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"I want to be rich as soon as possible and then I will also be happy." We are enjoying a pasta meal at the kitchen table and discussing the meaning of life. My four partners are 12 to 16 years old and have a future to plan. "How rich do you have to be in order to be happy?" is my first reaction, "because if you don't put a limit to it, you will never be happy." And there they go: discussing what really matters in life and why we are on earth anyway.

It is amazing how people open up while sitting round the kitchen table—especially with escapes like: "Pass me the pepper, please?" to ease tension or to get some time to think.

Even when we are not eating, but just sitting and enjoying each other's company, a kitchen table is "the place to be" to think about the meaning of life. An informal setting gives opportunities to develop a thought and let it go again, to taste a new idea and swallow it, or try another one....

"Okay, but if I am not rich, I don't think I can ever be happy," responds a 12-year-old. "Or do you want me to think about other people too?"

"Do you think other people matter?" I ask.

"Well...maybe...I guess I do, but don't tell my mum I do," he says.

"Maybe you can be rich and use your money to share," suggests a 14-year-old.

This is definitely a "pass-me-the-pepper moment."

"Okay," sighs the 12-year-old, "I guess this is where God comes in." A heated discussion starts and goes on; I clear the table.

What a meal! 🍴

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