. Perhaps, this is due to us being overly anxious living in a competitive society. The buzz in Singapore is hard to resist but sometimes, packed trains, the fast pace of life and crowds can get a little too</p>



	not last, which in turn produces anxiety.		<p>much.</p> <p>The author is adopting a fatalistic point of view when he says we are incapable of enjoying lasting moments of happiness. Human beings have the ability to control their own lives rather than one controlled and designed by a higher being for example. The ability to feel happy and sustaining one's level of happiness is all dependent on one's state of mind and the phase one is in life – difficult or otherwise.</p> <p>Application to Singapore</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It may not be true that Singaporeans do not know how to enjoy moments of happiness. They have worked hard and are beginning to show signs of sitting back and enjoying their fruits of labour.</li> <li>In fact, with the many recreational areas, like parks, set aside for Singaporeans - its tranquillity is the perfect antidote to stressful big city living. Restaurants, shopping malls, resorts with beautiful grounds to explore (eg Sentosa, East Coast, Macritchie Reservoir etc) offer Singaporeans escapes from a stressful living environment. Many would spend the weekends with their families to soak in the relief offered by these places.</li> </ul>
6	Beneath our society's desperate attempts to minimise risk, and to prescribe happiness as an all-purpose antidote to our woes, there resides a wretched impotence in the face of the intrinsically insecure nature of human existence. As a society, we have arguably lost the capacity to cope with this insecurity.	In order to not to take chances and to be happy we have to live with inaction because any action would move us away from our secure world. The author argues that his society is unable to deal with this insecurity.	<p><b><u>Applicable to Singapore</u></b></p> <p>This is very true of Singaporeans too. The single most issue in Singapore is not to take risks with regard to the achievement of happiness. Therefore, few Singaporeans would want to do things differently in life. We all choose the safe paths in life. We do not do the unconventional.</p> <p><b><u>Not applicable to Singapore</u></b></p> <p>Very few Singaporeans feel secure being less educated than their peers or secure being without a job and therefore have possibilities of anxiety. Those who do so are seen as not fitting into this society. These people even eventually migrate out of Singapore.</p>
7	the biggest contributions to our collective history — have lived lives that seem fairly	Yet, there are those who are not fitting into the conventional society who are the contributors to the arts.	<p><b><u>Applicable to Singapore</u></b></p> <p>Singaporeans choose conventional and secure lives. The few unconventional and hence artistic people do stand out.</p> <p><b><u>Not Applicable to Singapore</u></b></p> <p>On the other hand there have been conventionally living artists who have made contributions too like Liu Kang, Ng</p>

	unconventional and problematic.		Eng Teng, Ovidia Yu, Philip Jeyaretnam, Stella Kon and Wong Kim Seng. Having said that, one really will not know what kind of problems with life these people may have.
8	If we had grown up in a different society, we might celebrate other traits—say, absolute dedication to a cause—instead. We are mistaken when we interpret anxiety and other forms of existential disorientation and ‘negative’ feelings as being at odds with a well-lived life. It may well be that they are an essential part of such a life.	The author says that anxiety and other problems in life should be taken as an integral part of life rather than something that must avoided and, if present, perceived as a failure and a life not well lived.	<p><b><u>Applicable to Singapore</u></b></p> <p>We in Singapore too, do not look kindly at life filled with anxiety. It is a sign of life not well lived or a failed existence. This is because, as said before, we in Singapore want everything to be good and problem free, at least on the surface. We do not, in most cases, look upon with kindness of people having an inability to cope with problems. We will walk on by pretending it does exist if we see people showing mental anxiety. We like people to behave with decorum in public. No excessive anxiety ridden abnormal behaviour would be looked upon with sympathy.</p>
9	<p>It is also possible that the more we pursue happy, balanced lives, the more bland and boring, the more devoid of character, we become.</p> <p>There is an underlying futility to their existence that makes them feel fake, unreal, or not fully present in their skins. Much of the time, they sense that the edition of themselves they display to the world is an empty shell, a mask that may sometimes dazzle but</p>	<p>He argues that the normal lives we yearn for and live, lacks excitement. There is a lack of distinction and colour.</p> <p>He also says that this kind of life lacks sincerity to the self and we all put on a face for others but deep down inside we lack a genuine character and in the long run cannot bring real happiness or meaning to life.</p>	<p><b><u>Applicable to Singapore</u></b></p> <p>Singaporeans generally perceive themselves as boring and colourless. This is because we only do what is necessary for survival and are mostly very impersonal towards the others because we don’t want others to see our deficiencies and this is not the Asian or Singaporean way of life. We always put on a front and we don’t want to act out of character. We don’t want to be perceived to be different.</p> <p><b><u>Not applicable to Singapore</u></b></p> <p>On the other hand we have our own quaint way of doing things and have our sense of humour too. There is a distinct Singaporean way that is taking root. Unlike the western societies, we may not be too expressive but we do show our emotions and care for the community. We are not looking to ‘dazzle’ but we do celebrate life and the unconventional.</p>

	does not ultimately bring fulfillment.		
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