

Happiness is a Choice

Kenya Nunez

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There are many factors in our lives that we cannot control. Nonetheless, it is important to not lose sight of what we are actually in complete control of, which is ourselves. We control how we feel and how we think, and Carlos Santana's quote, "Happiness is not a destination or an experience. "It's a decision" highlights the autonomy we have over ourselves and our emotions.

I had high expectations for my senior year at Banning High School. I expected to be able to walk down the graduation stage with my friends, deliver the salutatorian speech at our graduation ceremony, and be able to give everyone who had been part of my high school years a proper farewell. However, the COVID-19 pandemic canceled all of these opportunities for me and most other students around the world. Receiving the news that I would not be going back to school for the remainder of the school year was devastating. Nonetheless, this unexpected news presented me with a choice: I could either spend my time in quarantine feeling sorry for myself or fill it with happiness.

Every day, I make the conscious decision to be happy. I choose to be happy, because I get to spend time with my family, have lots of free time to read and be creative, and because feeling happy makes me feel I am living as my best self.

We cannot always control what occurs around us, but we can control how we approach, view, and react. I have learned I have the ability to decide what I focus my energy on and how I feel. I have the choice to focus on the good or the bad and to look

at the downsides or the upsides. I agree with Carlos Santana that every day will present me with the opportunity to focus on the good and to choose happiness.