

# Can Fame and Fortune Make You Happy?

Being a celebrity seems like a dream come true. So why are many young stars so miserable? **BY MACKENZIE CARRO**

**I**s Jennifer Lawrence happy? She certainly *looks* happy, gliding down the red carpet, surrounded by eager photographers and starstruck fans. And why wouldn't she be? She spends her days doing what she loves. She earns more money from one movie than most people make in a lifetime. Plus, she gets amazing perks, like free clothes from top designers, front-row seats at **prestigious** award shows, and trips around the world.



But wait. If being a celebrity is so great, why are so many of them, well, kind of messed up? Take Justin Bieber. By age 16, he was cranking out chart-topping hits and earning millions of dollars on sold-out concert tours. Lately, however, it seems like the 22-year-old has been spending most of his time apologizing for his bad behavior. He's been arrested for drunk driving and charged with vandalism, and he has bailed on multiple shows. Or look at Shia LaBeouf. Once a star of hit movies like *Transformers*, LaBeouf is now known mostly for bizarre public meltdowns and struggles with drugs and alcohol.

**Celebrity Lifestyle**  
Turns out, the happiness that comes from fame is **fleeting**. "It's the kind of happiness you get when you buy a new purse," explains Donna Rockwell, a psychologist who **specializes** in celebrity mental health. "That kind of happiness fades within no time."  
So what *does* bring lasting happiness? According to a study at

the University of Rochester in New York, true happiness **derives** from having close relationships, time to focus on personal growth, and connections to your community. The celebrity lifestyle can make those things extremely difficult.  
Celebrities *do* have friends, though, right?  
Of course. But according to Rockwell, it can be difficult for

a celebrity to trust others and to make and keep true friends. Stars have to wonder if their "friends" like them for who they are or for what they have.

**A Lot of Stress**  
To outsiders, constant attention might seem glamorous. In reality, though, it brings an enormous amount of stress.

Beyoncé has said that though she likes attention when she's onstage, she'd be happier if she could "cut it off" when she isn't performing and just enjoy her life. In an interview with *Vanity Fair*, Lawrence said that simply stepping outside her front door gives her anxiety. Indeed, famous people can't so much as walk their dogs or tie their shoes without being gawked at, photographed, tweeted about, or Instagrammed.

**Holding Steady**  
Clearly, not all stars crumble under the pressures of fame. Selena Gomez, Ariana Grande, Will Smith, and Justin Timberlake—all of whom became famous as teens—seem to be doing fine. Lawrence is holding steady too, though she has had to deal with a lot of drama. Her phone has been hacked and her looks and eating habits have been criticized in the media.

So perhaps you should consider yourself lucky that your big night out is a slumber party with your best friends and that your biggest fan is your grandma. ●

CAROLYN RIDSDALE

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## What Do You Think?

**Can fame and fortune make you happy?**

Go back to the article and find arguments that support each side of the debate. Write them on the lines below.



**YES**  
Bring on the cameras.

1 Being a star comes with amazing perks.  
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**NO**  
It makes people nuts.

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**EXAMINE POINTS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE DEBATE—AS WELL AS YOUR OWN BELIEFS**—and decide what you think. State your opinion in one sentence below. This can be your thesis statement for an essay on this topic.

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