

Too Much to Ask

Abstract

Is that really asking too much? An inquiry into what, really, is too much to ask for, from God or any of the other Powers that Be, including but not limited to the government, significant others, the United States Postal Service (who continue to leave my packages at the house down the street, damn them), strangers, etc.. In approaching the question, the author will make use of any and all resources available to him in conducting his research, including personal experience, connections, and copious amounts of whiskey. We hope, ultimately, to figure out whether anything is actually worth bothering about.

Introduction

Wherein we approach, obliquely, the issue of what happiness is and what, exactly, we should expect to get out of our nasty/brutish/short stint on this godforsaken spinning marble in space;

Figure 1: Excerpt from Call Transcript of Telephone Conversation between Subject 1 and Subject 2.

4 February, 2020, approx. 12:45am

Subject 1 [aka “Sarah”; aka girlfriend]: I just want to be together in the same place and move in together and be able to do stuff that most couples take for granted. Like, I just want a normal relationship and a cute wedding and a future together. I just want to be happy. Is that too much to ask?

Subject 2 [aka yours truly; aka the author]: [sharp exhalation, potentially construed as a “scoff” or “flippant snort”]

Subject 1: What?

Subject 2: Apparently.

Subject 1: Apparently what?

Subject 2: (suppresses beer burp) Apparently it is too much to ask.

Subject 1: (becoming angry) Why would you say that?

Subject 2: I mean, empirically speaking, do you know anyone who’s happy? Anyone who actually gets all the stuff they want?

Subject 1: What does that have to do with us?

Subject 2: Nothing. I mean, I’m just saying. It was a joke.

Subject 1: Are you saying you don’t want to move in together and have a future together?

Subject 2: Wait, what? No! I’m just saying that people don’t get what they want.

[end excerpt]

additionally, whether it is unreasonable and/or entitled to expect the deliverance of these sources of happiness, and which (if any) higher authority and/or power they come from, and whether it is tacky to direct supplications and/or protestations to said higher power; finally, whether it is appropriate to respond to the aforementioned primary question (ie, *“Is that really asking too much?”*) posed by one’s long-distance girlfriend with a sharp exhalation of air through the nose (ie, the so-called “flippant snort”) and a single four-syllable word (“apparently”) (see Figure 1).

We have high hopes that this study might lead to a larger volume of related research.¹

Materials/Methods

The protocol of this investigation included extensive casual observations of several subjects known personally to the author, whose situations are henceforth to be referred to as Case 1 (aka the author’s parents, John and Christy), Case 2 (aka Gordon, the author’s best friend), Case 3 (aka Abdullah and July, the nice couple across the street), and Case 4 (aka Mr. Cheng², the owner of the convenience store on the corner of Market Street).

A cursory examination of **Case 1** leads the author to question the validity of monogamy as a lifestyle and ponder the potential benefits of a state-enforced selective reproduction program. The author is unsure that his parents have exchanged more than a dozen words in the last five years, and knows for a fact that they sleep in separate bedrooms. Presumably, this regrettable conjugal coldness is the unfortunate but arguably inevitable outcome of two people once believing that marital happiness was “not too much to ask.”

¹ In particular, we are highly interested in addressing the question of whether couples who face these sorts of deep metaphysical existential crises continue to talk and maintain their relationship after one member of the relationship has applied the epithet “insensitive nihilist asshole” to the other and hung up the phone.

² Not sure if subject’s real name – It could also be “Chen” or “Chung.” This author has long felt too ashamed and embarrassed to confirm.

The author also has the privilege of being closely acquainted with the subject of **Case 2**, whose lying skank of a girlfriend (YES YOU, TINA) cheated on him repeatedly with the drummer of a local band named Goats of Paradise. It should be noted that the couple had been together for five years in what had been a (seemingly) idyllic relationship, and that Gordon had already begun to shop for a ring for the aforementioned lying skank when he found out about that she had been beating the drummer's bass (if you know what I mean) for over a year. Gordon, too, is an example of a generally awesome dude who thought that a faithful girlfriend was "not too much to ask." (TINA, YOU CRAYON-CHEWING BUTTWAFFLE, IF YOU'RE READING THIS, I HOPE YOU ROT IN HELL.)

The author recognizes that the context of this inquiry so far has largely centered around examples that are romantic in nature, and would like to present a departure from this trend with the introduction of **Case 3**, a young married couple who occupy the house catty-corner (caddy-corner?) from his own. They are, in general, splendid upstanding citizens with the sweetest and fluffiest Great Pyrenees (named Bart) that this author has ever had the pleasure of playing tug with. Recently, Bart escaped from his yard by means of a faulty latch and was hit by a car two blocks away from his house while wandering the neighborhood. The car did not stop, and Bart was found dead by his owners later that day, having managed to drag himself a full half block before dying of his injuries. I present to you, then, two blameless people who thought it "wasn't too much to ask" for some asshole to have the common decency to not pull a hit-and-run on their beloved dog.

The author's final piece of evidence, **Case 4**, involves a Mr. Cheng, the solicitous and generous proprietor of the corner store on Market Street who, in the past, has been wont to wink and slip this author a free pack of gum or candy bar on his not infrequent beer runs, and has always asked

this author how his brother is doing³ and offered to set this author up with one of his five daughters⁴. Recently, while conducting his weekly Friday supply run, this author was surprised and distraught to see a young woman⁵ behind the counter of the Quickie-Mart. On inquiring as to the whereabouts of Mr. Cheng, this author received word that Mr. Cheng recently went to the hospital after experiencing blurry vision and nearly fainting while at work and was there informed that he has an inoperable, terminal brain tumor and given mere months to live. Due to his rapidly deteriorating condition, Mr. Cheng has been obliged to turn the management of the store over to his family, who are scrambling to pay his medical bills while still supporting relatives back in Mr. Cheng's native homeland, China. This author never got to say goodbye.

Results

Thus, based on the examples provided above in the form of Cases 1-4 and a cursory survey of literally any news outlet, this author has concluded that humans are, as it were, seemingly unentitled to any sort of basic decency or consideration on the part of the Universe. Moreover, this author strongly suspects that if anything, the Universe seems to be going out of its way to punish perfectly undeserving people with shitty things in a way that makes no sense, nor seems to hint at any sort of cosmic justice or underlying reason. In fact, this author is beginning to suspect that the Universe is something of a vindictive bitch who takes perverse, savage pleasure in the pain of her constituents.

Discussion

³ Persons who are acquainted with this author might point out that he does not, in fact, have a brother. However, the author considers this particular piece of information to be beside the point, the point being that Mr. Cheng is a gregarious, pure soul who has done nothing that this author is aware of to deserve misfortune.

⁴ It should be noted that the author has always politely declined this proposition.

⁵ Possibly one of the aforementioned daughters?

This author feels there is nothing more to discuss about the findings detailed in this inquiry, and plans to retreat to his room with a bottle of whiskey to brood and ponder his newfound sense of existential dread while he waits for his girlfriend to call him back. Being peacefully left the fuck alone while he gets spectacularly drunk is, he feels, not too much to ask.