

## The price of happiness

[listening comprehension questions]

**Author:** Benjamin Wallace

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**Location:** TED TALKS

**Level:** \*\*\*\* [B1/B2]

**Link:** [http://www.ted.com/talks/benjamin wallace on the price of happiness?language=en](http://www.ted.com/talks/benjamin_wallace_on_the_price_of_happiness?language=en)

Check these words before listening:

### Key vocabulary

1. 1787 Bottle of Lafitte (google this)
2. Flamboyant millionaire
3. A wine cellar
4. Thomas Jefferson – founding father of the USA (google him)
5. Scotland Yard
6. A fake
7. Cattle / a steak
8. To be outraged
9. A truffle
10. An aroma / pearlescent flakes
11. A Rolls Royce
12. A nanoparticle
13. To tickle
14. Zimbabwe (country)
15. Shuttle loamed (a process of making material – google it)
16. Olives / olive oil
17. Tuscany (a region in Italy)
18. Molecular analysis / oxidising
19. Platinum (a metal)
20. An enzyme
21. A chaperone
22. An obnoxious person
23. Tom Cruise (famous actor) / Mission Impossible III (a film)
24. Cheval Blanc 1947 (Famous wine)
25. A palate
26. A philistine
27. Stanford and Caltech (California Institute of Technology)
28. MRI brain imaging

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## **The price of happiness**

TED TALK: Benjamin Wallace [Jul 2008. 14:40]

### *Explain what you understand*

1. What's significant about the bottle of 1787 Lafitte?
2. Describe the 12 products that were tested and his outcome?

Number	Product	Product description / price / speaker's reaction
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		

7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		

3. What was the study and who was it done by?

4. What was the overall conclusion of the study?

Critical thinking?? What do you think about this lecture? Do you agree with Benjamin Wallace's analysis and outcomes? What could be the criticism of this type of research? Are we really governed by price and emotional response? What do you think?

## The price of happiness **ANSWERS**

5/12/1985, a bottle of 1787 Lafitte £105,000 -- world record. The buyer - Kip Forbes

Longest-running mystery in the modern wine world.

Hardy Rodenstock 1985, discovery. Workmen in Paris found a hidden cache of wines -- the property of Thomas Jefferson. 1787, 1784. Bill Koch ( Florida billionaire) bought four of the Jefferson bottles, Hiring ex-FBI and ex-Scotland Yard agents = Hardy Rodenstock con man, Jefferson bottles were fakes!

### Main research:

Number	Product	Product description / price / speaker's reaction
1	Kobe beef	Eight-ounce rib eye for \$160 dollars / tiny rich like foie gras . <u>disliked</u>
2	White truffles	One of the most expensive luxury foods by weight in the world. Little ugly flakes on my pasta / <u>disappointment</u>
3	Hotel suite	4,300 square feet/ 360-degree views/ four balconies/ architect I.M. Pei. Rolls Royce & driver / wine cellar / \$30,000 for a night in a hotel. (no comment)
4	Soap	Silver nanoparticles -antibacterial properties, tickled a little bit /smells good, nobody compliment.
5	GQ jeans	Handpicked organic Zimbabwean cotton / hand-dipped in natural indigo 24 times. No comment/compliment for months – reasonable bench mark for fashion!
6	Armando Manni olive oil	Tuscany phenolics development / analysis / gauge freshness. Blind taste test with 20 people and five other olive oils. = last.
7	Gold & platinum golf clubs	Minimize loss of club speed and drive ball farther -- \$57,000. Interviewee said pleasurable!
8	Coffee from the Luwak	(Asian cat eats coffee beans and enzymes flavour the bean in the stomach) the bean collected from faeces and processed
9	Japanese Toilet Neorest 600	/ MP3 / fragrance dispenser/ analyzes contents emails doctor/ sit lifts / water jet / blower / no hands no paper
10	Bed	A good deal 1/3 of your life in bed!
11	World's most expensive production car	Amazing. If a billionaire I'd buy. Video problem opening the door - Tom Cruise premiere
12	1947 Cheval Blanc (wine)	The most mythologized wine of the 20th century. Wine from Bordeaux. Most faked wine. Tasting with wine enthusiasts = no very impressed.

**Study:** Interesting study / this year / Stanford and Caltech researchers.

Subjects given the same wine, labelled with different price tags.

A lot of people, liked the more expensive wine more (same wine)

Unexpected MRI brain imaging while the people were drinking the wine,

Key point: brain registered more pleasure from the same wine when it was labelled with a higher price tag!