Happiness and the Good Life

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For Shannon, Sonia, and Nicole.

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PREFACE

How does happiness enter into good lives? Is it perhaps the highest good, and hence the most important feature of desirable ways of living? Is it instead only one aspect of worthwhile lives, and if so how is it related to other aspects? The answers to these questions are deeply personal and yet invite dialogue. They turn on how we understand happiness, good lives, and a host of practical, psychological, and philosophical issues. In my view, we are happy insofar as we love our lives, valuing them with ample enjoyments and a robust sense of meaning. As such, happiness is one vital dimension of good lives, but only one. My aim is to explore how happiness interacts with other aspects of good lives, in particular moral decency and goodness, authenticity, self-fulfillment, mental health, and meaningfulness in terms of a wide array of justified values. Here is a brief overview.

Chapter 1: Loving Life. What is happiness? The question calls for a concise definition rather than a compendium of things that make us happy. Plato and Aristotle began a tradition of defining happiness in terms of the virtuous life, which in turn they understood in narrow canonical terms. Today, however, most of us understand happiness as subjective and define it entirely in terms of emotions, attitudes, and other mental states. Psychologists aptly call it "subjective well-being." In tune with this subjective emphasis, I define happiness as loving one's life, valuing it in ways manifested by myriad enjoyments and a robust sense of meaning, regardless of whether the enjoyments and sense of meaning are rooted in justified values. I also understand "the good life" as shorthand for a wide diversity of admirable ways of living, ways that embody the virtues and other values in myriad ways.

Chapter 2: Valuing Happiness. How does happiness relate to morality? Happy lives are not always morally good, and morally good lives are not always happy. Nevertheless, happiness and morality are interwoven in myriad ways. Happiness is among the basic goods for a human being. In addition to being a self-interested good, it is a moral good, assuming it is not based directly on immorality. Its worth increases as it intertwines with moral values: Loving our lives has greater moral worth insofar as our lives are worth loving, and our enjoyments and sense of meaning have greater worth insofar as they are rooted in justified values. As affirmed in the Declaration of Independence, there is a human right to pursue happiness, which is implied in the basic right

to liberty. There is even a limited responsibility, rooted in self-respect, to pursue happiness as an aspect of a good life. Of most interest in subsequent chapters, the virtues tend to promote happiness, and happiness often contributes to the virtues.

Chapter 3: Betting on Virtue. How do the virtues contribute to happiness? As Rosalind Hursthouse and others suggest, the virtues are a good bet in pursuing happiness. Specific virtues contribute to happiness in vastly many ways. As a preliminary sampling, I discuss nine virtues grouped in three categories: (1) virtues of the heart, centered on valuing what is good (gratitude, self-respect, love), (2) virtues of the will, centered on strength in pursuing what is good (courage, self-control, hope), and (3) virtues of reason, centered on wisdom (moral understanding, humility, mindfulness). Positive psychologists study how these and many other virtues contribute to happiness, and vice versa, and I draw on their insights while registering some cautions about their procedures.

Chapter 4: Authenticity. Is authenticity a reliable guide to happiness? Be yourself, we are told, and happiness will follow. Discovering and developing our "true self," the self that expresses our deepest aspirations and talents, does indeed contribute to happiness by tapping into wellsprings of enjoyment and meaning. Yet authenticity is neither a simple nor a sure guide to happiness. It is not even an independent guide, for what makes us happy is itself an important indicator of our deepest desires and hence of our authentic selves. Moreover, authenticity has multiple aspects that can be in tension with each other: wholehearted caring, self-honesty, self-acceptance, self-creation, and self-realization. In addition, authenticity connects with other values that might be in tension with happiness. These complexities are illustrated with decisions about whether to use biomedical enhancements.

Chapter 5: Happily Self-Deceived. Does illusion promote or diminish happiness? It might do either, depending on the situation. We are frequently mistaken about what makes us happy, and we can deceive ourselves about how happy we are. Within limits, many of these illusions augment happiness by bolstering hope and confidence. Yet honesty is even more important in pursuing happiness. Honesty helps us identify what we want most; it helps us appreciate what we enjoy most and find meaning in; it keeps our expectations realistic; and in general it keeps us in touch with reality as we pursue our vision of a good life.

Chapter 6: Suffering in Happy Lives. Is happiness compatible with suffering? Once again the answer is complicated. Nothing can protect us from tragedies that destroy what we cherish most and thereby undermine happiness. Yet much suffering can be integrated into happy lives, depending significantly on our attitudes. As is often said, suffering can deepen joy and meaning. Not surprising, philosophical perspectives on the value of suffering in good lives both reflect and shape conceptions of happiness.

Chapter 7: Paradoxes of Happiness. Should happiness be pursued directly and deliberately, with an eye on the prize? Doing so is self-defeating, according to the paradox

of happiness, for it fosters self-absorption and undermines meaning and even enjoyment. Instead we should participate in activities and relationships that we find inherently meaningful, rather than solely because of the happiness we hope to find in them. Then, with any luck, happiness comes indirectly. This paradox expresses an important truth, albeit with a dollop of hyperbole. Indeed, it expresses a number of truths that are highlighted by dividing the paradox of happiness into a dozen more specific paradoxes concerning aims, success, freedom, and attitudes. These paradoxes form the backdrop for discussions of philanthropy, love, and work in the following chapters.

Chapter 8: Happy to Help. How is happiness related to helping others? Specifically, how is happiness connected to philanthropy, that is, voluntary giving of time or money for public purposes? Psychologists confirm commonsense beliefs that there are noteworthy correlations, and they see causation moving in two directions. On the one hand, helping tends to contribute to the helper's happiness, although not always. On the other hand, being happy tends to motivate happiness. This happiness-promoting aspect of giving is important in understanding the motives of philanthropists, which, as in most areas of life, typically mix self-interested and social-oriented motives. Yet there are also philosophical issues concerning how happiness, interacting with other aspects of good lives, enters into justifying.

Chapter 9: Shared Pursuits in Love. What does it mean to pursue happiness together within marriage and other committed relationships? Marriages are happy insofar as both partners are happy with and within the marriage, and happy marriages contribute to the overall happiness of each partner. Yet these ideas do not fully capture how marriages are shared pursuits of happiness. To that end, we need to invoke the ideas of shared agency, personal identity, and intimacy between partners who share the pursuit of a happy life together. Happiness plays a major role in justifying decisions to marry and to sustain or abandon marriages, as does a wider array of moral values. Although shared pursuits of happiness are singularly intimate, they illustrate how the pursuit of happiness is not as highly individualistic as we tend to think. Nowhere is the interplay of happiness and the virtues more complex than in love and marriage.

Chapter 10: Balancing Work and Leisure. What does it mean to live a balanced life, and in particular to balance work and leisure? Balance is often celebrated as a mark of wisdom and as a source of happiness. Yet happiness is also one of the main criteria for telling what balance is. Hence, as with authenticity and happiness, balance and happiness are interwoven in both their meaning and value. Additional criteria for balance include health and moral responsibility. As elsewhere, the criteria for balance are multifaceted and sometimes conflicting in good lives.

Chapter 11: Simplicity. What is voluntary simplicity, and does it increase happiness? The contribution of simplicity to happiness is emphasized from Buddha to Thoreau, and from Socrates to contemporary self-help books. As a virtue, however, simplicity is

not a simple idea. If it is merely reducing complexity by cutting back on the number of our concerns, then it might be prudent or foolish. If instead it is the virtue of identifying and living by what is most important, removing undesirable distractions in order to stay focused on essentials, then it is a large part of practical wisdom—in all its nuance and subtlety. Happiness is one of the important values that enters into understanding simplicity (once again paralleling authenticity and balance). The question then arises how happiness relates to familiar "simplicity themes" such as greater mindfulness, frugality, and conservation. Simplicity is best subsumed under the wider rubric of coping with complexity in good lives.

Chapter 12: Felicity in Frankenstein. Does happiness promote virtue, and does unhappiness produce vice? Mary Shelley dramatizes the issue in *Frankenstein*. Reminiscent of Rousseau, her articulate monster argues that happiness does indeed advance goodness and misery causes malice. Victor Frankenstein largely shares this "happiness principle," and this agreement between creator and creature is central to the novel's plot. Shelley and her novel, however, convey a more nuanced perspective. The unqualified belief in the happiness principle easily becomes a source of moral evasion, for her protagonists and perhaps for us.

Chapter 13: Personal and Political. Should laws and government policies be guided by what positive psychologists are discovering about happiness? A number of distinguished thinkers contend that they should. Their main contention is that increasing personal wealth and the Gross Domestic Product are very limited ways to increase happiness. These advocates of a politics of happiness are right about the need to take the science of happiness seriously in public policy, but they are wrong when they sometimes elevate happiness above all other dimensions of good lives and good societies. Even when wealth does not contribute to happiness it can still have great importance in bringing economic security and creating opportunities for self-development. I conclude by summarizing my themes about happiness in good lives by drawing parallels with Goethe's insights into happiness.

I thank the publishers who permitted me to draw on my earlier articles, in revised form:

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1

LOVING LIFE

I was troubled, abstracted, dreamy; I wept, I sighed, I longed for a happiness of which I had not the first notion, and yet whose absence I felt keenly.[1]
—Jean-Jacques Rousseau

What is happiness? The question calls for a definition rather than a laundry list of things that make us happy. A good definition will be concise, reasonably clear, attuned to ordinary language, and useful for the purposes at hand. It will not appeal to everyone, if only because the word "happiness" is ambiguous and can be defined with different purposes in mind. For example, motivational speakers prefer value-laden definitions of "true happiness" centered on virtuous and spiritually enlightened living. In contrast, psychologists employ value-neutral definitions of happiness as "subjective well-being," understood exclusively in terms of emotions (especially pleasurable ones), attitudes (satisfaction with one's life), beliefs (for example that one's life is going well), and other mental states. I follow the lead of the psychologists, primarily because they are closest to predominant understandings of happiness but also in order to draw upon their studies. In my view, we are happy insofar as we love our lives, valuing them in ways manifested by ample enjoyments and a robust sense of meaning. I explore how happiness, in this sense, functions as one dimension of good lives interacting with other dimensions, in particular with authenticity, health, self-fulfillment, moral decency and goodness, and meaningfulness in terms of justified values.

HAPPY PERSONS

Mike Leigh portrays an exceptionally happy person in his film *Happy-Go-Lucky*.[2] Poppy (played by actress Sally Hawkins) is an irrepressibly upbeat elementary schoolteacher who finds her life greatly enjoyable and deeply meaningful. She is bubbly, witty, and fun to be around. By temperament, she is not given to extended bouts of depression, anxiety,

and anger. When her bike is stolen she can joke about it, and soon makes plans to learn how to drive. She is also kind, compassionate, a good friend, and strongly motivated in her career. When one of her students bullies another child on the playground, she comes to the aid of both children. After protecting the child who is attacked, she consults with a social worker about how best to change the bully's behavior. Together they identify the source of the problem in an abusive home. On another occasion she takes risks in trying to help a homeless man, communicating empathetically despite his seemingly incoherent babbling. Such episodes almost invite a spiritual interpretation of Poppy as akin to a laughing Buddha who radiates peace, forgiveness, generosity, and joy. Poppy is no Pollyanna, however, and her occasional effusiveness causes problems. In particular, she realizes too slowly that her lighthearted and erotically tinged banter is misconstrued by her bigoted driving instructor as an alarming sexual provocation.

As audience members we do not doubt that Poppy is happy, but her sister Helen does. Poppy lacks a husband, house, and pension fund, all of which Helen considers necessary for happiness.

> HELEN: "I just want you to be happy, that's all."
> POPPY: "I am happy."
> HELEN: "I don't think you are."
> POPPY: "I am. I love my life. Yeah, it can be tough at times. That's part of it, isn't it? I've got a great job, brilliant kids [i.e., wonderful students], lovely flat. I've got her to look at [referring to her friend Zoe]. I've got amazing friends. I love my freedom. I'm a very lucky lady, I know that."

"I love my life" is a natural way to express happiness, and it is a useful starting point for a definition. To love our lives is to love being alive, but much more. After all, we might be miserable and yet glad to be alive, if only because we hope to become happier in the future. To be happy is to love our lives, at least in most of their primary configurations; it is to value our lives in ways manifested in ample enjoyments and a robust sense of meaning. Let us briefly clarify each of these ideas: valuing, enjoyment, and sense of meaning.[3] (Afterward I comment on the idea of "lives.")

Valuing. To value our lives, in the way relevant to happiness, is to affirm them in their present configurations, which include our primary hopes for the future as well as our current activities and relationships, possessions and accomplishments, and values and ideals. The affirmation is manifested in predominant patterns of enjoyment and sense of meaning.

Valuing our lives should not be conflated with *evaluating* them.[4] In general, to evaluate is to make a judgment of appraisal, rating, or ranking in a hierarchy of quality. Some evaluations are impersonal assessments according to social standards, for example

when a government inspector assesses the quality of foods or a judge ranks performances in an ice skating competition. Other evaluations are based on more personal standards, as when we rate a song or movie according to our personal tastes. Yet not even personal, positive evaluations fully capture what it is to value our lives in ways manifested by enjoyment and meaning. Valuing is an affirmative psychological stance that permeates how we experience our lives; it is not a judgment or ranking. If we say that happiness is an attitude toward our lives, we should immediately add that it is an umbrella attitude that encompasses myriad positive attitudes toward people, relationships, activities, and other components of our lives.

Although happiness is not an evaluation, we do sometimes evaluate how happy we are. We evaluate informally when we rank our present happiness as higher or lower than at other times, or higher or lower than someone else's happiness. We evaluate more formally when we fill out a psychologist's questionnaire, ranking our present happiness on a scale of 1 to 7 or 1 to 10. What we rate and rank on these occasions, our happiness itself, is the extent to which we love our lives; it is the extent to which we value them as shown in patterns of enjoyment and meaning.

Loving our lives is comparable to loving persons.[5] To love persons implies cherishing them for themselves, with all their flaws. To be sure, we also evaluate persons and their features such as physique, personality, intelligence, social skills, achievements, and wealth. But love is at risk when evaluations overshadow valuing, especially when evaluations are accompanied by a longing or readiness to "trade up" to a better spouse.[6] There is a rough analogy here with how happiness is poisoned by envious comparisons between what others have and we lack, as well as by failures to accept irremediable limitations in our lives. Furthermore, we do not love other persons solely *because* they bring us pleasure and meaning. Rather, love is *shown* and expressed in the delight and meaning we derive from the two-way caring relationship with the person. Likewise, love for our life is shown in patterns of enjoyable and meaningful activities, relationships, and accomplishments. And just as loving a person has its ups and downs, with episodes of pain, anger, terror, and doubt, so does a happy life.

Enjoyment. I use "enjoyment" in a wide sense to include pleasurable emotions and moods, pleasant sensations and thoughts, enjoyable activities and relationships, and attitudes of being pleased about things. The enjoyments contributing to happiness take innumerable forms. To take an alphabetical sampling, there are enjoyments of art, boating, cooking, drawing, eating, fishing, gardening, helping, ice skating, jokes, kayaking, laughing, money, novels, opera, philanthropy, quilting, reading, sex, travel, understanding, video games, work, xylophones, yachting, and Zen. More useful than alphabetical listings, enjoyments can be catalogued with different interests in mind. Thus, enjoyments can be grouped by categories of activities and relationships that produce them: work, family, and sports, or specific types of work, family, and sports. They

can be sorted into broad aspects of persons, such as psychological, physical, moral, and spiritual. They can be differentiated by duration: brief, lingering, recurring, or rare. And they can be distinguished as active or passive, according to the effort and intention involved.

Of special interest, enjoyments might be sorted by general modes of emotion. Daniel Haybron conjectures that positive emotions and moods, all of which I count as enjoyments, cluster into three categories of dispositions that are central in the personalities of happy individuals: (1) endorsement (e.g., joy, cheerfulness, feeling happy), (2) engagement (e.g., exuberance, passion, vitality), and (3) attunement (e.g., tranquility, confidence, expansiveness).[7] Haybron calls these categories the three faces of happiness, understanding happiness as an overall positive emotional state of "psychic affirmation" of one's life as going well.[8] In contrast, unhappy lives are dominated by negative attitudes, emotions, and moods such as anxiety, fear, depression, sadness, despair, meaninglessness, anger, hatred, rage, envy, and boredom. My definition of happiness differs from Haybron's by explicitly mentioning valuing and a sense of meaning, which are implicit in his account, and by using the colloquial "loving one's life" rather than "psychic affirmation." Otherwise, our accounts have much in common.

In another recent discussion, Fred Feldman attempts to understand happiness in terms of one formal category of pleasure, attitudinal pleasure: "This sort of pleasure is a propositional attitude rather than a feeling, or sensation. We attribute this sort of pleasure to a person when we say that he is pleased about something, or when we say that he 'takes pleasure in' some state of affairs."[9] Persons are happy, according to Feldman, insofar as they have pro attitudes toward the various aspects of their lives, valuing them for their own sake. Much that he says connects with my emphasis on valuing, whose core comprises positive attitudes toward specific aspects and the totality of our lives. Yet he disregards other important pleasures that enter into happiness, including the positive emotions Haybron highlights. Sometimes he blurs attitudinal pleasures and enjoying activities, for example when he says that to be pleased by living in Massachusetts is an attitude, whereas surely it also includes enjoyable activities connected with living there. In any case, I see no reason to follow him in restricting enjoyments in happy lives to any one type. It is true, however, that enjoyments can be categorized by how strongly they contribute to happiness, including how different categories of enjoyment are more or less crucial for an individual's happiness—types in terms of propositional attitudes versus sensuous pleasures, as well as types in terms of such things as sports or scientific inquiry, or engagement and attunement (a point I return to later).

Sense of Meaning. A sense of meaning is not an abstract perspective or set of beliefs. Instead, it is a nuanced set of attitudes that are revealed in what we care about and enjoy. A sense of meaning yokes together two things: (1) having values (ideals, principles, tastes) and (2) finding our lives intelligible. More fully, a sense of meaning

is the value we find in (and give to) our activities and relationships; it is also the intelligibility and coherence we find in (and give to) our activities and relationships in light of our values and related beliefs. In the intended sense, a sense of meaning is subjective—there is no suggestion that the values are sound and the intelligibility is reasonable. Thus, Hitler had values and a sense of meaning, monstrous ones. It is important to bear this point in mind when, for convenience, I sometimes refer to a sense of meaning as simply meaning. The context will make clear that in other contexts, when I discuss aspects of good lives in addition to happiness, I have in mind meaning in terms of justified values.

Although a sense of meaning centers on our values, it interweaves with enjoyments in various ways. For example, some activities are meaningful (worthwhile) to us largely because they provide streams of enjoyment, such as riding a roller coaster or playing a video game. Other activities are meaningful to us because they yield enjoyments at the end of an unpleasant process, such as having a tooth drilled by a dentist. But most activities are meaningful in part because they connect with enjoyments: we value them, at least in part, because we find them enjoyable or because they bring about things that we find enjoyable. Appreciating these connections leads me to highlight a sense of meaning as integral to happiness, in contrast with the more standard exclusive emphasis on pleasures in defining happiness.

HAPPY LIVES

I am interested in happy lives as well as happy persons. The ideas are not identical, any more than "lives" and "persons" are synonyms. They are, however, interdefined: Persons are happy insofar as their lives are happy, and lives are happy insofar as persons are happy. This logical connection seems trivial, but it reflects an important point. Because happy persons love their *lives*, the concept of happiness in anchored in both mental states and the world beyond mental states. More fully, the concepts of happy persons and happy lives include an outward reference to activities and relationships, struggles and obstacles, accomplishments and failures, and other components of lives as unfolded in the world. Quite appropriately, Poppy defends her claim that she is happy by commenting on the features of her life that provide meaning and enjoyment: her great job, wonderful students, amazing friends, and cherished freedom.

To be sure, other notions of happy persons and happy lives are not interdefinable. For example, "happy persons" might refer to individuals with naturally happy temperaments, that is, dispositions to be upbeat regardless of any features about their present lives. Again, "happy lives" might have a primary outward reference. In its etymological sense, happy lives referred to good fortune (*hap* = good luck), where good fortune was measured objectively in terms such as lineage, wealth, success, and social standing.

Today, however, it sounds odd to say that a person has a happy life but is unhappy. Instead, we say that individuals blessed with every good fortune can be unhappy, perhaps because they are depressed, and individuals with little good fortune can still be happy. Indeed, sometimes we experience the frustration and perplexity in knowing we have everything necessary for happiness and yet we are miserable.

To repeat, today the predominant concept of happiness centers on our subjective responses to our lives. That concept has a double anchor in mental states and the world, regardless of whether we are talking of happy persons or happy lives. This double anchor is obscured when happiness is mistakenly reduced to pleasure and other mental states. Language encourages this mistake, in that "happiness" and "pleasure" are sometimes used as synonyms. Thus, happy *experiences* are pleasurable experiences such as making love or playing golf. Happy *emotions* are pleasurable emotions such as amusement, delight, contentment, and joy. Happy *moods* are somewhat longer-term enjoyable emotional states, including exuberant states like joy and cheerfulness and quiescent states like serenity and peace. Complicating matters, some meanings of "happy" do not refer to states of consciousness. For example, there are happy *events*, which are occurrences favorable in light of our desires, even though we might not be conscious of them; for example, our stock investments doing well. In short, the everyday language of happiness contains a mélange of meanings. I am interested primarily in happy persons and happy lives, each of which refers to both states of mind and to activities and relationships in the world.

For similar reasons, we need to exercise caution in using psychologists' generic definition of happiness as "subjective well-being." The expression aptly reminds us that happiness centers on our subjective responses to the world, in particular to our attitudes, emotions, enjoyments, and sense of meaning. It is misleading, however, if it suggests that happiness is a mental state that makes no reference to the world beyond our minds. When psychologists define happiness as subjective well-being, they primarily intend happy persons rather than happy lives. Thus, it would be odd to say that a life (as distinct from a person) has subjective well-being, at least if we think of lives as narrative histories of persons in the world, which are not reducible to a series of conscious states. Nevertheless, in speaking of subjective well-being and happy persons, psychologists typically do allude to happy lives. For example, Ed Diener, who popularized the expression "subjective well-being," takes for granted that mental states are expressed in lives—that is, in human existences in the world. In a book co-authored with his son Robert Biswas-Diener, Diener writes: "Subjective well-being encompasses people's life satisfaction and their evaluation of important domains of life such as work, health, and relationships. It also includes their emotions such as joy and engagement. . . . In other words, happiness is the name we put on thinking and feeling positively about one's life."[10]

I would replace "evaluating" with "valuing," and I take personal meaning to be as central as enjoyment (and interwoven with it). With those adjustments, the Dieners' definition of subjective well-being is largely congruent with my definition of happiness as loving one's life and valuing it through enjoyments and a sense of personal meaning. In any case, my interest is to explore happiness as an aspect of persons' lives, lives that are not reducible to mental states. More fully, my interest is in exploring the happiness of persons in leading lives that are morally decent and good, authentic, self-fulfilling, healthy, and happy.

VARIETIES OF HAPPINESS

With her unflagging wit and cheerfulness, Poppy illustrates only one paradigm of happiness. There are many others, including persons who are serene and peaceful, or passionately committed to creative projects, or resilient in coping with great difficulties. Moreover, happiness takes vastly many forms according to its ingredients, pathways, emotional styles, degrees, domains, aspects, and segments.

Ingredients. The ingredients of happiness—the things that make us happy—vary enormously, not only among individuals but even for the same person at different times. On the one hand, ingredients depend on our interests, tastes, and values concerning everything from sex to sports to spirituality. To be sure, some contributions to happiness are widely shared, for example a sense of control, self-esteem, economic security, love, and friendship. Psychologists identify the most common ingredients and report them as statistical averages. These statistics have great interest to employers, therapists, public policy makers, and each of us in pursuing happiness. Yet statistics cannot capture the specific factors and configurations that contribute to an individual's happiness, for example their delight in Mozart or skydiving. The detailed sources of our happiness must be discerned through experience and good judgment, a friend's advice or the insights of a therapist, and perhaps serendipity.

It is easy to confuse the ingredients of happiness with the idea of happiness. We are sometimes told, for example, that happiness is indefinable because what makes individuals happy varies so greatly; hence happiness is whatever anyone thinks it is. This *Alice-in-Wonderland* view is the product of conflating the concept of happiness with the content (sources, ingredients) of happiness. A related confusion occurs when the concept of happiness is conflated with a representative ingredient of happiness. In a 1960 *Peanuts* comic strip, Charles Schulz depicts Lucy hugging Snoopy and exclaiming, "Happiness is a warm puppy." The assertion became iconic after Schulz used it as the title of book that sold over a million copies. When critics charged that the statement was simplistic, Schulz challenged them to come up with "a better definition of what happiness is."[11] Of course Schulz's statement is not a definition at all. The problem is not

that puppies make some people unhappy, as they might for people with dog allergies and dog phobias. The problem is that puppies are only one possible source of happiness, not a definition of it.[12] To be sure, epigrams that highlight selected sources of happiness can be illuminating and even make for a fun parlor game. Schulz's statement is an endearing reminder that giving and receiving affection is a major source of happiness, a better reminder than an abstraction like "happiness is love." The Beatles, too, convey something significant, this time about darker sources of happiness, when they parody Schulz with their song "Happiness Is a Warm Gun." But highlighting particular ingredients and sources of happiness should not be confused with defining it.

Pathways. Pathways (or paths) are routes for pursuing happiness, whether tailored to individuals or recommended for people in general. Broadly understood, pathways include chosen strategies (for example, be kinder to yourself) and received influences (for example, being born to loving parents). The confusion is tempting because pathways often do overlap with ingredients. For example, if caring for a puppy is a pathway to happiness, then adopting a puppy is a pathway to happiness. Moreover, both pathways and ingredients can both be called "sources of" or "contributors to" happiness. Nevertheless, there is a point in distinguishing ingredients and pathways. Ingredients are the constituents that provide enjoyment and a sense of meaning; pathways are the routes to obtaining those constituents—or at least suggested routes. Thus, relaxation is an important ingredient in all happiness, but it might be found through music, massages, and Merlot. Spirituality is an ingredient of happiness for many people, but it can be pursued by participating in a particular religion, meditation and yoga, communing with nature, or helping others. And a sense of personal control is an ingredient of happiness that can be found by dieting, cleaning the house, simplifying one's life, or being promoted at work.

More generally, causes of and influences on happiness should not be conflated with happiness itself. Doing so is another source of confusion that leads people to say happiness cannot be defined, since the pathways to happiness vary so enormously. Having said this, we can agree that the pathways of happiness are so utterly personal that advice about how to seek happiness must be filtered through individuals' interests and circumstances. As Wladyslaw Tatarkiewicz observes, "Practically every detailed formula for happiness is such that it can be opposed by another, contrary to it, which can be equally, or only slightly less convincing."[13] Here are a few examples: Live in the present (cherish the moment); keep your eye on the future (stop worrying about present difficulties). Stay socially engaged; seek more solitude. Follow your dreams; be realistic. Live with passion; all things in moderation. Be flexible and willing to compromise; be firm in your commitments and don't compromise your integrity. Be yourself; learn from others. Be courageous; be more cautious. Try harder; relax more. Take care of your health; stop obsessing about your health. Don't sweat the small stuff; pay attention