


Pursuit of Happiness

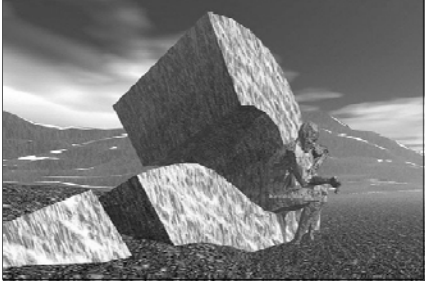
The Good Life



What is happiness?




Why do we pursue happiness?



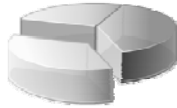
One Theory

- Fredrickson :Broaden and Build
 - Positive emotions are adaptive (evolutionarily)
 - They help us build resources for hard times
 - Friendship, love, coalitions build more readily
 - Our problem-solving improves
 - More tolerant and creative
 - Open to new ideas and new experience



How happy are you?

- What percent of time to you feel
 - Happy?
 - Unhappy?
 - Neutral?
- How about most people?
 - 54%
 - 21%
 - 20%



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Happiness is good for us

- Happy nuns:
 - Most cheerful: 90% live beyond 85
 - Least cheerful 34% lived beyond 85
- General Public:
 - Duchenne Smile: happy marriage & well being



Take a moment

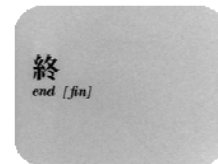
- Think about happiness in your life for a moment ...
- What is the happiest moment you've ever experienced? What were the circumstances?



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Endings Matter

- Hedonics - the science of how we feel moment by moment
- Fredrickson's ratio -
- Hedonic Theory
 - Good moments minus bad moments = quality of life
 - Research: momentary feelings don't actually predict broad well being
 - Daniel Kahneman - Princeton
 - The endings matter the most
 - The 'color' of an ending forever tinges the memory for the entire event



Highs and Lows....

- Positive and negative emotion are only marginally correlated
- Women have more of both positive and negative emotion
Men are made of stonier soil
---Stephen King
- Our greatest joys often follow as relief from our greatest fears



How can I be happy?

Happiness=S+C+V

It's just that simple



Set Point + Context	Interesting....
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S (50%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <i>Set point</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inborn temperament • adaptation • C (8-15%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <i>Circumstances</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income above poverty • Romance & friends • Spirituality that brings hope 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't increase happiness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Wealth ◦ IQ ◦ education level • Don't decrease happiness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Medical problems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exception: 5 or more problems ◦ Aging ◦ Being a racial minority ◦ Being female

H=S+C+V

H=S+C+V^(again)

- V – the stuff we can control (35-42%)
 - Attitudes about your *past*
 - Generate attitude of gratitude & forgiveness
 - Approach to your *future*
 - Generate self compassion & optimism
 - Living in the *present*
 - Choose gratifications over pleasures

Seligman's Position

- Thought Patterns are an important key to happiness
 - Attitudes that increase positive emotion
 - **Past:** gratitude/ forgiveness
 - **Future:** self enhancing views
- Behavior Matters too
 - Choices that increase positive emotion
 - **Present:** savoring pleasure
pursuing gratification/ engagement



Thinking about the Past

- Thoughts determine mood (ala Seligman)
 - Interpretation, memory, associations, beliefs
- One cultural belief ---
 - **The past determines your future**
- BUT ... little research to show that single events are related to later outcomes
- However, events DO shape thinking patterns and brain function ...



What past do you see?

- Depressed People
 - Get caught in negative rumination cycles
 - Thinking about past harm leads to upset



- Angry People
 - Rumination about wrongdoing and angry expression raises blood pressure
 - Friendliness after wrongdoing lowers it



Emotion, if left alone, dissipates and there is return to set point

A deeper look




Is there a way to visit emotional past stories and experiences WITHOUT getting lost in them?

The Past
Part One . . .changing the balance

1 negative to 3 positive maintains health

- **Gratitude**
 - Intentionally focusing on the people who have provided care and support and warmth and all the good stuff throughout your history
 - Intentionally focusing on the 'blessings' in your life
- **Forgiveness**
 - Intentionally focusing on the people who have betrayed you




Confucian concept of 'Jen'

Jen (wren): human heartedness; goodness; benevolence. Jen is a sense for the dignity of human life—a feeling of humanity towards others and self-esteem for yourself.

Forgiveness

- Think about a time when you were betrayed by someone – it can be a small or large betrayal... doesn't matter.
- Write about this experience for 2-3 minutes
- What did you lose in this experience?
- What did it or would it take to forgive?
- How easy or hard was it/ would it be to forgive? Why?



Part Two . . .forgiveness

- Accept, tolerate, explore *all* that exists within us and arises in our lives
- Existential realities impinge upon us
 - If we live long enough,
 - we will lose everyone and everything for which we care
 - We will experience betrayals and shame and failure
- How then is it possible to care? To forgive? To try again? To remain open?
 - We must gracefully bear the inevitable losses; find meaning in them
 - "Mental illness must be understood, ultimately, as suffering that has not yet found meaning" --- carl jung
 - Reflection, mindfulness, writing, gratifications... help us find meaning


NYT, Sept 23, 2010...
 a mother finds meaning (Joanna Steinglass)

- A hospital vigil creates tunnel vision; all I see is my 2.5 year old boy's face in his hospital bed, and all I hear are his wheezing calls for us, followed by our answering song: "I'm right here, Jack, I'm right here." My son doesn't want me to look away when visitors enter, as if he shares my fear that the only thing keeping him safe is my concentration on his breathing. The radiator is piled with Chinese food, corned beef sandwiches and cheesecake, brought from Brooklyn by a particularly caring friend.
- For those 19 days my husband and I, both doctors, do not go to work. Each night one of us stays at the hospital while the other goes home, where the blooming lilacs and rhododendron surrounding our house are surreal. The challenge is getting upstairs and into bed without looking at the pictures on the wall. Or going into the boy's room. Or looking at his bed. Or falling on it, crying and thinking unthinkable thoughts.
- In his hospital bed, my son holds my thumb. It's all he wants. Cuddling hurts when you have a chest tube, so he holds my thumb. It amazes me that he has any inclination to trust us, that he finds comfort in us rather than fear — we who brought him to this place where he must endure hourly assaults on his body with stethoscopes and blood pressure cuffs. I am stunned by his resourcefulness in seeking the comfort he needs.
- On a gurney outside the operating room, he sits on my lap. Or rather he folds over my belly onto my shoulder. He is too young to be told what is going on, to know about the surgery to help clear his lungs. He looks at the surgeons, masks covering their faces, and burrows into my shoulder seeking relief.
- Then flashes The Moment. Many parents will recognize that moment. That split-second flash through your brain, with an intense grip of emotion, a wave that lasts far longer; that squeezes your lungs, no matter how long ago it was. The moment you were forced to focus — acutely, terrifyingly — on your child's mortality.
- What I know now is that parental love is layered on, with each layer a shield of denial, protecting you from an inner core of fear. And the layers peel away remarkably slowly.
- We did not interpret the serious expression on the nurse's face as fear. We ungraciously attribute it instead to a classic New York City hospital mentality, and when she says she thinks he should be in the intensive care unit, we assume she just prefers not to have an admission. We do not recognize that she, like the triage nurse, is not burdened by denial and that she, unlike us, sees that our child is deeply, gravely ill. For us it's still not sinking in. It can't penetrate our thick protective suits.
- Who knows why he got pneumonia so severe it could have killed him. But he got better — spectacularly better. We fell into that horrible inner core. And then we walked out, with a clearer vision of what it is to be two people together in love with a child.

The future

Looking Forward

- Learned helplessness/ **pessimistic**
 - How do you explain events?
 - **Negative:** internal, stable, global (permanent, universal)
 - **Positive:** fleeting, temporary
- Pessimism undermines hope & motivation
 - These are habits of thinking
 - They can be modified
- Optimism
 - Optimists live 19% longer than pessimists
 - (839 patients from Mayo Clinic followed for 40 years)



Why bother?

The Present

- Seligman
 - It's misguided to devote much effort to correcting your weaknesses
 - Highest success/ deepest satisfaction comes from exercising strengths
- Strengths/ Virtues
 - Valued in nearly every culture
 - Valued in their own right (not just as a means to another end)
 - They can be developed/ learned
 - Virtue – from Latin *virtus* meaning 'mighty works'

We maintain 'earned' happiness longer

- Seeking pleasurable experiences



pleasures


- Using personal strengths (character)



gratifications

Harry Bailey Strengths ...

- One study: 60 years of data
 - Harvard Grads (1939-1943) & Inner City Boston Males
- Strong Character in these men
 - Lead to:
 - Successful aging, wealth, and joy
 - What are those traits?
 - The Harry Bailey Traits....
 - Ability to delay gratification
 - Altruism
 - Humor



Strengths lead to happiness, wealth, health


Seligman's Strengths & Virtues

- **Wisdom**
 1. Curiosity
 2. Love of learning
 3. Open-mindedness
 4. Ingenuity
 5. Emotional Intelligence
 6. Perspective
- **Courage**
 1. Bravery
 2. Perseverance
 3. Integrity
- **Humanity**
 1. Kindness
 2. Loving/ Receiving Love
- **Justice**
 1. loyalty
 2. Fairness
 3. Leadership
- **Temperance**
 1. Self control
 2. Caution
 3. Modesty
- **Transcendence**
 1. Appreciation of beauty
 2. Gratitude
 3. Optimism
 4. Sense of purpose
 5. Forgiveness
 6. Humor
 7. Zest




Being in the Moment

- **Pleasures**
 - Bodily focused
 - Fleeting/ easily satiated
 - Enhance pleasures – two ways
 - Savoring
 - Tell others how you enjoyed the experience
 - Save the moment with photos or mementoes
 - Mindful Pleasure
 - Focus attention on the sensual experience
 - Slow down ... and stop when pleasure stops



Being in the Moment

- **Gratifications**
 - Activity consonant with noble purpose
 - Jen: 'are you completing good in yourself or others'
 - Utilize our strengths and virtues
 - Willingness to invest effort to accomplish
 - Often evoke absorption and flow



A possible metaphor... investment

- **Pleasures**
 - We are consuming
 - Sensory delights, emotional highs
- **Gratifications**
 - We are investing
 - Have to develop skills, delay gratificati
 - Accumulating well being
 - Building psychological capital
- Csikszentmihalyi (cheeks sent me high)
 - Teens: mall kids versus hobby kids



A Lizard Tale...

- Amazonian lizard for pet
 - Refused to eat, not mango, not ground pork, not flies, not blended fruit juices
 - One day offered a ham sandwich – lizard refused again
- Absentmindedly tossed a newspaper over the sandwich
 - The lizard leapt onto the paper, shredded it, and then gobbled the sandwich
- The lizard wanted to use its signature strengths to attain food; no shortcuts



Reflect on American Culture...

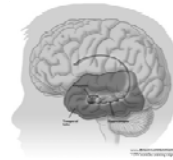
- What is encouraged/ rewarded?
- Why?
- What might be the consequences?

Depression

- Rates of depression 10x higher now than 1960
- Average age of first episode:
 - 1960: 29.5
 - Now: 14.5
- Rates of suicide jumped in equal proportion
- Why?



- Calming
- Social connection
- 'approach'
- Promote health
- Promote cognitive integrations
- hippocampus



- Activating
- Avoidance
- Compromise health
- Interfere with cognitive integration
- Amygdala

Seligman's Recommendations


Stress & Emotional Imbalance

Bottom Line

- Lasting Happiness:
 - 50% - genetic set point
 - 10% - circumstances
 - 40% - choices in living/ attitude

• Lasting Happiness = set point + circumstances + (gratitude + optimism + gratifications)

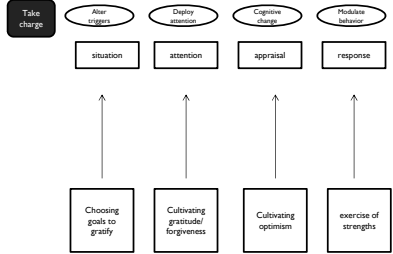
50% 10% 40%




Positive Psychology as Emotion Regulation

WE CAN IMPACT OUTCOMES AT ANY INSERTION POINT

"If you want happiness for an hour ? take a nap.
 If you want happiness for a day ? go fishing.
 If you want happiness for a year ? inherit a fortune.
 If you want happiness for a lifetime ? help someone else."
 --- Chinese Proverb



Becoming the conductor of your own symphony ...
 in that available 40% - that which you can control



mindfulness

Impacts S and V

S { Meditators

- More functional immune response
- Lower BP
- Lower right brain resting activity

V {

- Thicker Prefrontal Cortex
- More focused attention
- Amygdala & prefrontal cortex links

