

The Pursuit of Happiness in “This Emotional Life” on ETV Jan. 4

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Columbia, SC...What if our lives were just like fairy tales? Every day began with “Once upon a time,” and ended with, “Happily every after”? We knew all about delight and nothing about despair? Some would say that this would be a dream come true; however, in the new **PBS** series, “**This Emotional Life**,” Harvard psychologist and best-selling author of *Stumbling on Happiness*, Professor Daniel Gilbert would say that we need the good and the bad in order to achieve happiness in the reality of life.

On the brink of a new year, **ETV** unfolds three, two-hour episodes which examine why people find happiness to be such an elusive goal. Airing on **January 4-6 at 9 p.m.**, each episode weaves together compelling personal stories of ordinary people and the latest in brain science research, along with revealing comments from celebrities such as: **Chevy Chase, Katie Couric, Larry David, Alanis Morissette, and Robert Kennedy, Jr.** All three segments trace relationships and what science reveals about them. Beginning with our very first one, the parent-child relationship, research shows how our connections to others impact our own happiness. Commenting on this finding, Gilbert says, “Science has revealed three important facts about happiness: You can’t be happy alone; you can’t be happy all the time; you can be happier than you are.”

The first episode, “**Family, Friends & Lovers**,” premiering on **January 4**, explains that food, water and shelter are not our only needs as human beings, but we also have an essential need of love and successful relationships. However, it also questions why some relationships flourish while others fail. We meet a young boy adopted from a Russian orphanage, whose story illustrates how a lack of attachment in infancy fundamentally shapes his ability to build relationships for years to come. We also meet a couple in therapy for their troubled marriage and two women grappling with the stress of workplace conflicts. Their stories are told in an attempt to understand the importance of social connections and relationships.

Then on **January 5**, **ETV** will air the second episode, “**Facing Our Fears**,” which looks at emotions commonly regarded as obstacles to happiness such as anger, fear, anxiety and despair. How can these emotions be both our best friends and worst enemies? Across the episode, science also reminds us that we are of two minds—a rational brain that’s relatively new and an emotional brain that’s older than time. Experts then expand on the function of memory as they present answers to questions such as why it is so easy to remember what you were doing at 8:30 a.m. on Sept. 11, but not the same time the day before.

Finally, the last episode explores happiness. “**Rethinking Happiness**,” on **January 6**, asks what happiness is, why it is important and how we can attain more of it. We meet individuals facing major turning points in their lives — a job loss, a cancer diagnosis, the death of a child — as well as those facing more common struggles. Throughout the segment, we peek into a window of resilient individuals such as a Vietnam veteran who survived torture, solitary confinement and seven years as a POW, yet emerged emotionally unscathed.

The film ends by coming full circle to the understanding that it is the quality of our relationships — with friends, family and the larger community — that ultimately defines our happiness.

ETV is South Carolina's statewide network with 11 television stations, eight radio stations and a closed-circuit educational telecommunications system in more than 2000 schools, colleges, businesses, and government agencies.

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