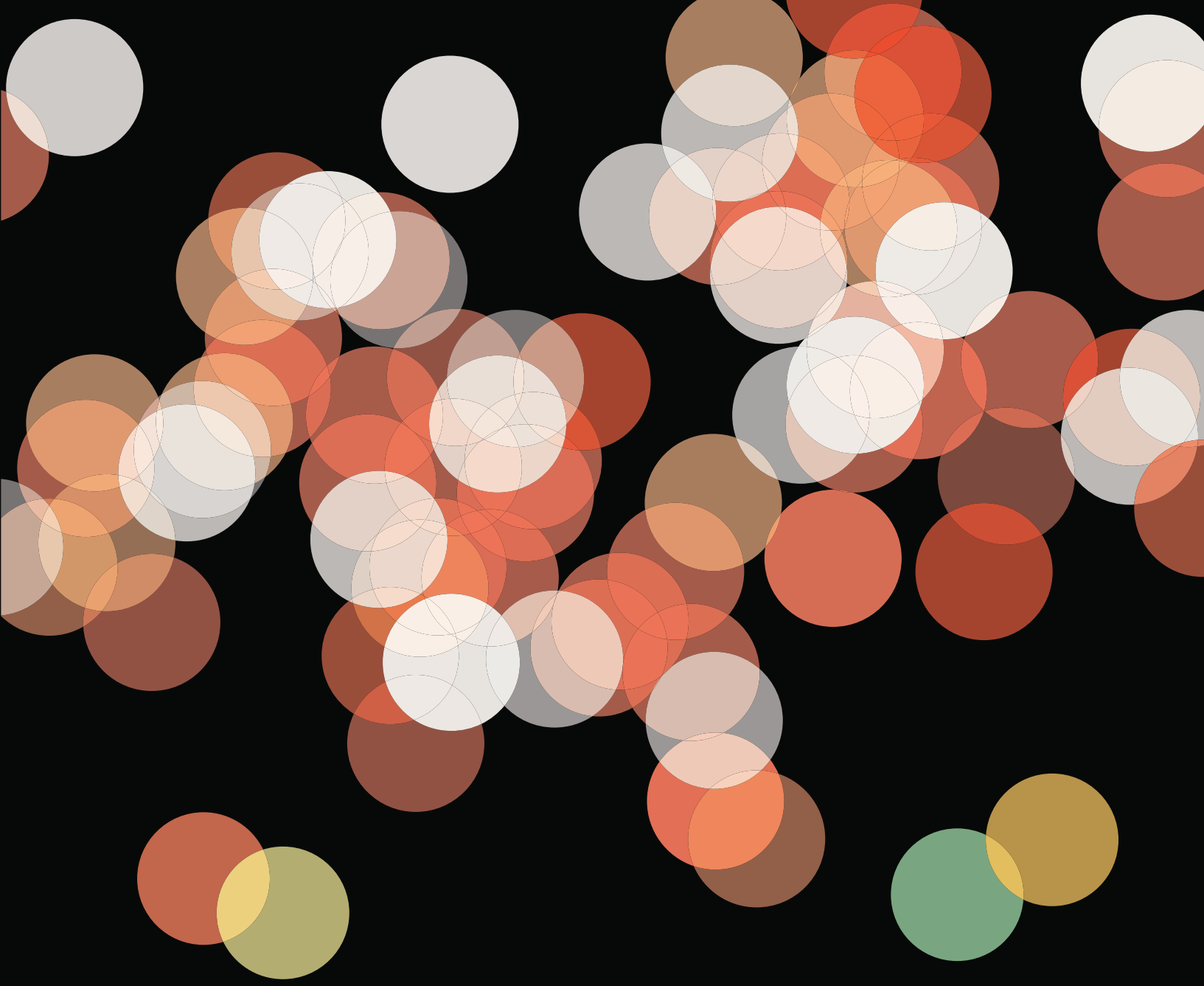

PEARSON NEW INTERNATIONAL EDITION

Positive Psychology

Steve Baumgardner Marie Crothers

First Edition

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What Is Positive Psychology?

CHAPTER OUTLINE

TRADITIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

My major professor used to say that the surest way to become famous in psychology was to publish a study showing that human nature is even worse than we had imagined. His point was not to impugn the integrity of anyone who conducted such a study, but rather to note people's fascination with the dark side of human nature. A case in point is the one study that nearly every college student in introductory psychology remembers, namely Stanley Milgram's (1974) famous research on obedience to authority. In Milgram's study, ordinary people delivered what they believed to be painful electric shocks to a middle-aged man as he made errors on a simple learning task. At the direction of a white-coated lab technician, people increased the level of "shocks" despite strident protests from the recipient. These protests included refusals to continue the experiment, agonizing screams, demands that he be let out of the study, and complaints that his heart was starting to bother him. The participants were visibly upset by the effects on the victim of what they believed to be genuine electric shocks. However, 66% still obeyed the commands of the experimenter, marched up the shock scale, and pulled the last switch at the highest shock level of 450 volts, despite clear markings on the control panel indicating that the shocks were dangerous. How bad is

human nature? Milgram's classic study suggests that ordinary people will go against their own judgment and moral values under minimal pressure from a legitimate authority. Human nature, it appears, cannot be counted upon to insulate society from acts of brutality.

The connections between the Milgram study and real-life cases of people following orders to commit acts of brutality are compelling. Adolph Eichman, tried for crimes against humanity for his part in the Holocaust death camps run by the Nazis in World War II, said repeatedly in his own defense that he was just following orders. Captured in philosopher Hanna Arendt's famous phrase, "the banality of evil" (1963), those who carried out extraordinary acts of brutality in the systematic killing of Jews were utterly ordinary people—not pathological monsters. Like participants in Milgram's study, they were just following orders.

A positive psychologist might ask, why aren't there equally dramatic studies showing the human capacity for goodness? It certainly is not because goodness does not exist in the world. History provides countless examples. People risked their lives to help Jews escape from Nazi Germany during World War II, and priests and ministers aboard the *Titanic* sacrificed their own lives for others by giving their life preservers to fellow passengers. And, who can forget the imagery of heroic firefighters, police officers, and ordinary citizens following the September 11 terrorist attacks? A basic positive psychology premise is that the field of psychology is out of balance, with more focus on the negatives in human behavior than on the positives. Positive psychology does not deny the negative, nor does it suggest that all of psychology focuses on the negative. Rather, the new and emerging perspective of positive psychology embraces a more realistic and balanced view of human nature that includes human strengths and virtues without denying human weakness and capacity for evil. Each of us confronts a share of sadness and trauma in our life; but we also experience our share of joy and happiness. Historically, psychology has had more to say about the downs than about the ups. A large number of college students complete a general psychology course as part of their college education. Studies show that they recall mostly the negatives of human behavior, such as mental illness and the Milgram study (see Fineburg, 2004, for a review). Positive psychology aims to offset this negative image of human nature with a more balanced view.

Why the Negative Focus?

NEGATIVE ASPECTS PERCEIVED AS MORE AUTHENTIC AND "REAL" Sigmund Freud is perhaps too easy a target for criticism regarding psychology's emphasis on negatives. Yet undoubtedly, Freud *was* influential in promoting the belief that beneath the veneer of everyday politeness and kindness lurked more self-serving motives. Let's say you sacrifice some of your own study time to help your roommate with a difficult homework assignment. Looks positive and altruistic on the surface, but some would argue that in actuality, you are just expressing your need to dominate and feel superior to others. You give blood at a university blood drive, but in actuality you were motivated by sexual attraction to one of the blood drive volunteers. You commit your life to helping others for low pay, but Freud might argue that you are just trying to compensate for feelings of inadequacy and guilt caused by traumatic childhood experiences. Freud believed that human behavior is motivated primarily by self-serving drives that must be controlled and channeled in productive ways for society to function effectively. Freud did not necessarily believe self-serving behaviors were bad. From his perspective they simply express our biologically inherited needs and impulses. The legacy of Freud's views within psychology, however, has been to perperpetuate a negative image of human nature. It is difficult to deny that behaviors and traits that are seemingly positive on the surface are sometimes rooted in negative motives. However, positive psychology emphasizes that this is not always the case. From a positive psychology perspective, positive qualities and motives are just as authentic as negative ones and they affirm the positive side of human nature.

In addition to the Freud-inspired suspicion that negative motives lie beneath the surface of positive behaviors, there is also a science-inspired skepticism concerning the scientific legitimacy of topics studied in positive psychology—topics that some perceive as reminiscent of the popular psychology literature. Historically, psychologists have used pop psychology and self-help books as examples of the folly of unscientific and empirically unsupported ideas about human behavior. Many psychologists view the success of the self-help industry as evidence of laypersons' gullibility and the importance

of a critical scientific attitude. Telling an empirically-minded psychologist that his or her research smacks of pop psych would be an extremely disparaging criticism.

One of my students gave the following description of positive psychology: "Positive psychology is pop psychology with a scientific basis." The student's description is insightful because it acknowledges the connections between the subject matter of positive psychology and many long-standing mainstays of pop psychology. Current topics in positive-psychology include the study of happiness, love, hope, forgiveness, positive growth after trauma, and the health-promoting benefits of a positive, optimistic attitude. These topics read like a rundown of books in the pop psych section of your local bookstore. In summary, two reasons for psychology's greater focus on negative than positive phenomena are rooted in negative beliefs about the basic nature of humanity, and skepticism about the scientific basis of positive psychology's subject matter.

NEGATIVES AS MORE IMPORTANT Ironically, research suggests that the greater weight and attention given to the negatives in human behavior compared to the positives may reflect a universal tendency (i.e., such a focus may be inherent in human nature). Generally, in human behavior the **"bad is stronger than the good"** (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, & Vohs, 2001). Studies of impression formation show that information about negative traits and behaviors contributes more to how we think about others than does positive information—a finding dubbed the "trait negativity bias" (Covert & Reeder, 1990; Rozin & Royzman, 2001). Research has also shown that the presence of conflict and negative behavior makes a greater contribution to relationship satisfaction (or lack thereof) than does the amount of positive behavior (Reis & Gable, 2003). Studies strongly suggest that one negative comment can undo many acts of kindness and one bad trait can undermine a person's reputation.

Part of the reason for the power of the negative is that we seem to assume that life is generally going to be good, or at least ok. This assumption may reflect our everyday experience, in which good or neutral events are more frequent than bad ones. As a result, negative events and information stand out in distinct contrast to our general expectations. Research supports this idea that because positive events are more common in our experience, negative ones violate our expectations and are consequently given more attention (Gable & Haidt, 2005).

The fact that we attend more to the "bad" than to the "good" may also reflect an adaptive evolutionary behavior (Reis & Gable, 2003). Aversive events and negative behaviors may represent threats to our survival, therefore justifying, in an evolutionary survival sense, greater attention and impact. Evolution may thus help explain the "attention-grabbing power of negative social information" described by Pratto and John (1991). So, another reason for psychology's focus on the negative may be that psychologists are simply human, studying what attracts the greatest attention and what has the greatest impact on human behavior.

THE DISEASE MODEL Martin Seligman (2002a, 2002b, 2003) argues that the dominance of the disease model within psychology has focused the field on treating illness and away from building strengths. The disease model has produced many successes in treating psychopathology. Based on the disease model, psychology has built an extensive understanding of mental illness and a language to describe the various pathologies that affect millions of people. However, Ryff and Singer (1998) argue that psychology should be more than a "repair shop" for broken lives. The disease model is of limited value when it comes to promoting health and preventing illness. Psychologists know far less about mental health than about mental illness. We lack a comparable understanding or even a language for describing the characteristics of mentally healthy people; yet it is clear that mental health is not simply the absence of mental illness. Eliminating illness does not ensure a healthy, thriving, and competent individual. This fact points out that another contributor to psychology's focus on the negative has been the well-intentioned desire to reduce human misery, guided by the disease model.

POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Martin Seligman may have been the first contemporary psychologist to call this new perspective "positive psychology." In his 1998 presidential address to the American Psychological Association, Seligman made a plea for a major shift in psychology's focus (Seligman, l998), from studying and trying to undo the worst in human behavior to studying and promoting the best in human behavior. He asked his

audience why psychology shouldn't study things like "joy and courage." Seligman supported his call for positive psychology by noting the imbalance in psychology we discussed earlier: too much attention to weaknesses and reducing human misery, and not enough attention to strengths and promoting health. Seligman's hope was that positive psychology would help expand the scope of psychology beyond the disease model to promote the study and understanding of healthy human functioning. The standing ovation at the close of his address indicated an enthusiastic response to Seligman's ideas.

New areas of psychology do not emerge in a vacuum. The concerns and perspectives of positive psychology, given clarifying description by Seligman, have scattered representation throughout psychology's history. Terman's (1939) studies of gifted children and determinants of happiness in marriage (Terman, Buttenwieser, Ferguson, Johnson, & Wilson, 1938) are early examples of research emphasizing positive characteristics and functioning, as noted by Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000). The origins of research on subjective well-being can be found in early research starting in the 1920s and reinforced by the polling techniques of George Gallup and others (Diener, Lucas, & Oishi, 2002). Within psychology's recent history, the humanistic movement may have been one of the stronger voices for a more positive psychology. Humanistic psychology (a popular perspective in the 1960s) also criticized the tendency of traditional psychology to focus on negative aspects of human functioning. Humanistic psychologists Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers viewed human nature as basically positive, insisting that every individual is born with positive inner potentials, and that the driving force in life is to actualize these potentials. Humanistic psychologists believed that the goal of psychology should be to study and promote conditions that help people achieve productive and healthy lives.

What is new about positive psychology, however, is the amount of research and theory it has generated, and the scientific respectability it has achieved. Psychologists can now study hope, forgiveness, or the physical and emotional benefits of positive emotions without feeling that they are leaving their scientific sensibilities behind, and without being regarded as pop psychologists. One may still receive some good-natured ribbing, however. For example, one of our colleagues refers to your first author's positive psychology class as "the happiness course."

While there is no official or universally accepted definition, positive psychology draws on research and theory from established areas of psychology. Positive psychology is, in part, a mosaic of research and theory from many different areas of psychology tied together by their focus on positive aspects of human behavior. Below is a brief sketch of research and theory from different areas of psychology that have contributed most to positive psychology. Hopefully, an overview of its relationship to more established and familiar areas of psychology will clarify what positive psychology is about.

Health Psychology

Positive psychology and health psychology share much in common (Taylor & Sherman, 2004). Health psychologists have long suspected that negative emotions can make us sick and positive emotions can be beneficial. However, only recently has a scientific and biological foundation been developed for these long-standing assumptions. Our understanding of the relationship between body and mind has advanced dramatically in the last several decades. Research findings affirm the potential health-threatening effects of stress, anger, resentment, anxiety, and worry (Cohen & Rodriguez, 1995; Friedman & Booth-Kewley, 1987; Salovey, Rothman, & Rodin, 1998; Taylor, 1999; Vaillant, 1997, 2000). The pathways and mechanisms involved are complex and are just beginning to be understood. They involve the brain, the nervous system, the endocrine system, and the immune system (Maier, Watkins, & Fleshner, 1994). A variety of research shows that people going through long periods of extreme stress are more vulnerable to illness (Cohen, 2002; Kiecolt-Glaser & Glaser, 1987; Ray, 2004; Vaillant, 1997). One reason that stress and negative emotions are bad for us is that they seem to suppress the functioning of the immune system and reduce our body's ability to fight disease.

Positive psychologists are very interested in the most recent studies suggesting that positive emotions may have effects equal to negative emotions, but in the opposite direction. While negative emotions compromise our health, positive emotions seem to help restore or preserve the health of both our minds and our bodies. Positive emotions appear to set in motion a number of physical, psychological, and

social processes that enhance our physical well-being, emotional health, coping skills, and intellectual functioning. Summarized in Fredrickson's (2001) broaden-and-build theory, positive emotions like joy, contentment, interest, love, and pride "all share the ability to broaden people's thought-action repertoires and build their enduring personal resources, ranging from physical and intellectual resources to social and psychological resources" (p. 219).

Our increasing knowledge of the physiological processes underlying emotions provides a biological foundation for positive psychology. It seems reasonable to conclude that positive emotions have every bit as much biological and evolutionary significance as the negative emotions that have attracted so much research attention. Consistent with the goal of restoring balance to the field, positive psychology emphasizes examination of the value of positive emotions in our lives.

Focus on Research: Living Longer Through Positive Emotions—The Nun Study

Do people who experience an abundance of positive emotions in their lives—emotions like cheerfulness, joy, and contentment—live longer than those whose emotional lives are less positive? Sounds reasonable, but how could you untangle all the complex factors that affect people's health to show that emotions made the difference? The "Nun Study," perhaps destined to become a classic in positive psychology, took advantage of the unique features of the religious life of sisters of the Catholic Church. The Nun Study was conducted by Danner, Snowdon, Friesen (2001) from the University of Kentucky. The study's formal title was "Positive emotions in early life and longevity: Findings from the Nun Study." Danner and her colleagues examined the relationship between positive emotions and longevity in a sample of 180 nuns. Why nuns? Nuns were an ideal group of people for such a study because many of the factors affecting physical health were controlled or minimized. Nuns don't smoke or drink excessively; they live in similar life circumstances; they are childless, so they have the same reproductive histories; and they eat the same bland diet. The "sameness" of their lives eliminated many of the variables that might confound an understanding of which specific factors were responsible for a long life.

What led the researchers to believe that a person's emotional life might predict longevity? First of all, prior research (reviewed in the article's introduction) supports the connection between emotions and health. Negative emotions have been shown to suppress the immune system and other aspects of physiological functioning and thereby increase the risk of disease. Positive emotions seem to enhance these same processes and thus reduce the risk of disease. Second, temperament has shown long-term stability over the life span. That is, emotional expressiveness, such as whether we have a positive and cheerful outlook or a negative and more guarded outlook, tends to be fairly consistent over a person's lifetime, from childhood through adulthood. Third, temperament is known to influence how well a person copes with the stress and challenges of life. People with cheerful temperaments and positive outlooks fare better than those with less cheerful and more negative outlooks. Finally, research has shown that writing about significant life events can capture a person's basic emotional outlook. When we write about things that are important to us, we express emotions that reflect aspects of our basic temperament. Taken together, these findings of prior research made it reasonable to assume that autobiographies written early in life would capture basic aspects of emotional expressiveness. Differences in emotional expressiveness might then predict health and longevity.

The nuns in Danner and colleagues' study had been asked to write a brief 2- to 3-page autobiographical sketch as part of their religious vows. These sketches were written in the 1930s and 1940s when the sisters were about 22 years old and just beginning their careers with the church. Researchers were able to retrieve the autobiographies from church archives. Then, they coded each autobiography by counting the number of positive-, negative-, and neutral-emotion words and sentences that it contained. Because few of the autobiographies contained negative emotions, the researchers concentrated on the number of positive-emotion words, positive-emotion sentences, and the number of different positive emotions expressed. Here are two sample portions of autobiographies—one low in positive emotion and the other high in positive emotion. Sister A—coded as low in positive emotion:

> I was born on September 26, 1909, the eldest of seven children, five girls and two boys . . . . My candidate year was spent in

> the Motherhouse, teaching chemistry and Second Year at the Notre Dame Institute. With God's grace, I intend to do my best for our order, for the spread of religion and for my personal sanctification."

Sister B—coded as high in positive emotion:

> God started my life off well by bestowing on me a grace of inestimable value. The past year, which I spent as a candidate studying at Notre Dame College has been a very happy one. Now I look forward with eager joy to receiving the Holy Habit of Our Lady and to a life of union with Love Divine.

Scores resulting from the coding system provided numeric indices to describe the women's early emotional lives. These scores were then analyzed in relation to mortality and survival data for the same group of women 60 years later. At the time the study was done in 2001, the surviving nuns were between 75 and 94 years of age. Forty-two percent of the sisters had died by the time of the follow-up study.

The results of the study were rather amazing. Researchers found a strong relationship between longevity and the expression of positive emotion early in life. For every 1.0% increase in the number of autobiographical sentences expressing positive emotion, there was a corresponding 1.4% decrease in mortality rate. Comparisons of those nuns expressing many different positive emotions with those expressing only a few, showed a mean difference in age of death of 10.7 years. The most cheerful nuns lived a full decade longer than the least cheerful! By age 80, some 60% of the least cheerful group had died, compared to only 25% for the most cheerful sisters. The probability of survival to an advanced age was strongly related to the early-life expression of positive emotions. Figure 1 shows the positive-emotion/survival relationship beginning at age 75. The probability of survival to age 85 was 80% for the most cheerful nuns (Quartile 4 in Figure 1) and

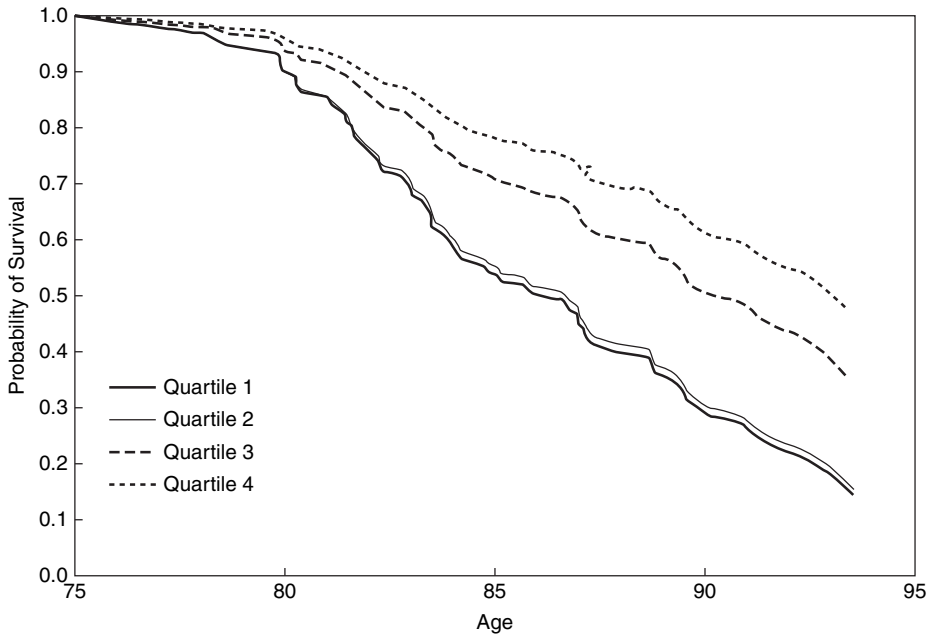

FIGURE 1 Positive Emotions and Survival

Probability of survival to different ages after age 75 as a function of positive emotions expressed early in life by 180 participants in the Nun Study. Positive emotional expression arranged in rank order from lowest (Quartile 1) to highest (Quartile 4). *Source:* Danner, D.D., Snowdon, D.A., & Friesen, W.V. (2001). Positive emotions in early life and longevity: Findings from the Nun study. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 80*, 804–813. Copyright 2001 by the American Psychological Association. Reprinted by permission.

54% for the least cheerful (Quartile 1). The odds of survival to age 90 were 65% for the upbeat sisters, but only 30% for the less upbeat. By age 94, the survival odds were over half (54%) for the most positive sisters and only 15% for the least positive.

According to the results of the Nun Study, the phrase, "don't worry, be happy" is excellent advice. You may live longer!

Clinical Psychology

The disillusionment of many clinical psychologists with sole reliance on the disease model has been another factor contributing to the development of positive psychology. Mental health professionals are beginning to view the work of reducing psychological misery as only part of their task. There will always be clients in need of help, and it will continue to be an important mission of psychologists to provide such help. However, many clinicians have begun shifting from the single-minded purpose of treating psychopathology toward a perspective that includes prevention of illness and promotion of positive mental health. Fundamental to this shift is the need to develop models of positive mental health. That is, what personal characteristics and what type of life define the extreme opposite of mental illness—a state Keyes and Haidt (2003) call "flourishing?" In the past, mental health was defined mostly in terms of the absence of disease. One goal of positive psychology is to establish criteria and a language defining the presence of mental health that parallels our current criteria and language for describing and diagnosing mental illness.

Developmental Psychology

A long-standing focus of developmental psychologists has been examination of conditions that threaten healthy development. Following a deficit-focused model, it was assumed that most children growing up under conditions of adversity (e.g., poverty, abuse, parental alcoholism, or mental illness) would be at heightened risk for deficits in social, cognitive, and emotional development compared to children not subjected to such adversities. These assumptions began to change in the 1970s when many psychiatrists and psychologists drew attention to the amazing resilience of certain children and adults subjected to potentially debilitating life challenges (Masten, 2001). Cases of resilience—meaning "good outcomes in spite of serious threats to adaptation or development" (Masten, p. 228) —are more common than previously supposed. Research documenting the amazing resilience of ordinary people facing difficult life circumstances highlights a major theme of positive psychology, namely human strengths.

Perhaps even more intriguing is the concept of **posttraumatic growth** (PTG) as a counterpoint to posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Researchers have documented that positive growth can occur as a result of traumatic experiences like serious illness, loss of a loved one, or a major accident or disability (Ryff & Singer, 2003a). In the aftermath of such events, many people report a greater appreciation for life and their loved ones, an increased sense of personal strength, and more clarity about what is most important in life. Studies of resilience and posttraumatic growth underscore positive psychology's emphasis on human strengths and positive coping abilities.

Survey Research and Subjective Well-Being

Public opinion polling has been a long-standing research tool for social psychologists and sociologists. Beginning with national surveys of opinions toward issues, groups, and political candidates, survey research subsequently branched out to include quality-of-life measures. Ed Diener (2000) is a prominent contemporary researcher who studies happiness, defined as **subjective well-being** (SWB). Measures of SWB assess a person's level of life satisfaction and the frequency of positive and negative emotional experiences. Studies of happiness have established a reliable pattern of intriguing findings (e.g., Diener, 2000; Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999; Myers, 2000a). The most noteworthy of these is that material success (i.e., money and wealth) bears only a weak relationship to happiness. Increases in income and possession of consumer goods beyond what is necessary to meet basic needs are not reliably related to increases in happiness. You may dream of winning a multimillion dollar lottery, but studies show that winners quickly return to their prelottery levels of happiness (see Csikszentmihalyi, 1999 and Diener, 2000 for reviews).

Survey research raises an interesting question. If money doesn't buy happiness, what does? This

question is one way to think about positive psychology. Once basic needs are met, objective life circumstances (such as the amount of money you make, or your age, race, or gender) do not have much influence on your level of happiness. So, the difference between happy and unhappy people must involve more psychological and subjective factors. Positive psychology follows the lead of early survey research in examining the traits and states that help explain differences in the level of happiness. Much of the research in positive psychology is focused on *traits*, such as self-esteem, physical attractiveness, optimism, intelligence, and extraversion, and on *states*, such as work situation, involvement in religion, number of friends, marital status, and the quality of relationships. Taken together, these traits and states help explain one of the major questions of positive psychology: "Why are some people happier than others?"

Social/Personality Psychology and the Psychology of Religion

Social psychologists have provided extensive evidence of the critical importance of satisfying social relationships and support from others for our health and happiness (e.g., Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Ryff & Singer, 2000; Taylor, Repetti, & Seeman, 1997; Uchino, Cacioppo, & Kiecolt-Glaser, 1996). A satisfying life is founded on satisfying relationships, such as a happy marriage and good friends. Social psychologists have also sensitized us to the different cultural understandings of well-being and happiness. Concepts of happiness in America and Japan, for example, are quite different. In addition to studies across diverse cultures, social psychologists have investigated a potential dark side of affluence and materialism among advanced consumer cultures such as our own (e.g., Cushman, 1990; Kasser & Kanner, 2004). These latter studies show that materialistic people who sacrifice fulfillment of important psychological needs in their pursuit of fame and fortune may also sacrifice their own happiness and life satisfaction. Related research has contributed to an understanding of the amazing process of human adaptation that helps explain why increases in income, like the sudden wealth of lottery winners, has only short-term effects (Diener & Oishi, 2005). In short, why money does not buy happiness.

Studies by personality psychologists have identified positive traits and personal strengths that form the foundation of health and happiness. These studies include investigations of the genetic basis of a happy temperament (e.g., Lykken, 1999) and personality traits related to individual well-being such as optimism (Peterson, 2000; Seligman, 1990), self-esteem (Baumeister, 1999), extraversion (McCrae & Costa, 1997), a positive life outlook (e.g., Taylor, 1989; Taylor & Brown, 1988), and how the pursuit of personally meaningful goals contributes to happiness (Emmons, 1999b).

Both social and personality psychology researchers have contributed to an understanding of the roles that religion and morality play in people's lives (e.g., Pargament, 1997; Spilka, Hood, Hunsberger, & Gorsuch, 2003). Religion has become an important topic within positive psychology because it is a significant foundation of well-being for most people. The study of virtue also has a prominent position because the meaning of a good life and a life well-lived is strongly connected to human virtues, such as honesty, integrity, compassion, and wisdom (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). And, expressing human virtues contributes to individual well-being and the well-being of others. For example, acts of forgiveness (McCullough, 1999) and gratitude (Emmons & McCullough, 2004) tend to increase life satisfaction for both givers and recipients.

POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY: ASSUMPTIONS, GOALS, AND DEFINITIONS

Martin Seligman's call for a positive psychology was aimed at refocusing the entire field of psychology. He will likely be disappointed if positive psychology becomes simply one more area of specialized research. It is encouraging, then, to find elements of positive psychology represented in so many different areas of psychology, from physiological to clinical psychology. Positive psychology is both a general perspective on the discipline of psychology and a collection of research topics focused on positive aspects of human behavior.

To sum up our discussion, we may point to several common themes that run through much of the developing literature in positive psychology. A major assumption of positive psychology is that the field of psychology has become unbalanced (Simonton & Baumeister, 2005). A major goal of positive psychology is to restore balance within the discipline. This goal is reflected in two areas of research and theory that need further development.

First, there is a need for improved understanding of positive human behaviors to balance the negative focus of much mainstream research and theory (Sheldon & King, 2001). Related to this is the need for psychologists to overcome their skepticism about the scientific and "authentic" status of positive psychology's subject matter. A second need is to develop an empirically-based conceptual understanding and language for describing healthy human functioning that parallels our classification and understanding of mental illness (Keyes, 2003). It is arguably just as important to understand the sources of health as it is to understand the causes of illness, particularly if we are interested in preventing illness by promoting healthy lifestyles (Ryff & Singer, 1998).

The themes of positive psychology are captured in various attempts to define this new area of psychology. Sheldon and King (2001) define positive psychology as "nothing more than the scientific study of ordinary human strengths and virtues" (p. 216). This definition reflects the emphasis on psychology's lack of attention to people's everyday lives, which are typically quite positive. Gable and Haidt (2005, p. 104) suggest that positive psychology is "the study of the conditions and processes that contribute to the flourishing or optimal functioning of people, groups and institutions." This definition has much in common with Seligman's (2003) description of the three pillars of positive psychology. Positive psychology is built on the study of (1) positive subjective experiences (such as joy, happiness, contentment, optimism, and hope); (2) positive individual characteristics (such as personal strengths and human virtues that promote mental health); and (3) positive social institutions and communities that contribute to individual health and happiness.

In a more specific formulation, Seligman and his colleagues have proposed that happiness as a central focus of positive psychology can be broken down into three components: the pleasant life, the engaged life, and the meaningful life (Seligman, 2003, Seligman, Rashid, & Parks, 2006). These three aspects of happiness capture the two major themes in positive psychology, namely that positive psychology is the scientific study of optimal mental functioning and happiness. The **pleasant life** reflects the emphasis in positive psychology on understanding the determinants of happiness as a desired state—what some people might call the "good life." Specifically, what life circumstances and personal qualities make people happy, content, and fulfilled? The **engaged life** is an aspect of happiness focused on active involvement in activities (e.g., work and leisure) and relationships with others that express our talents and strengths and that give meaning and purpose to our lives. Such involvements promote a zestful and healthy life. A **meaningful life** is an aspect of happiness that derives from going beyond our own self-interests and preoccupations. This is a deeper and more enduring aspect of happiness that stems from giving to, and being involved in, something larger than your self—what Seligman and his colleagues (2006) call "positive institutions." Examples might include a religious community, a personal philosophy of life, your family, a charitable community organization, or a political, environmental, or social cause. The point is that a life well-lived means being connected to something "larger than the self" (Seligman et al., 2006, p. 777).

Life Above Zero

In summary, you can think of positive psychology as the study of what we might call life on the positive side of zero, where zero is the line that divides illness from health and unhappiness from happiness. Traditional psychology has told us much about life at and below zero, but less about life above zero. What takes us from just an absence of illness and unhappiness to a life that is meaningful, purposeful, satisfying, and healthy—in short, a life worth living? Positive psychology is all about the personal qualities, life circumstances, individual choices, life activities, relationships with others, transcendent purposes, and sociocultural conditions that foster and define a good life. By combining these factors with the criteria positive psychologists have used to define a good life, we suggest the following definition of positive psychology: *Positive psychology is the scientific study of the personal qualities, life choices, life circumstances, and sociocultural conditions that promote a life well-lived, defined by criteria of happiness, physical and mental health, meaningfulness, and virtue.*

Culture and the Meaning of a Good Life

The particular meanings of a good life and a life well-lived are obviously shaped by one's culture. Conceptions of a good life are part of every culture's ideals, values, and philosophic/religious traditions (Ryff & Singer, 1998). Because positive psychology is

largely a Western enterprise, it is appropriate to ask whether its ideas about health and happiness reflect a Western view and, therefore, do not apply to other cultures. For positive psychologists this is largely an empirical issue, but one that has its share of controversy. Certainly, researchers in the emerging field of positive psychology do not want to impose a "one-size-fits-all" definition that suggests there is only one kind of good life. Instead, they want to tease out universal from culture-specific ideas and define a life well-lived according to broad and flexible criteria that allow for individual and cultural differences. Studies comparing people from widely diverse cultural backgrounds find both differences and commonalities in their understanding of the meaning and general defining features of a good life. Through intensive cultural comparisons, researchers have sought not only to respect differences, but also to identify the commonalities across cultures—that is, what all or most cultures share regarding their descriptions of positive human qualities and the meaning of a good life.

Why Now?

Why has positive psychology attracted so much enthusiastic interest from psychologists today? Calls for psychologists to give more attention to positive human behaviors have been made before. Why were they heard only recently? New ideas emerge in part because they fit or capture some essential theme that is prominent at particular point in history. Historians often refer to this as the *zeitgeist*, which means the spirit of the times. Several authors (e.g., Keyes & Haidt, 2003; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) have argued that positive psychology gave expression to concerns and issues widespread in our culture and in psychology that surfaced in the late 1990s and continue into the new millennium.

Foremost among these is the stark contrast between unprecedented levels of affluence in our society and increasing signs of subjective distress. Csikszentmihalyi (1999) captures this concern in the title of his article, "If we are so rich, why aren't we happy?" In short, most indicators of material affluence, from personal income and ownership of computers and DVD players to GNP, have gone up over the last 30 years. The 1990s are perhaps epitomized in the bumper sticker stating, "the one with the most toys wins." However, the "**paradox of affluence,**" as Myers (2000b) describes it, is that many indicators of distress and unhappiness have also gone up.

The "misery index" includes rates of divorce, child abuse, childhood poverty, and adolescent suicide. Seligman (1998) notes that we are twice as rich as we were 40 years ago, but we are also 10 times more likely to get depressed. According to many clinical psychologists, depression in the United States is currently at the epidemic level. Themes related to the emptiness and dark side of affluence have also found expression in movies and documentaries such as *American Beauty, Bowling for Columbine*, and the PBS investigation titled, *The Lost Children of Rockdale County* (Frontline, 2002). The latter examined a group of affluent teenagers in a suburb of Augusta, Georgia, who grew up in "good homes" with every advantage money could buy. In the absence of adequate parental supervision, these teens lapsed into exploitive and abusive group sexual relationships culminating in an outbreak of sexually transmitted diseases. When their troubled experiences were discovered, these young people told painful stories of inner emptiness and unfulfilled lives.

Perhaps the most fundamental idea in these descriptions of our culture is an old one—namely, that money doesn't buy happiness. Recognition of the limits in the ability of affluence to bring personal satisfaction has raised questions about the sources of a healthy and satisfying life. The fact that psychology has historically offered no ready answers to these questions has contributed, in part, to the surge of interest in positive psychology. In the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks, our own safety and security may have taken center stage. However, the questions addressed by positive psychology are enduring, and much of its subject matter is directly relevant to our current, uncertain times.

TWO FINAL NOTES

Positive Psychology Is Not Opposed to Psychology

Any description of the issues and concerns that led to the development of positive psychology necessarily involves the question of how positive psychology is different from psychology as a whole. For purposes of clarification, positive psychologists frequently contrast this new area with "traditional psychology." Describing what something *is*, inevitably involves describing what it *is not*. We do not want to create the

impression that positive psychology is somehow opposed to psychology. Psychologists have developed an extensive understanding of human behavior and the treatment of psychopathology. Psychology's history shows a steady advance in knowledge and in effective treatments. Positive psychologists are not so much concerned about what *has* been studied in psychology, as they are concerned about what has *not* been studied. It is the relatively one-sided focus on the negatives that is of concern. Sheldon and King (2001) describe the fundamental message of positive psychology as follows: "Positive psychology is thus an attempt to urge psychologists to adopt a more open and appreciative perspective regarding human potentials, motives and capacities" (p. 216). Positive psychology aims to expand—not replace—psychology's understanding of human behavior.

Positive Psychology and the Status Quo

Research in positive psychology shows that our attitude toward life makes a significant contribution to our happiness and health. But does this mean that life circumstances are not important? If you are poor, living in a high-crime area, and have no job, is your happiness dependent on your attitude and not your situation? If happiness is more a matter of attitude than money, do we need to worry much about the amount of poverty in our country? In other words, does positive psychology serve the status quo by helping to justify the unequal distribution of resources and power in our society? If our happiness is more a product of subjective personal factors than it is of material factors, why should we be concerned about who gets what?

There are a number of reasons why positive psychology should *not* be seen as justifying the status quo. First, an individual's external situation is clearly important to the quality of his or her life; and there are limits to people's ability to maintain a positive attitude in the face of challenging life experiences. Poor people are less happy than those who are not poor, and certain traumas, like death of a spouse, do have lasting effects on personal happiness (Diener, 2000).

Second, most of the research on subjective well-being involves people who are, economically speaking, living relatively comfortable lives. For individuals in this group, life satisfaction is more dependent on psychological and social factors because basic needs have been met. The fact that most Americans seem reasonably happy (Myers, 2000a) may reflect the optimism and satisfaction that results from having the freedom to make personal choices and to pursue satisfying endeavors. Both are made possible, in part, by relative economic comfort. However, knowing that someone is economically well-off does not tell us whether he or she is happy or satisfied with his or her life. One important message of positive psychology is this: A shortage of money can make you miserable, but an abundance of money doesn't necessarily make you happy.

Finally, questions concerning what makes us happy and questions about what is just and fair in the distribution of resources and in how people are treated, might best be answered separately. That is, whatever positive psychologists may discover about the sources of happiness, issues of justice and fairness will remain. The primary reasons for promoting equality, equal opportunity, and equal treatment have to do with the foundational values of our country. Policies to remove discriminatory barriers or to improve the equal distribution of resources do not require misery or unhappiness as justification. Discrimination and inequality may create misery, but being treated fairly and having equal opportunity are rights of every citizen regardless of how she or he may feel. No one should have to show that he or she is miserable and unhappy to justify fair treatment or equal opportunity.

Chapter Summary Questions

1. From the perspective of positive psychology, why does the Milgram study present an imbalanced view of human nature?
2. Why are negative aspects of human behavior perceived as more authentic and real than positive aspects?
3. Why are negative behaviors given more weight than positive behaviors?
4. How does the disease model promote a focus on negatives?
5. Why is positive psychology necessary according to Seligman, and how is positive psychology related to humanistic psychology?
6. What does recent evidence from health psychology suggest about the differing effects of positive and negative emotions on our physical health?

7. a. Why did researchers in the Nun Study hypothesize that expressed emotions could predict longevity?
   b. Briefly describe the study's design and major findings.
8. Describe two reasons why clinical psychologists are becoming interested in positive psychology.
9. How do developmental psychologists' studies of resilience and posttraumatic growth contribute to positive psychology?
10. What does survey research suggest about the importance of money to individual happiness?
11. How have social and personality psychology contributed to positive psychology? Describe three examples.
12. What is the major assumption and goal of positive psychology?
13. Describe the components of Seligman's three-part definition of happiness (i.e., pleasant, engaged, and meaningful life).
14. a. How may positive psychology be thought of as the study of life above zero?
    b. How do your text authors define positive psychology?
15. What cultural changes and paradoxes have contributed to the development of positive psychology?
16. How does positive psychology complement rather than oppose traditional psychology?
17. Discuss the issue of positive psychology's relationship to the status quo.

Key Terms

bad is stronger than the good
disease model
subjective well-being
posttraumatic growth
pleasant life
engaged life
meaningful life
paradox of affluence

Web Resources

Positive Psychology

www.positivepsychology.org Site for the Positive Psychology Center at the University of Pennsylvania. A wealth of information about positive psychology's goals, research, and theories.

www.apa.org Web page for the American Psychological Association, with links to articles and books about positive psychology.

www.pos-psych.com Site for the *Positive Psychology News Daily*. Web site put together by graduates of the Master's Degree program at the University of Pennsylvania. Contains recent research and "fun" information.

The Nun Study

www.mc.uky.edu/nunnet/ University of Kentucky web page for research related to the famous Nun Study.

Authentic Happiness

www.authentichappiness.org Martin Seligman's link to his popular 2002 book *Authentic happiness*. Contains research summaries and positive psychology self-assessment tests.

Suggested Readings

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The Meaning and Measure of Happiness

The Meaning and Measure of Happiness

CHAPTER OUTLINE

In this chapter, we begin an exploration of psychology's answer to some ancient questions. What is a good life? What is a life worth living? What is the basis for happiness that endures beyond short-term pleasures? The ancient Greeks contemplated the answers to these questions. Is a good life built on maximizing pleasures and minimizing pain, as the hedonic

philosophy of the Epicureans prescribed? Minimizing pain, as the Stoics believed? Or is happiness to be found in the expression of the true self, or *daimon*, as described by Aristotle's eudaimonic view of happiness?

Every day we are asked, "how are you doing?" Few of us consult classical philosophy to address this question. Yet our answers reflect some assessment of our well-being, even if only the temporary and fleeting assessment of our feelings at a given moment. In the larger scheme of things, much depends on how we describe and define happiness and "the good life." The kind of society we wish to have reflects our culture's image of what a good life represents. The efforts of parents, teachers, government, and religion are based on assumptions about the kind of qualities and behaviors that "should" be promoted and encouraged. As individuals, we each have some notion of the life we hope to lead, and the goals and ambitions we want to pursue. No matter how we describe the particulars, most of us hope for a happy and satisfying life. What makes up a happy and satisfying life is the question. Positive psychology has addressed this question from a subjective psychological point of view. This means that primacy is given to people's own judgments of well-being based on their own criteria for evaluating the quality of life. We now consider why a subjective and psychological perspective is important.

WHY A PSYCHOLOGY OF WELL-BEING?

We Americans collect a wealth of information related to the question, "how are we doing as a society?" We count, rate, and measure many aspects of our collective and individual lives. Information collected by federal, state, and local governments, along with numerous private agencies, provides a statistical picture of the "state" of different life domains. Economic indicators assess our collective economic well-being. They include statistics on the rate of unemployment, the number of people defined as poor, average annual income, new jobs created, home mortgage interest rates, and performance of the stock market. A variety of social indicators assess the state of our health, families, and communities (Diener, 1995; Diener & Suh, 1997). A picture of our physical health is suggested by statistics describing such things as how long we live, the number of people suffering from major illnesses (like cancer, heart disease, and AIDS), levels of infant mortality, and the percentage of people who have health insurance. A picture of mental health is provided by statistics showing the percentage of people suffering from emotional problems like depression, drug abuse, anxiety disorders, and suicide. An aggregate view of community and family well-being may be seen in statistics on such things as divorce, single-parent families, poor families, unwed mothers, abused children, serious crimes, and suicide.

What kind of answer do these statistics offer to the question, "how are we doing?" Taken in total, they describe what we might call our country's "**misery index.**" That is, they give us information about how many people are suffering from significant problems that diminish the quality of their lives. To be poor, depressed, seriously ill without health insurance, unemployed, or coping with the suicide of a family member seems like a recipe for misery and unhappiness. Most of us would agree that decreasing the misery index is an important goal of governmental, social, and economic policy. Within psychology, a good deal of research and professional practice has been devoted to preventing and treating the problems reflected in the misery index. Positive psychologists agree that these problems are significant and applaud efforts to deal with them. However, a positive psychological perspective suggests that national statistics provide an incomplete and somewhat misleading answer to the question, "how are we doing?"

Objective versus Subjective Measures

Researchers discovered early on that many economic and social indicators of a person's "objective" life circumstances (e.g., income, age, and occupation) were only weakly related to people's own judgments of their well-being (Andrews & Withey, 1976; Campbell, Converse, & Rodgers, 1976). In a major review of this research, Diener (1984) argued that subjective well-being (SWB), defined by ratings of life satisfaction and positive emotional experience, was a critical component of well-being that was missing from the equation. Subjective well-being, or happiness, in everyday terms, reflects an individual's own judgment about the quality of his or her life. From a subjective well-being (SWB) perspective, economic and social indicators are incomplete because they do not directly assess how happy or satisfied people are with their lives (Diener & Suh, 1997). Although these indicators describe the

"facts" of a person's life, they do not tell us how a person thinks and feels about these facts.

Personal, subjective evaluations are important for several reasons. First, different individuals may react to the same circumstances (as described by economic and social statistics) in very different ways because of differences in their expectations, values, and personal histories. Subjective evaluations help us interpret the "facts" from an individual's point of view. Second, happiness and life satisfaction are important goals in their own right. The "pursuit of happiness" is described in the Declaration of Independence as one of Americans' inalienable rights, and surveys show that people rank happiness high on the list of desirable life goals. For example, a survey of over 7,000 college students in 42 different countries found the pursuit of happiness and life satisfaction to be among students' most important goals (Suh, Diener, Oishi, & Triandis, 1998). Happiness is a central component of people's conception of a good life and a good society (Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2003). How happy people are with their lives is therefore an important part of the answer to the question, "how are we doing?"

Economic and social indicators may be misleading if we consider them to be sufficient indices of happiness and satisfaction. Research shows that a person's level of happiness depends on many factors that are not measured by economic and social statistics. For example, the amount of money a person makes is only marginally related to measures of happiness (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999; Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999). Over the last 50 years, average personal income has tripled. Yet, national surveys conducted during the same 50-year period showed that levels of expressed happiness did not go up, but remained unchanged. Clearly, some social statistics do tell us something about who is likely to be *unhappy*. The approximately 20% of Americans who are depressed are, by definition, dissatisfied with their lives (Kessler et al., 1994). However, most national statistics tell us little about who is likely to be happy. If we knew a particular person had a good job and adequate income, was married, owned a home, was in good physical health, and was not suffering from a mental disorder, we would still not know if he or she was also happy and satisfied. Diener and colleagues summarize the importance of happiness by arguing that the measurement of happiness is an essential third ingredient, along with economic and social indicators, for assessing the quality of life within a society (Diener et al., 2003).

Negative versus Positive Functioning

Other researchers have argued that national statistics are also incomplete because they fail to assess human strengths, optimal functioning, and positive mental health (Aspinwall & Staudinger, 2003; Keyes, Shmotkin, & Ryff, 2002; Ryan & Deci, 2001). For example, Ryff and Keyes (1995) described six aspects of positive functioning and actualization of potentials as the basis for what they called "psychological well-being:" autonomy, personal growth, self-acceptance, life purpose, environmental mastery, and positive relations with others. They argue that it is the presence of these strengths and realized potentials that define well-being and a fully functioning person. From this perspective, national statistics (particularly those related to mental illness) are incomplete because they only examine the presence or absence of illness and negative functioning, and fail to take into account the presence of strengths and positive functioning. Mental health statistics are focused on pathological symptoms of mental illness—not on positive markers of mental wellness (Keyes, 2002; Ryff & Singer, 1998). As noted by Keyes (2003), the absence of mental illness does not necessarily indicate the presence of mental health.

The major point of Keyes' analysis is shown in Figure 1. About 26% of American adults suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder in a given year. Does this mean that the other 74% are mentally healthy? Keyes' research suggests that the answer is no. Only 17% of Americans were found to enjoy complete mental health or to be flourishing, and 10% were estimated to be languishing. Languishing is a state of distress and despair, but it is not severe enough to meet current mental illness criteria and so is not included in official statistics.

Positive psychologists argue that without measures of SWB and positive functioning, our answer to the question "how are we doing?" is likely to be incomplete. In line with this conclusion, Diener and Seligman (2004) have recently provided a detailed examination of the social policy implications of well-being research. They argue for the development of a national indicator of well-being that would complement economic and social statistics. A national well-being index would highlight important features of our individual and collective lives that are not

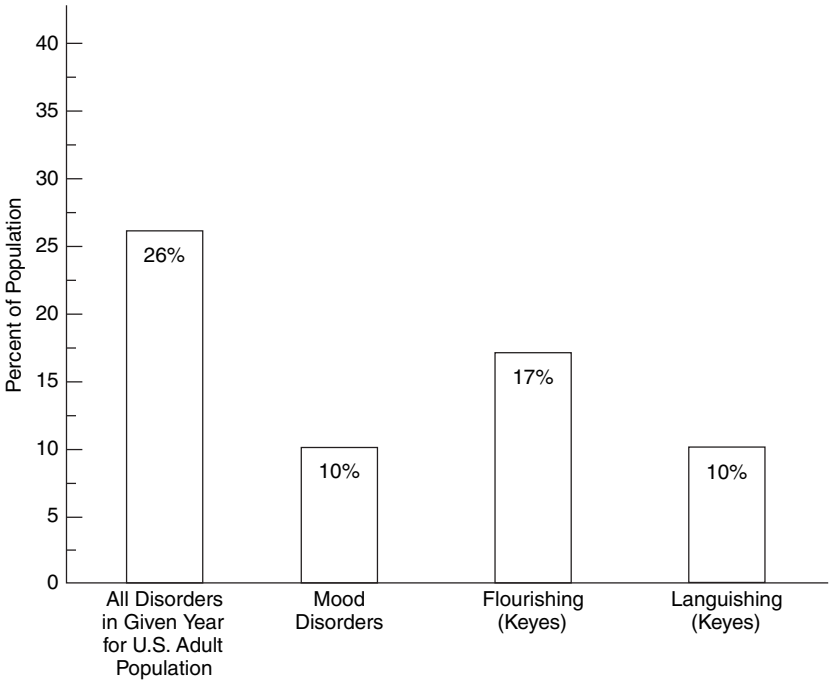

FIGURE 1 Mental Illness and Mental Health

Source: Mental disorders data from National Institute of Mental Health. The numbers count: Mental disorders in America, Rev. 2006. Retrieved August 2007 at http://www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/numbers.cfm. Flourishing/languishing percentages from Keyes, C.L.M. (2007). Promoting and protecting mental health and flourishing: A complementary strategy for improving national mental health. *American Psychologist, 62,* 95–108.

currently measured in any systematic way. Such an index could have important and positive effects on social policies, and on how we think about the quality of our lives. Several countries in Europe have already begun to address this issue. For example, the German Socioeconomic Panel in Germany and the Eurobarometer in European Union nations are two examples of government-sponsored programs that regularly collect information about life satisfaction and well-being.

WHAT IS HAPPINESS? TWO TRADITIONS

From your own individual point of view, how would you answer the questions raised at the beginning of this chapter? What is a good life? What is happiness? What defines a satisfying life or a life well-lived? What kind of life do you wish to lead? And in the end, how do you hope people will remember you?

Hedonic Happiness

Probably most of us would hope first for a long life—one that does not end prematurely. Suicide, however, is a reminder that the quality of life is more important to many people than the quantity of life. As for quality of life, happiness might be number one on our list. Most people would likely hope for a happy and satisfying life, in which good things and pleasant experiences outnumber bad ones. Particularly in American culture, as we noted earlier, happiness seems to be an important part of how people define a good life. Defining the good life in terms of personal happiness is the general thrust of the hedonic view of well-being (Kahneman, Diener, & Schwarz, 1999; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Waterman, 1993). Hedonic psychology parallels aspects of the philosophy of hedonism. While there are many varieties of philosophical hedonism dating back to the ancient Greeks, a general version of hedonism holds that the

chief goal of life is the pursuit of happiness and pleasure. Within psychology, this view of well-being is expressed in the study of SWB (Diener, 1984; Diener et al., 1999). Subjective well-being takes a broad view of happiness, beyond the pursuit of short-term or physical pleasures defining a narrow hedonism. **Subjective well-being** is defined as life satisfaction, the presence of positive affect, and a relative absence of negative affect. Together, the three components are often referred to as happiness. Research based on the SWB model has burgeoned in the last 5 years (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Studies have delineated a variety of personality characteristics and life experiences that help answer questions about who is happy and what makes people happy. A major portion of this text is devoted to reviewing the research and theory on SWB.

Eudaimonic Happiness

Is happiness enough for a good life? Would you be content and satisfied if you were happy and nothing else? Consider a hypothetical example suggested by Seligman (2002a). What if you could be hooked to an "experience machine" that would keep you in a constant state of cheerful happiness, or whatever positive emotion you desired, no matter what happened in your life. Fitting the hedonic view, you would experience an abundance of happiness all the time. Would you choose to be hooked up? We might like it for awhile, but to experience only one of our many emotions, and to have the same cheerful reaction to the diversity of life events and challenges might actually impoverish the experience of life. And some of what we would lose might be extremely valuable. For example, negative emotions like fear help us make choices that avoid threats to our well-being. Without fear and other negative emotions we might make very bad choices. We'd be happy, but we might not live very long. Seligman (2002a) argues that we would likely also reject the experience machine because we want to feel we are entitled to our positive emotions, and to believe they reflect our "real" positive qualities and behaviors. Pleasure, disconnected from reality, does not affirm or express our identity as individuals.

Above all, most of us would probably reject the experience machine because we believe that there is more to life than happiness and subjective pleasure. Or as Seligman (2002a) describes it, there is a deeper and more "authentic happiness." Much of classical Greek philosophy was concerned with these deeper meanings of happiness and the good life. Waterman (1990, 1993) describes two psychological views of happiness distilled from classical philosophy. Hedonic conceptions of happiness, discussed above, define happiness as the enjoyment of life and its pleasures. The hedonic view captures a major element of what we mean by happiness in everyday terms: We enjoy life; we are satisfied with how our lives are going; and good events outnumber bad events.

In contrast, eudaimonic conceptions of happiness, given fullest expression in the writings of Aristotle, define happiness as self-realization, meaning the expression and fulfillment of inner potentials. From this perspective, the good life results from living in accordance with your *daimon* (in other words, your true self). That is, happiness results from striving toward self-actualization—a process in which our talents, needs, and deeply held values direct the way we conduct our lives. "Eudaimonia" (or happiness) results from realization of our potentials. We are happiest when we follow and achieve our goals and develop our unique potentials. Eudaimonic happiness has much in common with humanistic psychology's emphases on the concepts of self-actualization (Maslow, 1968) and the fully functioning person (Rogers, 1961) as criteria for healthy development and optimal functioning.

What kinds of experiences lead to eudaimonic happiness? Waterman (1993) argued that eudaimonic happiness results from experiences of personal expressiveness. Such experiences occur when we are fully engaged in life activities that fit and express our deeply held values and our sense of who we are. Under these circumstances we experience a feeling of fulfillment, of meaningfulness, of being intensely alive—a feeling that this is who we really are and who we were meant to be.

At this point, you might ask whether hedonic and eudaimonic views of happiness are very different. Aren't activities that bring us pleasure also generally the ones that are meaningful because they express our talents and values? Waterman believes that there are many more activities that produce hedonic enjoyment than activities that provide eudaimonic happiness based on personal expression. Everything from alcohol consumption and eating chocolate, to a warm bath can bring us pleasure, but there are fewer activities that engage significant aspects of our identity and give a deeper meaning to our lives.

To evaluate the similarities and differences between hedonic enjoyment and personal expressiveness (eudaimonic enjoyment), Waterman (1993) asked a sample of college students to list five activities that addressed the following question: "If you wanted another person to know about who you are and what you are like as a person, what five activities of importance to you would you describe?" (p. 681). This question was meant to evoke activities that define and express a person's personality, talents, and values. Each activity listed was then rated on scales describing personal expressiveness and hedonic enjoyment of the activity. Expressive items included questions about whether the activity gave strong feelings of authenticity (who I really am), fulfillment and completion, intense involvement, and self-activity-fit. Hedonic questions focused on whether the activity produced good feelings such as a warm glow, happiness, pleasure, or enjoyment. Waterman found substantial overlap in expressive and hedonic ratings. Half to two-thirds of the time, personally expressive activities also generated a comparable level of hedonic enjoyment. However, the two forms of happiness also diverged for some activities. Hedonic enjoyment was associated with activities that made people feel relaxed, excited, content or happy, and that led to losing track of time and forgetting personal problems. Feelings of personal expressiveness (eudaimonic happiness) were more strongly related to activities that created feelings of challenge, competence, and effort, and that offered the opportunity for personal growth and skill development.

Focus on Research: Positive Affect and a Meaningful Life

Until recently, Waterman was one of the few researchers who examined the similarities and differences between hedonic and eudaimonic conceptions of happiness. However, in a recent study, Laura King and her colleagues have revisited this issue by examining the relationship between positive affect and meaningfulness (King, Hicks, Krull, & Del Gaiso, 2006). Positive affect is a summary term for pleasurable emotions such as joy, contentment, laughter, and love. Meaningfulness refers to more personally expressive and engaging activities that may connect us to a broader and even transcendent view of life.

King and her colleagues note that historically, positive affect has been thought of as more central to hedonic than to eudaimonic conceptions of well-being. In fact, "the good life," from a eudaimonic perspective, suggests that the pursuit of pleasure may detract from a personally expressive and meaningful life. Pleasure is seen as a shallow and unsatisfying substitute for deeper purposes in life. The potential opposition between pleasure and meaning is one reason for the scant research examining their potential interrelation. However, King and colleagues' study suggests that the line between positive affect and meaning in life is not as clear as previously imagined. Positive affect may enhance people's ability to find meaning and purpose in their lives.

As a basis for their study, King and her colleagues note the considerable research linking meaning with positive psychological functioning. Experiencing life as meaningful consistently predicts health and happiness across the life span. Finding meaning in life's difficulties contributes to positive coping and adaptation. Meaning in life may stem from a person's goals, intrinsically satisfying activities, interpersonal relationships, self-improvement efforts, or a transcendent philosophy or religion that provides a larger sense of understanding and coherence to the journey through life. Whatever the basis of their understanding, people are clearly capable of making global judgments about the meaning and purpose of life. Researchers do not typically define "meaning in life" for study participants, but let each person use his or her own understanding. People's self-described perceptions of meaning and purpose are highly related to well-being outcomes.

How might positive affect contribute to meaning in life? King and her colleagues believe that positive emotions open up people's thinking to more imaginative and creative possibilities by placing current concerns in a broader context. These effects of positive emotions may enhance meaning if they also cause people to think of their lives in terms of a larger system of meaning. For example, an enjoyable walk in the mountains on a beautiful day or a fun evening with friends may lead you to think of your place in nature's scheme of things or the importance of relationships in a satisfying life.

Positive emotions may also be markers of meaningful events and activities. Progressing toward important goals makes us feel good. Judgments of global life satisfaction are enhanced by a current or recent positive mood. Meaningful and expressive activities are typically accompanied by enjoyment. It is likely that these connections between positive affect and meaning are represented in our memories

as well-learned linkages. In the same way that the sights, sounds, and smells of Christmas may bring back fond childhood memories, positive affect may give rise to a sense of meaning in life. Positive emotions may be intimately bound to the meaning of meaning.

In a series of six studies, King and her colleagues found positive affect to be consistently related to meaning in life. Whether people were asked to make global life judgments or daily assessments, meaning and positive emotion were highly correlated. Taking a long-term view, people who characteristically experience many positive emotions (i.e., trait positive affectivity) report greater meaningfulness in their lives than people who typically experience more frequent negative emotions (i.e., trait negative affectivity). In day-to-day life, the same relationship was found. A day judged as meaningful included more positive than negative emotional events. People's ratings of statements such as, "Today, my personal existence was very purposeful and meaningful" or, "Today, I had a sense that I see a reason for being here" were significantly related to their daily diary entries describing positive emotional experiences occurring during the day. And the effect of positive emotion was above and beyond that of goal progress assessments. Goal pursuits are a significant source of purpose in life. When King and her fellow investigators factored out the effects of individual goal assessments, positive affect was still significantly related to enhanced life meaning. Experimental manipulations of positive and negative mood also supported the role of positive affect. People who were primed to think about, or induced to feel positive emotions rated life as more meaningful and made clearer discriminations between meaningful and meaningless tasks, compared to participants in neutral emotional conditions.

Overall, King and her colleagues' work suggests that meaning and positive emotion may share a two-way street. In other words, meaningful activities and accomplishment bring enjoyment and satisfaction to life, and positive emotions may bring an enhanced sense of meaning and purpose. As King and her associates conclude, "the lines between hedonic pleasure and more 'meaningful pursuits' should not be drawn too rigidly." " . . . pleasure has a place in the meaningful life" (King et al., p. 191).

Despite their apparent overlap, hedonic and eudaimonic conceptions of happiness are the bases for two distinct lines of research on well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Studies of SWB have explored the hedonic basis of happiness; and studies of optimal functioning, positive mental health, and flourishing have examined the underpinnings of well-being fitting the eudaimonic view. The definitions and measures of well-being developed within each of these empirical traditions will be reviewed separately. A comparative analysis will then examine the overlapping and the distinctive features of the hedonic and eudaimonic views.

SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING: THE HEDONIC BASIS OF HAPPINESS

Subjective well-being shares a common core of meaning with the more everyday term *happiness*. The term "subjective" means, from the point of view of the individual. That is, it refers to a person's own assessment of his or her life, rather than assessment by an external observer or evaluator, or as might be inferred from more objective measures of factors such as physical health, job status, or income. As Myers and Diener (1995) put it, the final judge of happiness is "whoever lives inside the person's skin" (p. 11). Diener (2000) describes SWB as follows: "SWB refers to people's evaluations of their lives—evaluations that are both affective and cognitive. People experience an abundance of SWB when they feel many pleasant and few unpleasant emotions, when they are engaged in interesting activities, when they experience many pleasures and few pains, when they are satisfied with their lives" (p. 34). In short, a person with high SWB has a pervasive sense that life is "good." In our review, we will use the terms *subjective well-being* and *happiness* interchangeably.

Measuring Subjective Well-Being

Early survey researchers assessed people's sense of well-being directly. In national surveys, tens of thousands of people responded to questions that asked for an overall global judgment about happiness, life satisfaction, and feelings (see Andrews & Withey, 1976; Campbell et al., 1976, for reviews). Survey researchers asked questions like the following: "Taking all things together, how would you say things are these days—would you say you are very happy, pretty happy or not too happy?" "How satisfied are you with your life as a whole? Are you very satisfied? Satisfied? Not very satisfied? Not at all satisfied?" Other researchers asked people to choose from a series of faces to indicate their degree of

FIGURE 2 Face Measure of Happiness

happiness (Andrew & Withey, 1976). Participants are simply asked to indicate which face comes closest to expressing how they feel about their life as a whole. An example of such a series of faces is shown in Figure 2

In current research, SWB is widely considered to have three primary components that are assessed by multi-item scales and inventories (Andrews & Robinson, 1992; Argyle, 2001; Diener, 2000; Diener et al., 1999). These three components are *life satisfaction*, *positive affect*, and *negative affect*. Life satisfaction is a cognitive judgment concerning how satisfied a person is with his or her life. The emotional components—positive and negative affect—refer to peoples' feelings about their lives. Positive affect refers to the frequency and intensity of pleasant emotions such as happiness and joy. Negative affect refers to the frequency and intensity of unpleasant emotions such as sadness and worry.

This three-part structure of SWB has been widely confirmed in research using large samples of people who completed a variety of measures of happiness, satisfaction, and emotions (e.g., Bryant & Verhoff, 1982; Compton, Smith, Cornish, & Qualls, 1996; Lucas, Diener, & Suh, 1996). Responses were then examined using a statistical technique called factor analysis to assess the relationships among the various measures. The results have generally revealed two prominent findings. First, statistical analyses reveal a single factor that underlies all the different measures. That is, despite the diversity of SWB measures, they all seem to tap a common dimension. Second, studies also reveal three components of SWB: a "life situation factor," a "positive affect factor," and a "negative affect factor." These three components (life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect) correlate strongly with the common dimension, but only moderately with one another. That is, each makes a relatively independent and distinct contribution. This finding (that measures of SWB reliably parcel themselves out into three related, but somewhat independent parts) serves as the basis for the three-component view of SWB.

The interrelationship of the three components is noteworthy because most researchers do not assess all three components (Diener et al., 2003). Researchers assess SWB in a variety of ways. The fact that different measures share a common underlying dimension permits a comparative and cumulative evaluation of research results, despite differences in how SWB is assessed. However, Diener (2000) notes that this situation is less than ideal. It would be better, from a scientific measurement point of view, if studies assessed all three components. Developing more detailed and widely shared measures of SWB is an important task for the development of positive psychology.

Many of the measures to be described can be taken online at Martin Seligman's Authentic Happiness web site described at the end of this chapter. You can obtain a profile of your scores on a variety of measures developed by positive psychologists.

Life Satisfaction

Single-item measures of life satisfaction have given way to multi-item scales with greater reliability and validity. One of the more widely used measures of life satisfaction is the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffen, 1985). This five-item scale asks the participant to make a global evaluation of his or her life (adapted from Diener, Lucas, & Oishi, 2002, p. 70). You may be interested in completing the items yourself. To fill out the scale, simply indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement with each of the five statements using the 1–7 ratings described below:

7 *Strongly agree*
6 *Agree*
5 *Slightly agree*
4 *Neither agree nor disagree*
3 *Slightly disagree*
2 *Disagree*
1 *Strongly disagree*

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

To score your responses, add up your ratings across all five items.

Diener et al. (2002) suggests the following interpretations. Scores below 20 indicate a degree of dissatisfaction with one's life, which can range from extremely dissatisfied (scores of 5 through 9), through very dissatisfied (10 through 14), to slightly dissatisfied (15 through 19). A score of 20 is the neutral point (i.e., not particularly satisfied or dissatisfied). Levels of satisfaction can vary from somewhat satisfied (21 through 25), through very satisfied (26 through 30), to extremely satisfied (31 through 35). Data from large-scale surveys show that most Americans are somewhat satisfied with their lives (scoring between 21 and 25) (Diener et al., 1985).

Life satisfaction can also be assessed by examining the levels of satisfaction in different life domains. A researcher might ask people how satisfied they are with their jobs, families, health, leisure activities, and social relationships. Overall life satisfaction would be expressed in terms of the average or sum of satisfaction ratings for these different aspects of life. This is the approach taken by "quality of life" researchers who ask about everything from satisfaction with physical health and the environment one lives in, to satisfaction with body appearance and sex life (see Power, 2003, for a review). To obtain a more detailed picture of the basis for people's overall life satisfaction, a recent model of SWB suggests that domain satisfaction be included as a fourth component of SWB (Diener, Scollon, & Lucas, 2004). Measures of domain satisfaction provide information on what specific aspects of a person's life make the largest contribution to her or his overall satisfaction. This is particularly important if a researcher is interested in how different life domains (e.g., work, family, or health) affect life satisfaction as a whole.

Positive Affect, Negative Affect, and Happiness

A variety of scales are used to measure people's emotional experiences (see Argyle, 2001; Larsen & Fredrickson, 1999; Lucas, Diener, & Larsen, 2003, for reviews). Some scales ask only about positive emotions, like happiness or joy, while others assess both positive and negative feelings. For example, Bradburn (1969) asked people to indicate the percentage of time they had experienced different positive and negative feelings, using questions like the following:

Within the last few weeks have you ever felt . . .

. . . particularly excited about something?
. . . pleased about having accomplished something?
. . . proud because someone complimented you on something you did?
. . . that things were going your way?
. . . on top of the world?
. . . very lonely or remote from people?
. . . so restless you couldn't sit long in a chair?
. . . very depressed or very unhappy?

A more common method of assessing feelings is to ask people to rate the frequency and intensity of different emotions they experienced during a given time period. For example, Diener and Emmons (1984) used nine descriptors to assess affect valence. The descriptors for positive affect were happy, pleased, joyful, and enjoyment/fun. The adjectives for negative or unpleasant affect were worried/anxious; frustrated; angry/hostile; unhappy; and depressed/blue.

Another example of a scale that is widely used to measure positive and negative affect is the Positive Affectivity and Negative Affectivity Schedule (PANAS) (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). It may be interesting to see how you score. To complete this measure, use the 1–5 rating scale to indicate how you feel right now.

1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
very slightly or not at all	*a little*	*moderately*	*quite a bit*	*extremely*

____ *interested (PA)*	____ *irritable (NA)*
____ *distressed (NA)*	____ *alert (PA)*
____ *excited (PA)*	____ *ashamed (NA)*
____ *upset (NA)*	____ *inspired (PA)*
____ *strong (PA)*	____ *nervous (NA)*
____ *guilty (NA)*	____ *determined (PA)*
____ *scared (NA)*	____ *attentive (PA)*
____ *hostile (NA)*	____ *jittery (NA)*
____ *enthusiastic (PA)*	____ *active (PA)*
____ *proud (PA)*	____ *afraid (NA)*

To score your responses, add up separately your ratings for the 10 positive affect items (PA) and your ratings for the 10 negative affect items (NA). Each score can range from 10 to 50, indicating the degree of positive and negative affect. You can also see from this scale which emotions had the greatest impact on your current mood.

Using scales like the PANAS, researchers can ask people to rate the intensity and/or the frequency of their emotional experiences. Researchers can also vary the time period for which the ratings are made. To measure short-term or immediate emotional experience, people are asked to rate how they feel right now, or during the past day. To measure longer-term emotions, a researcher might ask people how frequently they experienced positive and negative emotions during the past week, the past month, or past few months. Other scales used to measure positive and negative feelings employ longer lists of adjectives that can be grouped into subscales of related emotions (see Lucas et al., 2003, for a review). Positive and negative affect can also be measured by facial and physiological expressions of emotions. The human face is highly expressive of emotion. For example, Ekman and Friesen (1976, 1978) developed the Facial Action Coding System that allows trained observers to interpret emotional expression by a particular constellation of muscle movements in the face.

Focus on Research: Is Your Future Revealed in Your Smile?

An intriguing study by Harker and Keltner (2001) examined life outcomes for women showing one of two kinds of smiles in their college yearbook photographs. When asked to smile for the camera, some of us break into spontaneous, genuine, and authentic smiles that make us look as if we are happy or have just been told a good joke. Others look like we are going through the motions of smiling, but it doesn't look like the real thing. It looks more like we have been told a joke that we didn't find funny, and are faking a smile as a social obligation to the joke teller. Trained coders can easily distinguish a genuine, authentic smile (called a "Duchenne smile") from one that looks inauthentic and forced (non-Duchenne). The 141 women in the study had graduated from Mills College in 1958 and 1960 when they were either 21 or 22 years old. Their college senior yearbook photos were coded according to the Duchenne or non-Duchenne classification. Only a handful of the women did not smile in their photos and about half showed the Duchenne or "natural" smile. All the women in the study were contacted again when they were age 27, 43, and 52. The follow-up study at age 52 occurred 30 years after graduation from college. The researchers were interested in whether or not the expression of positive emotionality, shown among the women graduates with the Duchenne smile, would be related to personality and outcomes later in life.

During each of the follow-up periods, study participants provided information about their personalities, the quality of their relationships, their marital histories, and their personal well-being. Compared to the non-Duchenne group, women showing the Duchenne smile in their college yearbook photos showed lower negative emotionality and higher competence and affiliation with others across all three follow-up periods. Competence was expressed in higher levels of mental focus, organization, and achievement orientation. Affiliation was expressed in stronger and more stable bonds with others. The Duchenne women also showed consistently higher levels of personal well-being and life satisfaction, and lower levels of physical and psychological problems than the non-Duchenne group. Most interestingly, the Duchenne group of women were more likely to be married at age 27 and more likely to have stable and satisfying marriages throughout the 30 years since graduating from college. A number of researchers have noted the important role of positive emotions in avoiding and solving conflict and in maintaining the vitality of a relationship. The positive emotionality of the Duchenne group may have contributed to the development of more social and psychological resources for more creative solutions to life challenges, and may also have contributed to more stable and satisfying relationships and a happier life.

Issues in the Study of Affect

Before considering more global measures of happiness, we should note two issues concerning the relationship between positive and negative affect. The first issue concerns the controversy among researchers regarding the independence of positive and negative affect. The question is, are positive and negative feelings opposite ends of a single dimension (i.e., are they negatively correlated)? If so, this would mean that the presence of positive emotion

indicates the absence of negative emotion and *vice versa*. Or, are negative and positive emotions two separate dimensions with different causes and effects (moderate negative correlations)? If so, this would mean that people could experience both positive and negative emotions at the same time. There are arguments and research findings that support both the unidimensional and the bidimensional view (see Argyle, 2001; Diener & Emmons, 1984; Keyes & Magyar-Moe, 2003; Lucas et al., 2003; Watson & Tellegen, 1985). Several recent theories have attempted to resolve this issue (e.g., Keyes & Ryff, 2000; Zautra, Potter, & Reich, 1997). Moderate negative correlations found in research ($r = -0.4$ to -0.5) suggest that positive and negative emotions are somewhat independent, but the issue is still being debated (Lucas et al., 2003).

Lucas and his colleagues note that part of the issue has to do with how emotions are measured, and in particular, the time frame that is used (Lucas et al., 2003). To illustrate, let's say you are asked how you are feeling right now, and you say, "happy and relaxed." The odds would be low that you would also say you are feeling "depressed and uptight." In the short term, positive and negative emotions are likely to show a strong inverse relationship, supporting a unidimensional view (Diener & Larsen, 1984). On the other hand, if you were asked to report on your emotions over the past month, odds are that you would have experienced both positive and negative emotions. A longer-term assessment would likely show more independence in the experience of positive and negative feelings, supporting a more bidimensional view. Until the controversy is resolved, Diener (2000) recommends that both positive and negative affect be measured so that the contribution of each emotion to SWB can be evaluated.

A second and related issue concerns how much the intensity, and how much the frequency of emotional experiences contribute to SWB. Diener and his colleagues (Diener, Sandvik, & Pavot, 1991; Schimmack & Diener, 1997) have found that the frequency of emotions is more important than their intensity. Happiness is not built so much on intense feelings of happiness or joy, but rather on milder positive emotions that are experienced most of the time. That is, happy people are those who experience positive emotions relatively frequently and negative emotions relatively infrequently. This is true even if the positive emotions are mild rather than intense. Diener and colleagues (1991) found that intense positive emotions are very rare, even for the happiest people. People with high SWB report frequent experiences of mild to moderate positive emotions and infrequent negative emotions.

Global Measures of Happiness

Some researchers use more global "life-as-a-whole" measures that assess a person's overall happiness–unhappiness instead of separate measures for positive and negative affect. For example, the Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS) measures the extent to which an individual sees himself or herself as a happy or unhappy person (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999). If you wish to complete this measure, circle the number on the 7-point scale above each of the four questions, that you feel best describes you.

1. In general, I consider myself:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

not a 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 characterization describe you?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

not at all ... *a great deal*

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

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

not at all ... *a great deal*

To evaluate your ratings, you first need to reverse code your response to question number four. In other words, if your rating for question four

was a 1, replace the 1 with a 7. If your rating was a 2, replace it with a 6. A rating of 3 is replaced with a 5; a rating of 4 remains a 4; a rating of 5 is replaced with a 2; and a rating of 1 is replaced with a 7. Now, add up your ratings for all four questions and divide by 4. Your composite score can range from 1 to 7. A rating of less than 4 indicates some degree of unhappiness, ranging from very unhappy (scores of 1 and 2) to somewhat unhappy (scores of 3 and 4). A rating of 4 or greater indicates some degree of happiness, ranging from somewhat happy (scores of 4 and 5) to very happy (scores of 6 and 7). The SHS measures people's global assessment of how happy or unhappy they are. Despite the global nature of the SHS, individuals' responses to the scale are strongly related to their scores on more complex and detailed measures of positive and negative affect (Lyubomirsky, 2001). An individual's judgment about whether he or she is a happy or unhappy person would seem to be a good summary and a useful, brief measure of positive and negative affect.

Reliability and Validity of SWB Measures

A substantial amount of research shows that self-report measures of the various components of SWB have good psychometric properties (see Argyle, 2001; Diener & Lucas, 1999; Diener et al., 2004; Lucas et al., 1996, 2003, for reviews). Measures of SWB are internally reliable and coherent, stable over time, and validated by behavioral measures and the reports of others. Internal reliability assesses the coherence and consistency of responses to a particular measure. If responses to items on the scale are highly correlated with one another it suggests that the scale is measuring a coherent, single variable. The internal reliabilities of life satisfaction scales and measures of positive and negative affect are quite high (correlation coefficients [*r*'s] of 0.84 or so) (Argyle, 2001; Diener, 1993; Pavot & Diener, 1993).

Measures of SWB also show reasonably high stability over time. Reviews of research show life satisfaction scores to be moderately stable over time periods of 4 years (*r*'s at approximately 0.58) and still somewhat stable at 10 and 15 years (*r*'s near 0.3) (Argyle, 2001; Diener et al., 2004). Measures of positive and negative affect also show moderate stability (*r*'s of 0.3 to 0.5) over periods of 6 to 7 years (Costa & McCrae, 1988; Watson & Walker, 1996). Further evidence for stability can be seen in studies that examined SWB across different life situations. Diener and Larsen (1984) asked participants to record measures of SWB at multiple times during the day for a number of days. They found high correlations between life satisfaction and positive/negative affect across such diverse situations as work and recreation, being alone or in a social setting, and being in a familiar or new environment. Taken together, these studies suggest that people's overall evaluations of their lives are fairly stable and enduring across time and situations.

We should note that SWB measures are also sensitive to significant life events and changes. That is, within a general pattern of stability, life changes can increase or decrease SWB, at least in the short term. Research has shown that positive or negative changes in our lives can affect our level of happiness (e.g., Headey & Wearing, 1991). A good day at work, an enjoyable activity with friends, a new romance, or praise from others for our accomplishments can all increase our feelings of happiness and satisfaction, just as a bad day at work, conflict with friends, a failed romance, or criticism from others can make us unhappy and dissatisfied. However, research shows that most of these effects are short-lived (e.g., Brickman, Coates, & Janoff-Bulman, 1978; Eid & Diener, 1999). Within a day, a week, or a month we are back to our more typical level of happiness. Even the effects of major life events, like being fired from your job, have been found to decrease SWB for only a period of several months (Suh, Diener, & Fujita, 1996). Exceptions to these short-term effects include loss of a spouse and marriage. Widowhood produces longer-term decreases in SWB, while marriage produces longer-term increases in SWB (Winter, Lawton, Casten, & Sando, 1999).

If people say they are happy on measures of SWB, do they also behave in ways that confirm their self-reported happiness, and do others see them as happy? This question addresses the validity of a test. Is it measuring what it claims to be measuring? A number of studies support the validity of SWB measures. Individual self-reported happiness has been confirmed via assessments by peers (Watson & Clark, 1991), family members and friends (Sandvik, Diener, & Seidlitz, 1993), and spouses (Costa & McCrae, 1988). When asked to recall positive and negative life events, happy people recall more positive events than unhappy people (Seidlitz, Wyer, & Diener, 1997). A review of differences between

happy and unhappy people also supports the validity of SWB measures (Lyubomirsky, 2001). People with high SWB are more likely to perceive life in positive ways, expect a positive future, and express confidence in their abilities and skills. People with lower SWB are more focused on negative life events and show more self-absorbed rumination about themselves and their problems.

Experience Sampling Method

Despite evidence supporting their reliability and validity, global self-report measures of SWB are not free of potential biases. The most important sources of bias are those that may be introduced by distortions in memory and the effects of temporary mood. Suppose you were asked the following question: "Taking all things together how happy are you these days?" What would be the basis for your answer? Ideally, you would recall and reflect on the many significant events in your life (both positive and negative), and then make a reasoned judgment about what they all add up to in terms of your overall level of happiness. But what if you recalled only good experiences, or only bad experiences, or only your most recent experiences? What if your current mood affected your judgment of overall happiness? Using only one kind of remembered experience, or just your current mood as the basis for your judgment, might bias and distort your rated level of happiness. Studies show that this sort of bias can, in fact, occur. Schwarz and Strack (1999) have shown that such things as finding a small amount of money, hearing that your country's soccer team won the championship, being in a pleasant room, or being interviewed on a sunny day can increase people's self-reports of general life satisfaction. Conversely, hearing that your team lost, spending time in a noisy, overheated, and dirty laboratory, or being interviewed on a rainy day can decrease reports of satisfaction.

Work by Kahneman and his colleagues suggests that people may summarize and remember emotional experiences in complex and counterintuitive ways (see Kahneman, 1999, for a review). Common sense would indicate that the longer an emotional episode lasts, the more effect it should have on how we evaluate it. People who endure a long and uncomfortable medical procedure, for example, should rate it as more negative than people who go through the same procedure, but of shorter duration. However, research with people undergoing a colonoscopy revealed that retrospective evaluations of pain and discomfort were not related to the duration of the procedure and were not a simple function of moment-to-moment ratings of pain during the procedure (Redelmeir & Kahneman, 1996). When people evaluated the experience as a whole, their responses followed what Kahneman calls the "**peak-end rule.**" Global judgments were predicted by the peak of emotional intensity during the experience (in this case, pain), and by the ending emotional intensity. The duration of the experience did not affect overall evaluations. The peak-end rule has been confirmed with a variety of emotional episodes (Fredrickson & Kahneman, 1993; Kahneman, Fredrickson, Schreiber, & Redelmeir, 1993). The peak-end rule accurately predicted the basis of evaluations of an unpleasant film showing an amputation, immersing one hand in ice water, and exposure to aversive sounds of varying intensity and duration. In each of these studies, participants gave moment-to-moment intensity ratings for the emotions they were feeling, and an overall global judgment after the experience. Consistent with the peak-end rule, global ratings are strongly related to the average between the peak of the moment-to-moment intensity ratings and the ending intensity ratings. Global ratings are much less related to a simple average of all the moment-to-moment ratings of intensity.

The peak-end rule suggests that people's evaluations of emotionally significant events are heavily influenced by intensity and how the experience ends, and less influenced by how long the experience lasts. People selectively focus on certain features of an emotional episode to represent and judge the entire experience. Kahneman believes that only by examining moment-to-moment feelings can we come to understand the basis of people's summary evaluations. Global summary measures do not tell us what aspects of the experience are most important or how these aspects are combined.

The potential for biases in self-report measures has led some researchers to argue that moment-to-moment measures of experience are both more accurate and more revealing of the factors and processes that underlie SWB. **Experience sampling methods** (ESM) encompass a variety of measures that provide a "day-in-the-life" view of emotions and events in people's lives (Larsen &