

Happy Days

Materialism cannot fulfill our lives

GREGG MADSEN is a senior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist

What makes you happy? Is there something missing in your life? According to a commercial, you can find the secrets to a fruitful life on a show on MSNBC. The show, as the commercial claims, details what new items can bring happiness to our lives. If something is missing in your life and you find it by watching this show, I feel sorry for you. The secret to finding happiness in your life does not lay in a Microsoft Corporation-sponsored network program telling you what possessions will make you feel fulfilled. It's a sad commentary in our society that a television network uses such an advertising campaign to appeal to millions of Americans. It implies that many Americans are

missing something in their lives, and that the gigantic gap can be filled with possessions. An interesting thought, to say the least. Wealth and possessions cannot fill our lives. But how many of us believe a new car has the magical power to transform our lives? Let's not forget our career pursuits. Will we be truly satisfied if our hard work in college doesn't give us the six-figure salary? Perhaps the more pertinent question to ask is this: Is it even possible for someone to feel satisfied and fulfilled without things such as a new car or without the things found on MSNBC? American culture would answer a resounding "no" in response to that question. American culture would be wrong. But the materialist feelings in our world are strong. The commercial for MSNBC is just one example of how mainstream voices in our culture

preach that possessions can make our lives whole. Everywhere we look, we are told the qualifications for happiness, and most of them begin and end with owning something newer, bigger and better. Is this truly what we believe? Owning nice things on the cutting edge of technology isn't wrong. But thinking that the ownership of these things will bring our lives meaning and fulfillment is wrong. Yet materialism isn't confined simply to the pursuit of possessions. At its core is a selfish thought pattern that manifests itself in the lust for objects. As it influences our buying habits, materialism can infect all aspects of our lives. Marriages, parent-child relationships and countless other meaningful responsibilities have been neglected because of our materialistic value system. We want, so we pursue. And according to what we are being told

by society, there is nothing wrong with that. There is a saying for those who neglect their families, friends and, ultimately, themselves while pursuing worldly gain throughout the duration of their lives: "You can't take it with you." In other words, what good is it for someone to gain all the possessions of the world, if in reality their life is empty? We weren't put on this earth to gain status. We weren't created with a gigantic hole in our hearts that can only be filled by a Pentium processor, a new Lexus and a six-figure salary. There isn't anything wrong with these things, but they can't bring us the happiness we seek. While materialism isn't a mindset shared by all humanity, we all feel the emptiness it creates sometimes. Materialism tries to fill that void, claiming that our possessions will be around forever. Materialism pays no attention to the fact that, in 80 years,

my car, my house and salary will each be a memory. My tombstone will be the only item left. Therein lies the flaw. Adherents to the materialistic viewpoint believe manufactured goods and wealth can fill our deepest needs. You might be better off trying to cram the new Lexus into a thimble. Materialism cannot, despite the claims of many, fill the emptiness we all sometimes feel. The possessions we gain through our life span won't last, either. Materialism is flawed because it has a worldly focus that fails in the end. There is a gap in our lives. We try to fill it with countless objects, but the plain truth is that a spiritual void cannot be filled with anything of this world. You won't find any Bibles or reference to God on MSNBC or anywhere within the materialistic world view. Nor will you find what you are truly looking for.



KAY PRAUNER is a senior news-editorial major, copy desk co-chief and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

A middle-aged woman complete with pageboy, pert nose and Donna Karan power suit peers disdainfully into her living room. Sally's rugs were nearly as soiled as her younger sister's past. If only Sally realized the wondrous powers of Electrolux. Then Sally's life would be luxuriously complete. Now we have it. And Sally can have it too. Once again, budding technology is taking a stand so that we can feel more comfortable taking a seat. All for the low, low, low, introductory price of \$800 each. On Monday, Gillian Stern, a working mother in London, took a load off and looked on as she witnessed the first robotic vacuum cleaner in action. Created by a Swedish vacuum cleaner company, A. B. Electrolux, the latest invention to break convention will clean the carpets as you cart in the groceries, care for the little 'uns or catnap on the couch. Menial tasks no more. Now Sally can spend her afternoons in unadulterated bliss, nibbling at Mallomars and cooing over Bo Brady's Chewbacca collection of chest hair. No matter how much I would love to use this space to sift through the ways this contraption will concern the women's liberation movement, I find that I cannot. Looking back on the drawing board, I'm beyond positive that this hootenanny of all Hoovers was created not for ladies' lib but for the legions of the lazy. Yup. That's Electrolux's horsepower behind this thingamajig: "Learn how and why you too can overcome the drudgery and disappointment of using a common product for a common chore." Don't we wish everything were that way! Sally's husband suggests that he would like to have intercourse with her this evening. Sally is highly non-plused. Thanks to Electrolux, one flip of the switch and Sally can be free of the more tedious tasks in her life—all in time for back-to-back syndicated episodes of *The Mary Tyler Moore*

To have or have not

Technological upgrades add luxury to laziness

Show. (And we thought electric bread-slicers were all the rage — even though, unfortunately, those are still hands-on devices.) In addition, this vacuum is more or less one of those "Ricochet" remote-control vehicles for adults — but a lot more juvenile and a tad more complex. Apparently it has an acoustic radar system similar to that of a bat and a highly sensitive bumper to locate objects and to prevent it from "scarring the woodwork and chipping the Chippendales" (whatever that means). Furthermore, the design fulfills both the housewife hankering for a small slice of Her Royal Highness ("It looks like one of Queen Elizabeth's hats.") and the mores of those more masculine maids ("The design is based on a small, prehistoric marine creature known as the trilobite.") It's a sweeper for all seasons — and gender nonspecific. But, whoa. Wait. When you thought you'd heard it all — even though I'm sure many of you were sold five paragraphs ago — for those who've already exhausted the personal ads scouring for a mail-order mate, this little devil boasts qualities attributable to the most perfect of all partners. "So sensitive are the vacuum's sensors that it stops to avoid a glass of juice in the middle of the floor, easing delicately around it (and dig this part) as if it were an invalid." This just oozes of forget-me-not: sensitive and inattentive. Beautiful! Sign me up! Wait. There's gotta' be a glitch here somewhere. Let's see ... I'm already lazy. You're already lazy. We all scream for some machine to serve us ice cream ... because we're all already lazy. You don't agree? All right, already. Two words: Liz and Taylor. Two more words: remote and control. There's the Electrolux's biggest glitch. Where's the gaddam remote? That's why I'm waiting a couple years until they upgrade that sucker. Because, unless we can fully

entrench ourselves in our throw pillows, why bother? Until then, I think I'll invest my \$800 in hiring a cabana boy instead.

