

Unit 4: Jazz Day – Change of Economic Circumstance			MEL4E
Minds On: 10	<b><u>Learning Goal:</u></b> Students will <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Watch video to discover how economic circumstances can change and how one individual overcame many obstacles to get his career back on track.</li></ul>	<b><u>Materials</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Video, “Pursuit of Happyness” (2006)</li><li>BLM4.J.1</li></ul>	
Action: 120			
Consolidate:10			
Total=140 min			
			<b>Assessment Opportunities</b>
Minds On...	<b><u>Whole Class → Discussion</u></b> Ask students to share any experiences they might have had or that someone they know might have had with change in economic circumstances, e.g., job loss due to plant closures, separation, divorce, etc. Do a pre-read of BLM4.J.1 with students prior to the movie.	<div>Ensure students understand that this movie is based on a real life situation.</div> <div>➡</div>	
Action!	<b><u>Whole Class → Video Presentation</u></b> Students are to fill in worksheets (BLM 4.J.1) as they view this movie. Stop the movie at appropriate locations to allow students to respond to the questions on the worksheet.  <b>Mathematical Process Focus: Reasoning and Reflecting</b>		
Consolidate Debrief	<b><u>Whole Class → Reflection</u></b> Students will share some of their feelings and observations about how the principal character of this movie, Chris Gardner, overcame many obstacles to meet his career goals and achieve financial success.		
Reflection	<b><u>Home Activity or Further Classroom Consolidation</u></b> Complete Journal Reflection – “Is it necessary to achieve financial success to ensure personal happiness?” <b>OR</b> Rewrite the ending of this movie assuming Chris was not chosen for the stockbroker’s job.		

## BLM4.J.1: “Pursuit of Happiness” Movie

## MEL4E

1. Describe Chris Gardner’s family and financial situation at the beginning of this movie.
2. What is the time frame of this movie? What are some of the indications of the unstable economic climate in the United States at the time?
3. What are the skills mentioned that are necessary for someone to become a successful stockbroker?
4. At one point in the movie, the main character, Chris Gardner, states that “*maybe happiness can only be pursued but no one can ever have it*”. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Explain.
5. Do you think Chris would have worked so hard to achieve his goals if his wife had not left him?
6. What are some of the things Chris was forced to do to make ends meet while he was finishing his stockbroker training?
7. At a point in the movie when Chris and his son are shooting baskets, Chris tells his son “*If you have a dream, you have to protect it. When people can’t do something they will tell you that you can’t do it either.*” In this situation what dream does his son have?

How do you feel about this statement? Do you think others are negative and prevent others from trying to achieve success to prevent others from failing? Explain your reasoning.

8. At the end of the movie, did Chris Gardner achieve his goals? If so, why do you think he was successful?
9. Personal Reflection – Choose **one of the 2 options** below. Write your answer in full sentences and proper paragraph format.
  - a) “Is it necessary to achieve financial success to ensure personal happiness?”
  - OR**
  - b) Rewrite the ending of this movie assuming Chris was not chosen for the stockbroker’s job.

## BLM4.J.1: “Pursuit of Happiness” (sample solutions)

## MEL4E

1. Describe Chris Gardner’s family and financial situation at the beginning of this movie.

*Chris is in his thirties, he has a wife and 4 year old son. The family lives in San Francisco where Chris sells portable bone scanning machines (that he spent his life savings on), and is not very successful since the machines are expensive and not absolutely necessary. Chris and his wife argue about money frequently and are behind in their rent, in paying parking tickets and in paying for their son’s daycare expenses.*

2. What is the time frame of this movie? What are some of the indications of the unstable economic climate in the United States at the time?

*The movie takes place in the early 1980’s (1981). There is a television news clip of Ronald Reagan, who is the US president discussing the tough economic conditions in the country at that time. Also the huge line-ups of the homeless seeking food and shelter indicate the tenuous nature of the economy at that time. Also the fascination with the Rubics cube is another indication of the time frame of this movie.*

3. What are the skills mentioned that are necessary for someone to become a successful stockbroker?

*As stated in the movie a stockbroker must be “good with numbers and good with people”. Therefore math skills and interpersonal skills are necessary for this career.*

4. At one point in the movie, the main character, Chris Gardner, states that “*maybe happiness can only be pursued but no one can ever have it*”. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Explain.

*Student answers will vary.*

5. Do you think Chris would have worked so hard to achieve his goals if his wife had not left him?

*Student’s opinions will vary.*

## BLM4.J.1: “Pursuit of Happiness” (continued) (Sample Solutions)

MEL4E

6. What are some of the things Chris was forced to do to make ends meet while he was finishing his stockbroker training?

*Chris and his son left their apartment and moved to a cheaper motel. Chris washed their clothing in the bathroom sink. Often it appeared that Chris did not eat when he and his son were in restaurants. Chris tried to collect debts owing to him. He sold his bone scanning machines for whatever amount he could get. Chris even gave blood to collect a small amount of money. They left the motel and slept in a shelter or even on the streets (in a washroom).*

7. At a point in the movie when Chris and his son are shooting baskets, Chris tells his son “If you have a dream, you have to protect it. When people can’t do something they will tell you that you can’t do it either.” In this situation what dream does his son have?

*Christopher talks about being a professional basketball player.*

How do you feel about this statement? Do you think others are negative to prevent others from trying to achieve success to prevent others from failing? Explain your reasoning.

*Student answers will vary, but opinions must be supported.*

8. At the end of the movie, did Chris Gardner achieve his goals? If so, why do you think he was successful?

*Chris was very determined. He was also very bright and mathematically inclined. Chris felt he had no other options to protect himself and his son, so he worked tirelessly to better himself, to learn everything required and to make influential contacts to further his career. Another characteristic that helped to make Chris successful was his sense of humour and resourcefulness.*

9. Personal Reflection – Choose **one of the 2 options** below. Write your answer in full sentences and proper paragraph format.

- a) “Is it necessary to achieve financial success to ensure personal happiness?”

**OR**

- b) Rewrite the ending of this movie assuming Chris was not chosen for the stockbroker’s job.