

Happy Trails To You Positive Affect & Ageing

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A Shift in Perspective



“the healthy personality is a topic approaching which the expert becomes a fearful angel”

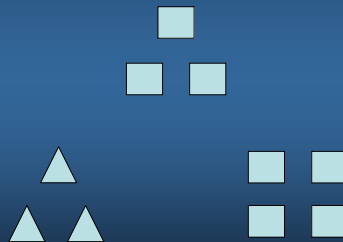
Erik Erikson (1950)

Mental Illness vs Mental Health

- Healthcare = biomedical model
- Mental illness = presence of certain Sx but mental health not just the absence of Sx¹
- ↑time thinking calming / grateful thoughts = ↓time spent upsetting / unhelpful thoughts
- Well-accepted in sports science

¹Harris & Thoresen (2006)

Positive Affect & Visual Processing



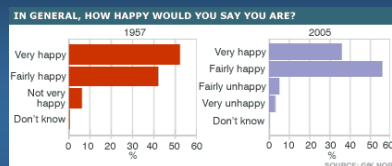
Happiness is Hot at the Moment



Over the last few years:

- ~3,000 papers published
- Journal of Happiness Studies
- World Database of Happiness
- Centre for Confidence and Well-Being (Glasgow)
- The Well-Being Institute (Univ of Cambridge)

Trends in Happiness



- Trend for ↑ wealth but ↓ happiness since the 1950s

Money & Happiness



'Whoever said money can't buy happiness simply didn't know where to go shopping.'

Happiness and Ageing

- By 2011, the first of the baby boomers will reach the age of 65
- Increasing emphasis on models of successful ageing
- What is the place of happiness in these models?



Rowe & Kahn (1987, 1995)

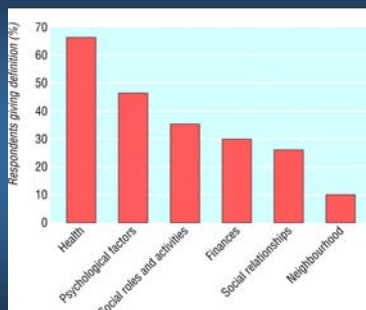
- Successful ageing as ". . . the ability to maintain three key behaviours or characteristics:
 - (1) Low risk of disease and disease-related disability,
 - (2) high mental and physical functions, and
 - (3) active engagement with life (i.e., relating to others and continuing productive activities)".

Baltes & Baltes (1990)

- "Selective optimisation with compensation" underlies successful, individual development (including ageing)
- Three domains of successful ageing: subjective well-being, positive emotions, and absence of feelings of loneliness¹

¹Freund & Baltes (1998)

Most common definitions of successful ageing given by 854 people aged ≥ 50 in Britain



Bowling, A. et al. BMJ 2005;331:1548-1551

bmj.com

Palmore (1995)

- A comprehensive definition of successful aging "would combine
 - survival (longevity),
 - health (lack of disability), and
 - life satisfaction (happiness)."



Defining Happiness

- Subjective well-being
 - positive affect
 - negative affect
 - life satisfaction

1. In most ways my life is close to my ideal
 2. The conditions of my life are excellent
 3. I am satisfied with my life
 4. So far I have gotten the important things I want
 5. If I could live my life over, I would change some things



Positive vs Negative Affect

- Bradburn & Caplovitz (1965) → independence of PA & NA
 - Low correlation bw pos & neg items
 - High correlation amongst pos items & amongst neg items
 - Pos & neg items correlated with diff external factors
- Now widely replicated

Measuring Happiness

Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS)
 By Satya Lyubomirsky, PhD

For each of the following assessments and/or questions, please circle the point on the scale that you feel is most representative in describing you.

1. In general, I consider myself:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all very happy person						a very happy person

2. Compared to most of my peers, I consider myself:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
less happy						more happy

3. Some people are generally very happy. They enjoy life regardless of what is going on, getting the most out of everything. To what extent does this characteristic describe you?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all						a great deal

4. Some people are generally not happy. Although they are not depressed, they never seem to be happy as they might be. To what extent does this characteristic describe you?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all						a great deal

Measuring Happiness

The Satisfaction with Life Scale
 By Ed Diener, PhD

DIRECTIONS: Below are 5 statements with which you may agree or disagree. Using the 1 = 7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by placing the appropriate number in the line preceding that item. Please be open and honest in your responding. There are no right and wrong answers.

1 = Strongly Disagree
 2 = Disagree
 3 = Slightly Disagree
 4 = Neither Agree or Disagree
 5 = Slightly Agree
 6 = Agree
 7 = Strongly Agree

_____ 1. In most ways my life is close to my ideal.
 _____ 2. The conditions of my life are excellent.
 _____ 3. I am satisfied with life.
 _____ 4. So far I have got the important things I want in life.
 _____ 5. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.

What Determines Happiness?

- Set point = genetically determined
- Circumstances only small contributor

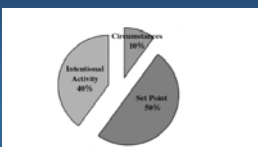


Figure 1. Three primary factors influencing the chronic happiness level.

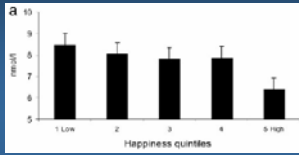
Genetic Set Point

- Assumed to be stable over time
- Some evidence from twin studies that there is a reasonably high degree of heritability of happiness ⇒ 0.80 in monozygotic twins; almost nil for dizygotic twins¹



¹Lykken & Tellegen, 1996

Biological Correlates - Cortisol



- On both work and leisure days, higher levels of happiness were sig associated with lower levels of cortisol, after corrections for age, grade of employment, smoking status, BMI and GHQ score¹

¹Stephoe, Wardle & Marmot (2005)

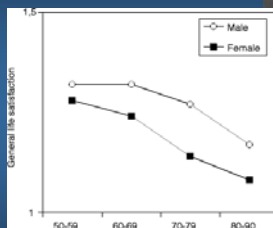
How Happy Are Older People?

- Meta-analyses indicate little difference bw younger and older age grps wrt life satisfaction¹ (smile-shaped).
- “Satisfaction paradox” → use of adaptive processes in old age that allow subjective well-being to be regulated^{2,3}.

¹Pinquart (1998); ²Fillipp & Ferring (1992); ³Staudinger (2000)

How Happy Are Older People?

- European Study on Adult Wellbeing¹
- 6 countries; N=12478; 50-90 yrs.
- “Life Satisfaction Index”²



¹Ferrina et al (2004); ²Neugarten et al (1962)

Predictors of Happiness

- Meta-analysis of 286 studies → quantity & quality of contacts with friends were stronger predictors of SWB than contact with family members¹
- Income also better predictor than education¹



¹Pinquart & Sorensen (2000)

Happy People are....

- More likely to be married rather than single, divorced or widowed^{1,2}
- More likely to participate in a variety of social & physical activities^{3,4}
- More likely to have better self-, not objective, ratings of health²

¹Mastekaasa (1994); ²Diener et al, 1999; ³Csikszentmihalyi, 1999; ⁴Menec, 2003.

Other Associations

- Task-oriented and avoidance-oriented coping strategies¹
- Higher current cog function but not IQ¹
- Sense of meaning derived from religion²
- Better housing quality e.g., in good repair, amenities, etc³



¹Jones et al (2003); ²Krause, 2003; ³Evans et al, 2002

Happiness as Protective

- N=1558; age 65-94 yrs.
- 7-yr f/up of people not initially "frail".
- CES-D scale \Rightarrow PA & NA.
- Each unit \uparrow in PA was assoc with a 3% \downarrow risk of frailty after adjusting for age, gender, marital status, medical conditions & yrs educ.

¹Ostir et al (2004)

Happiness as Protective

- N=937; mean age 72.8 (6.3) yrs.
- Dx of arthritis & no ADL limitation at B/L.
- High PA = \downarrow risk of ADL disability 2 yrs later, controlling for demographics, medical cond'n & NA (OR=0.46, 95%CI 0.22-0.94).
- Interaction bw PA and gender \Rightarrow larger effect in men.

¹Fisher et al (2004)

Happiness & Mortality

- Nun Study¹.
- In 1930, the Mother Superior requested that each sister write a brief autobiography e.g., background and influences that led to religious life.
- N=180. Mean age 22yrs.
- Scored for emotional content & related to survival 75-95 yrs



¹Danner et al (2001)

The Nun Study

- Strong inverse r'ship b/w amount of positive content & mortality risk ($p < 0.001$)
- 2.5 fold diff b/w lowest & highest quartiles (equiv 7 yrs)



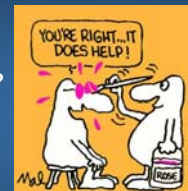
Positive Affect & Mortality¹

- 6317 pple in the Health and Lifestyle Survey at T1 & 3778 at T2 7 years later.
- General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-30) + POS-GHQ
- 7-year mortality was predicted more strongly by the absence of positive well-being than by the presence of psychological symptoms

¹Huppert & Whittington, 2003

Methodological Issues

- Inconsistent definition of constructs.
- Are happy people biased?



The Cart or the Horse?

- Many cross-sectional studies but few longitudinal ones.
- But large review found happiness precedes numerous successful outcomes¹



¹Lyubomirsky, King & Diner, 2005

A Happy Pill?

- Opioids \Rightarrow pleasure (shorter-lived emotion).
- Dopamine \Rightarrow anticipation & desire.
- Serotonin \Rightarrow Fear and anxiety reduction.



Interventions to Promote Happiness

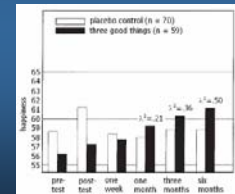
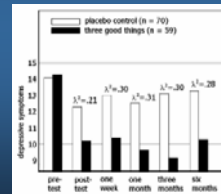
- Absence of role identity in later life. Volunteering found to \uparrow PA & buffer against this¹.
- “Groningen Intervention Programme” (GRIP) – home-based self-management. 6 tasks e.g., \uparrow self-efficacy. 2 RCTs – some benefit².



¹Greenfield & Marks (2004); ²Schuermans, 2004.

Three Good Things

- Write down 3 things daily that went well & provide causal explanation for each.
- RCT, 1-wk internet-based therapy.



¹Seligman et al (2005)

Promoting Happiness on a Global Scale

- Scotland studies
- Social workers trained to administer routine brief CBT e.g., 6 sessions per session
- Preliminary results very promising
- Need longer term follow-ups

“Making Slough Happy”

- 3-mth experiment
- 50 volunteers
- 6 specialists from a variety of disciplines worked to improve the happiness levels of a typical UK town
- “Happiness manifesto”



Happiness Manifesto

- 1. Get physical**
Exercise for half an hour three times a week.
- 2. Count your blessings**
At the end of each day, reflect on at least five things you're grateful for.
- 3. Talk time**
Have an hour-long uninterrupted conversation with your partner or closest friend each week.
- 4. Plant something**
Even if it's a window box or pot plant. Keep it alive!
- 5. Cut your TV viewing by half**
- 6. Smile at and/or say hello to a stranger**
At least once each day.
- 7. Phone a friend**
Make contact with at least one friend or relation you have not been in contact for a while and arrange to meet up.
- 8. Have a good laugh at least once a day**
- 9. Every day make sure you give yourself a treat**
Take time to really enjoy this.
- 10. Daily kindness**
Do an extra good turn for someone each day.

"Making Slough Happy"

- 2 established life satisfaction tests & constructed 3 further happiness & mood tests
- Over course of expt, mean life satisfaction 6.4 \Rightarrow 8.1 (i.e. 33% improvement)
- Lasting psychosocial change in Borough Council

Final Thoughts



"Psychology is much larger than curing mental illness or curing diseases. I think it's about bringing out the best in people; it's about positive institutions; it's about strength of character"

Martin Seligman

Is Happiness the Ultimate Panacea?



- Perhaps....
- More research required
- But it is relatively easy to increase a person's positive affect and it certainly cannot hurt.

Questions?

