



Nation's First Center of Excellence
for Tourette Syndrome

USING POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY TO FIND MORE HAPPINESS EVERYDAY

Anton Shcherbakov, Psy.D, BCBA

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OUTLINE

- What is positive psychology?
- A brief history
- What is happiness and why is it important?
- What doesn't make us happy: Money
- From happiness to well-being
- Simple ways to increase well-being
- Resources
- Gratitude practice

WHAT IS POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY?



*“...scientific study of optimal human functioning [that] aims to discover and promote the factors that allow **individuals and communities to thrive**”*

Martin Seligman



A BRIEF HISTORY

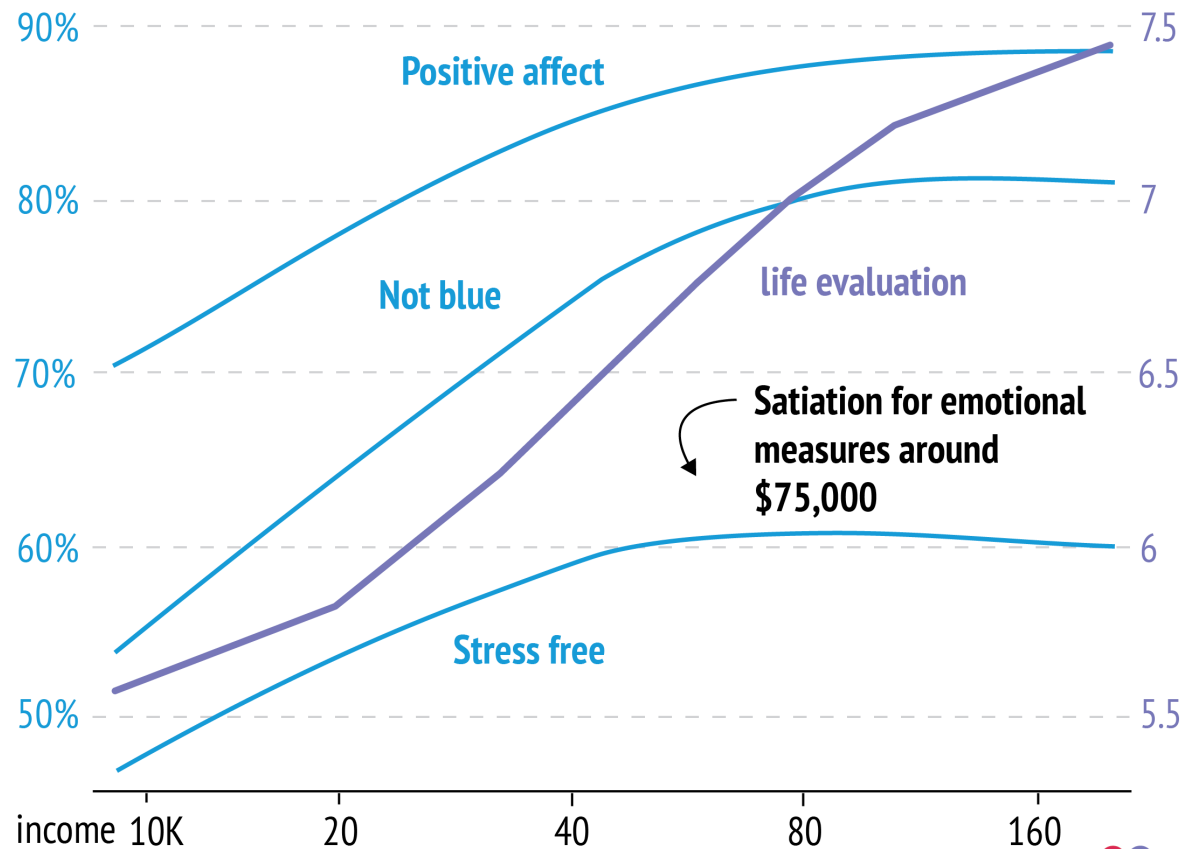
- For much of clinical psychology's history, focus has been on disease or disorders such as anxiety & depression.
- Little attention paid to what makes people happy or helps them live fulfilling lives.
- Martin Seligman, a prominent depression researcher, set it as a theme during his tenure as president of the American Psychological Association in the 1990s.
- Since then, a lot of research has been done about what helps people “live well”.

WHAT IS HAPPINESS AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

- **Happiness** is defined as *frequent* experience of positive emotions such as joy, interest, and pride. *Infrequent* experiences (not absent) of negative emotions such as sadness, anxiety, and anger.
- Why is it important?
 - Linked to better mental & physical health outcomes. Association w/ longer life
 - Increase resilience to stressful events
 - More & better quality relationships
 - Greater job success & community involvement



WHAT DOESN'T MAKE US HAPPIER: MORE MONEY*



Note: X axis scale is not linear.
Source: Kahneman and Deaton (2010)



FROM HAPPINESS TO WELL-BEING

- **P**ositive emotion
- **E**ngagement
- **R**elationships
- **M**eaning
- **A**chievement

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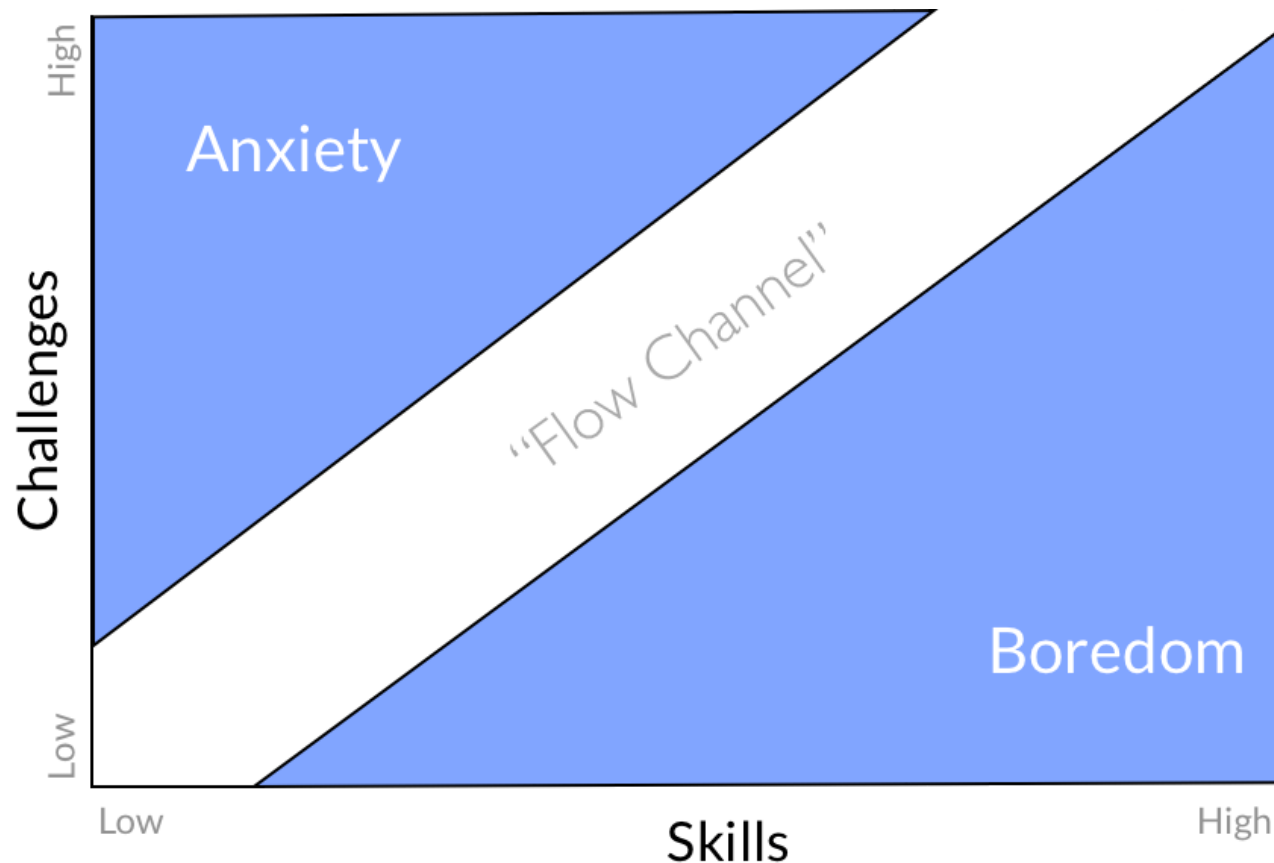
POSITIVE EMOTIONS

- Making an active effort to seek activities that promote positive emotions can be a simple way to increase well-being. We call this “**Self-Care**”:
 - Taking a bubble bath
 - Listening to music
 - Dancing
 - Playing with a pet
 - Eating a special meal
 - Talking to a friend
 - Watching a funny movie



ENGAGEMENT - FLOW

- Deep, effortless involvement in some activity. Intense enjoyment is common. “Passion” “Losing Track of Time”



RELATIONSHIPS

- May be the single most important contributing factor of to well-being.
- It is not the quantity of relationships that is most important, but their quality and frequency of engagement.

“Close relationships, more than money or fame, are what keep people happy throughout their lives . . . [Close relationships] protect people from life’s discontents, help to delay mental and physical decline, and are better predictors of long and happy lives than social class, IQ, or even genes.”

Source:

<https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2017/04/over-nearly-80-years-harvard-study-has-been-showing-how-to-live-a-healthy-and-happy-life/>

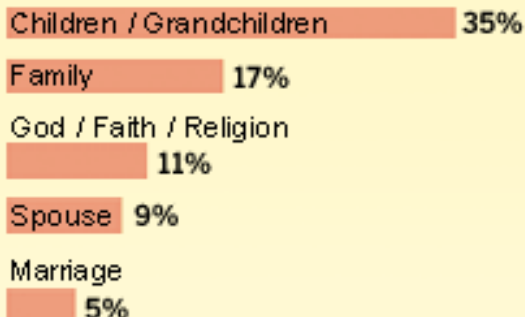


TIME POLL

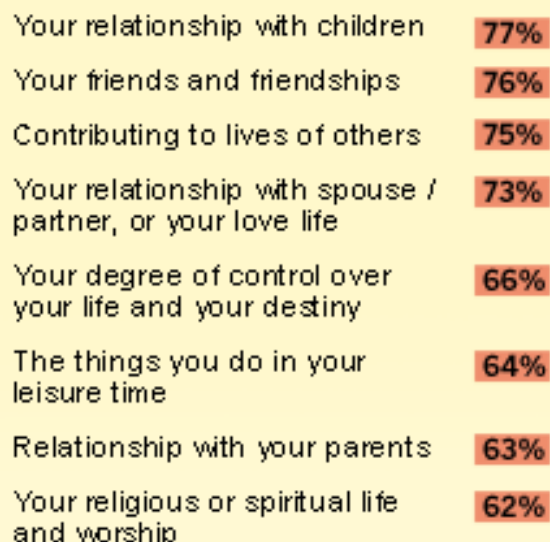
...And what makes us that way?

Most people find happiness in family connections and friendships

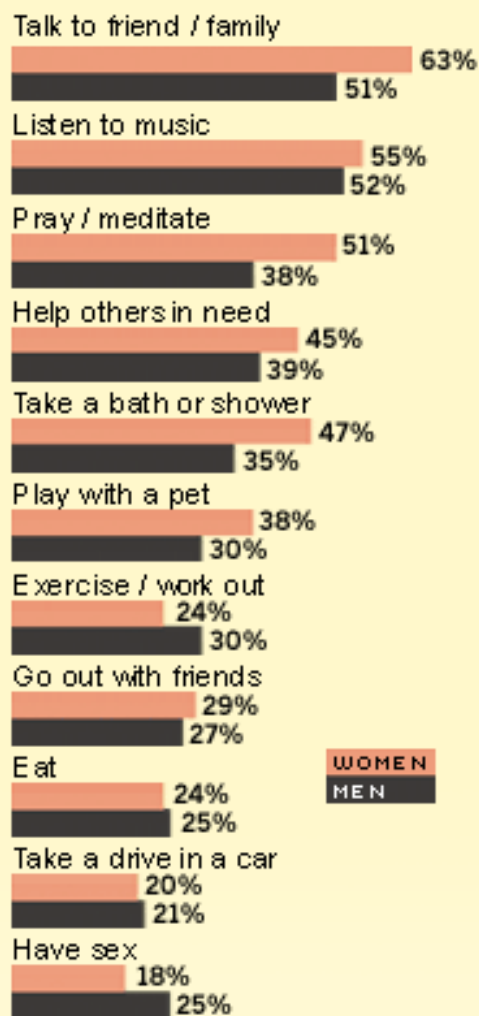
What one thing in your life has brought you the greatest happiness?



What are your major sources of happiness?

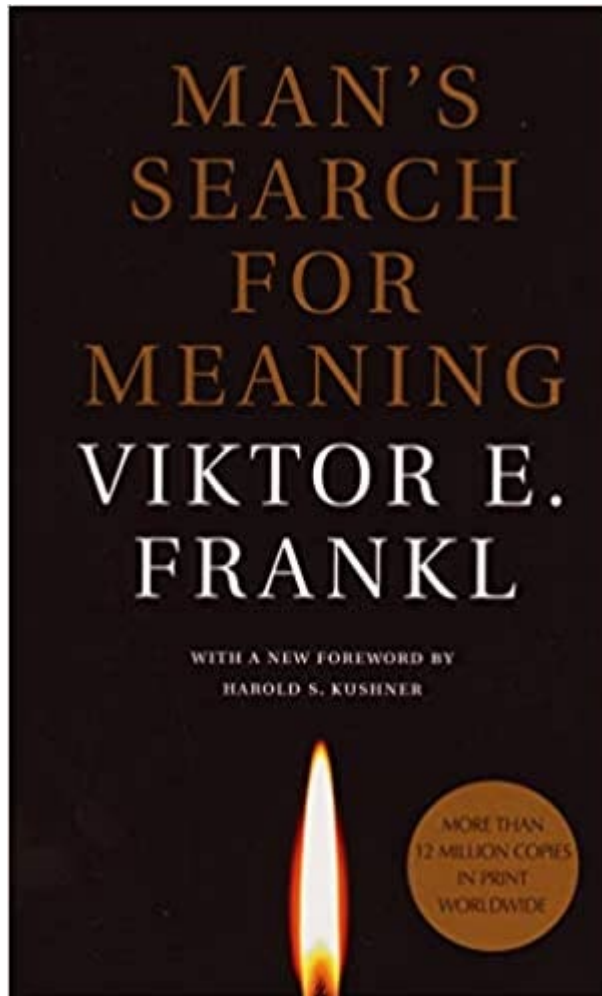


Do you do any of the following often to improve your mood?



WOMEN
MEN

MEANING



- Dedicating ourselves to a cause “higher than us” is one way that we can find meaning or purpose
- Involvement with religion, community, or service is a way to increase sense of meaning
- Those who seek positive emotions without also seeking meaning tend to not experience lasting well-being

ACCOMPLISHMENT



- Setting personal goals (big or small) is an important component of well-being.
- Striving for these goals and achieving them contributes to a sense of life satisfaction.
- Can be closely connected to our sense of meaning.

FROM HAPPINESS TO WELL-BEING

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SIMPLE WAYS TO INCREASE WELL-BEING

- Recall positive life events
- Do acts of kindness
 - Giving gifts
 - Volunteering & charity
 - Helping friends & loved ones
- Practice mindfulness
- Identify strengths
 - Success journal
- Develop a gratitude habit
 - Daily journal
 - Write letters expressing gratitude to important others
- Practice forgiveness

RESOURCES

- Apps:
 - Reflectly
 - Jour
 - Headspace
- Books:
 - *Flourish: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-being* by Martin Seligman
 - *Happier: Learn the Secrets to Daily Joy and Lasting Fulfillment* by Tal Ben-Shahar
 - *The How of Happiness: A New Approach to Getting the Life You Want* by Sonja Lyubomirsky
- Websites
 - <https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/>
 - <https://www.coursera.org/learn/the-science-of-well-being>

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GRATITUDE EXERCISE

- Think about your activities over the past 24 hours: chores, work, leisure, time with family, etc.
- Write down **three things** that that made you feel most satisfied (that made you feel good, or gave you a sense of accomplishment)
- Write down one thing you are grateful for at this moment

