

## *This iBelieve Essays*

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### **The Pursuit of Happiness**

**by William Dickinson**

If there's one thing I've learned about life, it is to not rely on anyone else to make you happy other than yourself. For most of my life, I've been let down because I relied on the wrong people—people that are inconsistent and fail to make me happy regularly. I've had this mindset since I was a kid, and I have always believed that the people who surrounded me should have an impact on how happy I am.

Before her divorce with my father, my mother was there for me for as long as I could remember. We would go to the South Street Seaport and go shopping every weekend or so. We'd go to places in Queens with my family and to Brooklyn for various concerts and shows. When she started having an affair, it seemed like she just lost the time to see me. I felt like I wasn't good enough for her, like I should improve and be a better son to her, but I realized I wasn't in the wrong—she was.

My father would become frustrated with my behavior in and out of school, but he knew he couldn't do anything to control me; the reason I was acting this way was because of my mother. My teachers and he would schedule meetings to try and reform my behavior in and out of the classroom, but it never seemed to work. It was at the end of eighth grade when I realized that the class clown wasn't who I wanted to be.

I realized this belief when I started flunking out of school, doing the wrong things on the street, and when I started to change mine and my father's relationship for the worse. When I realized all of these things were affecting the people around me, I reevaluated my behavior and changed myself for the better. This was hard because I was used to my reckless ways on the streets and with my friends, but I quickly changed my behavior and made friends with people that made me a better person.

My relationship with my mother definitely made me change myself, and I had a tough time between sixth and eighth grade. I am now the person I want to be and couldn't ask for more from myself. I'm grateful for this change because if I didn't change I wouldn't have become the confident, outgoing person that I am today. Unfortunately, many people have problems with themselves and have trouble overcoming their insecurities. I'm not saying my mother was the only reason that I changed, but it played a big component in the way I matured and thought about the world.