

Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001. resume	Re: David G. Myers (partial) (1 page)	n.d.	b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
First Lady's Office
Maggie Williams (Correspondence)
OA/Box Number: 12630

FOLDER TITLE:

[Maggie Williams Mail 1995-1996]: M [3]

2013-0359-S

ry1340

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
- P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
- P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
- P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

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- b(7) Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
- b(8) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
- b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

June 1, 1995

David G. Myers
P.O. Box 9000
Holland, MI 49422-9000

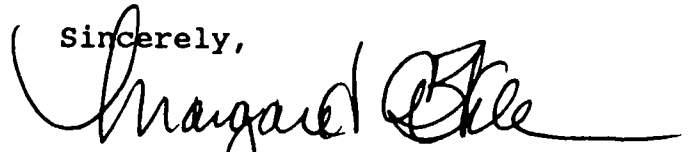
Dear Mr. Myers:

Thank you for offering your expertise in assisting with the writing of the First Lady's book. You clearly are devoted to the well-being of America's children with your role in organizing the Communitarian Network's conference and I commend you for your commitment.

Although your offer is much appreciated, Mrs. Clinton is currently being aided by non-governmental employees.

Thanks again for your thoughtfulness and I wish you the best as you continue your own efforts in increasing awareness about the condition of children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Margaret A. Williams". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a long, sweeping underline.

Margaret A. Williams
Chief of Staff
to the First Lady

Debbie -
per Maggie -
letter needs to be
drafted stating
thanks for
offer of asst.
but HRC is being
helped by
non-govt. employees.



HOPE COLLEGE

HRC -
help
w/ book

DAVID G. MYERS
The John Dirk Werkman
Professor of Psychology

May 25, 1995

non-govt people

Margaret A. Williams
Chief of Staff, Office of the First Lady
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Letter dtd
5/25/95 w/ attached
letter to Mrs.
Clinton on
"Book on Well-
Being of America's
Children"

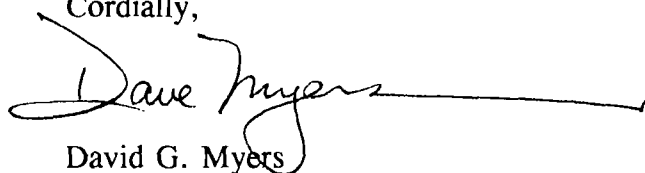
Dear Ms. Williams:

In Washington this last weekend (for the Communitarian Network's character education conference at which the First Lady had been scheduled to speak), the President mentioned to us her current work on a book on the well-being of America's children.

As one who shares her faith, values, and passion for this subject, as an experienced research psychologist and writer, and as one who has accumulated much information on this subject, I would be pleased to offer, gratis, any confidential assistance in her efforts. I'll attach a brief bio to this letter, and leave it to your judgment whether this merits her consideration.

With my thanks and good wishes,

Cordially,


David G. Myers

David G. Myers
Hope College
Holland, MI 49422-9000
616-395-7730 (Fax: 616-395-7121; E-mail: myers@hope.edu)

Social psychologist David Myers is an award-winning researcher (the Gordon Allport Prize for his studies of group influence), an award-winning teacher, and the author of psychology's most widely studied text. His scientific research, supported by National Science Foundation grants and fellowships, has appeared in two dozen periodicals, from *Science* and the *American Scientist* to *Psychological Bulletin* and *Psychological Science*.

Myers also has digested psychological research for the lay public through articles in more than two dozen magazines, from *Scientific American* and *Today's Education* to *Christian Century* and *Christianity Today*. Five of his ten books explore connections between contemporary psychological research and Christian belief. In *The Pursuit of Happiness: Who Is Happy—and Why* (Morrow, 1992; Avon, 1993), and in nearly 250 media interviews and invited lectures over the past three years, he has challenged American individualism and materialism and affirmed the significance of positive traits, committed relationships, and religious faith. In psychology, he is best known for his introductory psychology and social psychology texts, which are annually studied by students at some 1000 colleges and universities.

"David Myers writes with a clarity, precision of style, and graceful eloquence unmatched in all of psychology. He is the author of the best-selling Introductory Psychology textbook and also the best-selling Social Psychology text, a rare feat of effective writing and mind-boggling focused energy. What sets him apart from his talented peers is David's clear vision of his audience to whom he talks as if they were welcome guests at his dining table. We see him sharing his wealth of knowledge of psychology and of literature, posing just the right question to pique their interest, or calling up the apt metaphor that clarifies a complex thought, and always integrating it all within a compelling story."

-Philip G. Zimbardo, Stanford University
(from the Preface to *Exploring Social Psychology*)



HOPE COLLEGE

DAVID G. MYERS
The John Dick Weikman
Professor of Psychology

May 25, 1995

Hillary Rodham Clinton
First Lady of the United States
The White House
1700 Pennsylvannia Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Ms. Clinton:

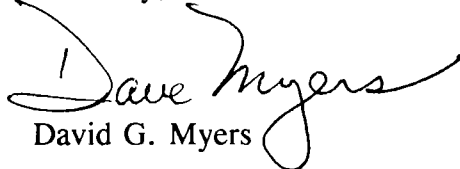
I was in Washington last weekend for the Communitarian Network's character education conference, and had the pleasure of a first row seat while the President spoke to us on Saturday morning. In his remarks he mentioned your in-preparation book on children.

I am an admirer who shares your faith, your values (as a Democratic Party and CDF supporter), and your passion for this subject (I again supported my friend Amitai Etzioni by co-funding the conference). I am also a research psychologist and seasoned writer—at a(nother) place called Hope!—who has accumulated much information pertinent to children's well-being in modern America. If any of these professional resources could support your efforts—in research, writing, editing, or reviewing manuscript—I would be pleased to help, gratis and in confidence.

I enclose two current writing samples and some biographical information (and I would, of course, be pleased to provide you or your staff with any further information).

With all good wishes,

Cordially,


David G. Myers

David G. Myers
Hope College
Holland, MI 49422-9000
616-395-7730 (Fax: 616-395-7121; E-mail: myers@hope.edu)

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David G. Myers
Hope College
Holland, Michigan 49422-9000
Phone: (616) 395-7730
Fax: (616) 395-7121; E-mail: myers@hope.edu

[001]

**PERSONAL
HISTORY:**

(b)(6)

Education: Whitworth College, B.A., 1964 (chemistry, magna cum laude)
University of Iowa, M.A., 1966; Ph.D., 1967 (psychology)
Hope College: Assistant Professor, 1967; Associate Professor, 1970; Professor,
1975; John Dirk Werkman Professor of Psychology, 1982

PUBLICATIONS: Scientific writings have appeared in two dozen periodicals and books, from *Science* and the *American Scientist* to *Psychological Bulletin* and *Psychological Science*.
Articles that digest psychology for the general public have appeared in two dozen magazines, including *Scientific American*, *Psychology Today*, *Today's Education*, *Science Digest*, and *Christian Century*.

Books:

The Human Puzzle: Psychological Research and Christian Belief (Harper & Row, 1978; China Alliance Press, 1992)
The Inflated Self: Human Illusions and the Biblical Call to Hope (Seabury, 1980; softcover edition, 1981)
Inflation, Poortalk, and the Gospel (with Thomas Ludwig, Merold Westphal, and Robin Klay; Judson Press, 1981)
Social Psychology (McGraw-Hill, 1983; 2nd ed., 1987; 3rd ed., 1990; 4th ed. 1993; 5th ed., 1996). Also in International, French, and Spanish editions.
Teachers Resource and Test Manual (to accompany *Social Psychology*, with Martin Bolt; McGraw-Hill, 1983, 1987)
The Human Connection (with Martin Bolt, InterVarsity, 1984; Hodder/Stoughton, 1985)
Psychology (Worth Publishers, 1986; 2nd ed., 1989; 3rd ed., 1992; 4th edition, 1995). Also published in Spanish and Italian editions.
Psychology Through the Eyes of Faith (with Malcolm Jeeves; Harper & Row, 1987; IVP Britain, 1992; IVP Korea, 1995)
Exploring Psychology (Worth Publishers, 1990; 2nd ed., 1993; 3rd ed., 1996)
The Pursuit of Happiness: Who Is Happy—and Why (William Morrow, 1992; Avon, 1993; Harper/Collins Aquarian, British Commonwealth, 1993).
Exploring Social Psychology (McGraw-Hill, 1994).

HONORS:

Graduate Fellowships: U.S. Public Health Service, 1964-1965; National Science Foundation, 1965-1967
Research Grants: One from NIMH; four from National Science Foundation
Invited lectures at various universities (Yale, Harvard, Michigan, Washington, etc.), colleges, and conventions
Consulting editor, *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 1978-1987, and *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1986-1990; Reviewer, panelist, and Oversight Review Committee, National Science Foundation

Awards:

Distinguished Service Award (for chairing Human Relations Commission and helping found Community Action House); Holland Jaycees, 1972
H.O.P.E. Award, 1972 (voted "Hope's Outstanding Professor-Educator")
Gordon Allport Prize (for social psychological research), APA Division 9
Doctor of Humane Letters: Northwestern College; Whitworth College

Mrs. Clinton -
Attho I have accumulated much
information on this subject, I have not
yet made this a formal book proposal.
Thus, I'd be pleased to contribute ~~the~~ pertinent
information (& further writing) to someone
such as you who could do much to
raise national awareness of the
decline in children's well being.
Dave Myers

Bare bones preliminary draft of introduction;
needs updating, compelling examples, and
adaptation suited to primary or co-author

SOCIETY IN THE BALANCE

America's Social Recession and Renewal

David G. Myers
Department of Psychology
Hope College
Holland, MI 49422-9000
(Phone: 616-395-7728; Fax: 616-395-7121; e-mail: myers@hope.edu)

INTRODUCTION

AMERICA'S SOCIAL RECESSION

- 1 Economic Wealth and Psychological Misery
- 2 The Sexual Revolution
- 3 The Decline of Marriage
- 4 When the Bough Breaks
- 5 A Culture of Violence

THE SEEDS OF SOCIAL DYSFUNCTION

- 6 Poverty
- 7 Individualism
- 8 The Media
- 9 The Arming of America

THE HEALING OF AMERICA

- 10 Family-Friendly Economics: Capitalism with a Heart
- 11 Transformed Public Awareness and the Media
- 12 Disarming America
- 13 Educating for a Moral Compass
- 14 Spiritual Centering

"There are good reasons for suggesting
that the modern age has ended. . . some-
thing is on the way out and something else
is painfully being born."

—Vaclav Havel, on receiving the
Philadelphia Liberty Medal, July 4, 1994

INTRODUCTION

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times,
it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness,
it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity,
it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness,
it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair,
we had everything before us, we had nothing before us,
we were all going direct to Heaven,
we were all going direct the other way.

Charles Dickens
A Tale of Two Cities

How fortunate we are to be living now, in the 1990s. Moments ago, I made a cup of tea in a microwave oven, sat down in a comfortable ergonomic office chair in my climate-controlled office, turned on my personal computer and answered electronic mail from friends in Hong Kong and Scotland. Gazing through my double-glazed window, I look across a landscaped courtyard to a state-of-the-art library, where I can read newspapers from around the world, unearth within seconds psychological information hidden among a million articles abstracted on a CD-ROM system, or electronically locate any published book, here or elsewhere. What a different world than I was born into but a half-century ago—a world without broadcast television, fax machines, computers, or jet airliners.

Earlier this morning the network news, cabled into my home on one of the dozens of channels available, headlined a new arms reduction treaty; Russians and Americans have taken another step toward a new world order by agreeing to turn still more swords into plowshares. Communism is dying. Democracy is thriving. Military budgets are

shrinking. And a bright, hope-filled new administration has taken the reins of our government.

Ethnic strife and hate crimes still haunt humanity, but in our part of the world bigotry is more gauche and diversity more accepted than ever before.¹ The environment is under assault, but we have awakened to the perils of deforestation, ozone depletion, and global warming and are taking initial steps toward containing the damage. (Middle-aged adults drive cars that get twice the mileage and produce a twentieth the pollution of their first cars.) Our economy is troubled by deficits and a growing underclass. Yet our average disposable income in constant dollars is double that of the mid-1950s, enabling us to have, among the other accoutrements of our unprecedented national wealth, twice as many cars per person today as then.

And would any of us really wish to have braved the family life of colonial times, or even a century ago? In *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap*, Stephanie Coontz reminds us of the way we really were.²

- *Children were exploited.* In Pennsylvania mines at the turn of this century, 120,000 children were at work, most of whom started laboring by age eleven. Children were one-fourth of the workers in southern textile mills. Seven-year-olds sometimes worked twelve-hour shifts, until falling asleep on the job and being carried to bed unwashed.

- *Families were often broken—by death.* In colonial times, mortality reduced the average length of marriage to a dozen years. Four in ten children lost a parent by age twenty-one. As late as 1940, 1 in 10 children did not live with either parent, more than

double today's 1 in 25. In 1850, when only 2 percent of the population lived past sixty-five and many people were migrating, few children had ties with their grandparents. Today, "for the first time in history," notes sociologist Arlene Skolnick, "the average couple has more parents living than it has children. It is also the first era when most of the parent-child relationship takes place after the child becomes an adult."³ Before 1900, only four in ten women married, raised children, and enjoyed the empty nest with their spouse—because most women either died before marriage, never married, died before children were born or grown, or were widowed before age 50. And consider the poems that lie unwritten, the music never composed, the philosophy never completed, because Keats died at twenty-five, Mozart at thirty-five, Pascal at thirty-nine.

- *The social safety net had gaping holes.* At the turn of the century, we had no social security system. Divorced fathers were not obligated to pay child support. One in five children lived in orphanages, often because their impoverished parents could not support them.

- *Most people had limited educational opportunities.* In the bad old days of a century ago, only half of 5 to 19-year-olds were in school (compared to more than 9 in 10 today). Only 3.5 percent of 18-year-olds were graduating from high school.⁴

- *Women had restricted opportunities.* A half century ago, only 1 in 5 Americans approved "of a married woman earning money in business of industry if she has a husband capable of supporting her." Today, 4 in 5 approve.⁵ Thus, 6 in 10 married women are now in the paid work force—up from 4 in 10 a half century ago and 1 in 7 a century ago. With greater economic independence, today's women are more likely to marry for love

and less likely to endure abuse out of economic need. American women still devote twice as many hours to household tasks as do men. But men's participation has doubled since 1965, putting them more often in front of the stove, behind the vacuum cleaner, and over the diaper-changing table.⁶ Today's men and women are more likely to share opportunities, responsibilities, and power.

Ergo, however great our present problems, the past is no golden age to which we would willingly return, if only we could. Yesterday was not the best of times, *today* is the best of times.

And the worst of times. For thirty years, America has been sliding into a deepening social recession that dwarfs the comparatively milder and briefer economic recessions which have dominated our news and politics. If Rip Van Winkle had fallen asleep in 1960 and awakened in 1990, would he have been pleased at the cultural shift? Here are the facts that would greet him. Since 1960:

- Child abuse and neglect reports have soared from well under a million reports annually to nearly 3 million.⁷

- Cohabitation has increased sixfold.⁸ Ironically, a successful trial marriage—cohabitation followed by marriage—is a statistical predictor of later divorce.⁹

- The divorce rate has doubled¹⁰ and happiness in surviving marriages has slightly declined.¹¹

- Teen sexual activity has doubled, with accompanying increases in sexually transmitted diseases.¹²

- The 5 percent of babies born to unmarried parents in 1960 has increased sixfold to 30 percent.¹³ Increasingly, everywhere in America, children are having children.

- In 1960 1 in 10 children did not live with two parents. Today, nearly 3 in 10 do not.¹⁴

This family meltdown caused the United Nations to declare 1994 the International Year of the Family. American Psychological Association members share the U.N.'s concern. In a 1991 survey, they rated "the decline of the nuclear family" as today's number one threat to mental health.¹⁵ Moreover, family decline since 1960 is compounded by other social trends:

- a tripled teen suicide rate,¹⁶
- a quadrupled rate of reported rapes,¹⁷
- a quintupled reporting of violent crime,¹⁸
- a sixfold increase in juvenile violent crime,¹⁹ and
- soaring depression rates.²⁰

Vice President Gore is right: "The accumulation of materials goods is at an all-time high, but so is the number of people who feel an emptiness in their lives."²¹

Bertrand Russell once said that the mark of a civilized human is the capacity to read a column of numbers and weep. Can we weep for all the crushed lives behind these numbers? Can we weep for the children who are the social recession's casualties? (Yale psychologists Edward Zigler and Elizabeth Gilman report a consensus among researchers: "In the past 30 years of monitoring the indicators of child well-being, never have the indicators looked so negative."²²) Breaking through our collective denial of this cultural

erosion, dare we—without yearning for an unreal past or squashing basic liberties—expose the corrosive social forces at work and take steps to renew our social fabric?

We can and we must. For the sake of America's children. For the sake of all people who live with the emotional wounds of crumbling relationships, of neglect or abuse, of spiritual malaise. For the sake of all who bear the economic costs of, say, supporting America's one million state and federal prisoners—five times the 196,000 incarcerated in 1970.²³ Marian Wright Edelman of the Children's Defense Fund challenges us: "If the Soviet people and their extraordinary leader Gorbachev could dismantle Communism, can't we in America envision and wage an end to child neglect, poverty, and family disintegration, which are graver threats to our national future than nuclear weapons?"²⁴

Winning this domestic war against cultural collapse requires a new, centrist family movement, one that welcomes liberals' support for family-friendly workplaces and economic policies and conservatives' support for committed relationships and moral standards. Although values differ, there is broad support for business, government, and media policies that support the nuclear family ideal: *two adults committed to each other and to their children's nurture*. That ideal is shared by most Americans, whether entering a first marriage or a second, whether supporters of the ACLU or the American Family Association, whether admirers of Bill and Hillary Clinton or Dan and Marilyn Quayle. Recognizing that this simple ideal is decreasingly modeled by the media and practiced by the populace, family advocates, left and right, are discovering a common agenda: Awaken

public consciousness. Sound the alarm. The two-parent family and its children are under fire.

If this "new familism" is to become a transforming social movement, it must split off two divisive issues—abortion and gay rights—for which "family values" have so often been code words. Asked during the 1992 Republican convention what family values he upholds, Pat Robertson answered, believing in God, opposing gay marriages, and opposing abortions for 13-year-olds.²⁵ A post-election mailing from conservative psychologist James Dobson of Focus on the Family offers "a list of family-related issues that will receive high priority early in the Clinton administration." The first five issues: 1) "The Freedom of Choice Act [permitting] no limits on the killing of unborn babies." 2) "The abortifacient RU-486 may be legalized in the United States." 3) "The use of aborted fetuses for medical research may be authorized by the new president." 4) A "'litmus test' for federal judges, especially candidates for the U.S. Supreme Court, insisting that they be pro-abortion." 5) "Highly significant changes are likely in the arena of what is called gay rights"²⁶

To judge these top five issues, Dobson has lost his focus on the family. So it also would seem from a post-election mailing by Donald Wildmon of the American Family Association, which begins by warning that "President-elect Bill Clinton has promised to pass laws giving homosexuals special rights and making it legal to kill an unborn baby up until birth."²⁷ While these important issues merit continuing debate, they are, for the new family movement, lethal distractions. They are issues that divide rather than unite

In C. S. Lewis's tongue-in-cheek book of advice to a junior devil, senior devil Screwtape advises his underling to corrupt by diverting attention: "Success depend on confusing. . . . The game is to have them all running about with fire extinguishers whenever there is a flood."²⁸ Wormwood, the junior devil, is still actively following Screwtape's advice, in part by distracting family values advocates from their focus on the core family value: the preservation and renewal of the family.

To form an effective alliance, people of diverse opinion must focus on their shared vision. Most Americans can envision a better world—one that rewards initiative but restrains exploitative greed, that balances individual rights with communal well-being, that respects diversity while embracing unifying ideals, that protects and heals our degrading physical and social environments. In our utopian social world, adults and children together enjoy their routines and traditions. They have close relationships with extended family and with supportive neighbors. Children live without fear for their safety or the breakup of their families. Fathers and mothers jointly nurture their children; to say "He fathered the child" parallels the meaning of "She mothered the child."

This dreamed-of world is far from our real world. As the gap grows between the ideal and real, society hangs in the balance. The time has come to expose the depth and breadth of America's social recession, to identify the roots of our social dysfunction, and to discern steps toward the healing of America.

NOTES

1. See the chapter on "Prejudice" in my *Social Psychology*, 4th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993).
2. Stephanie Coontz. *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (New York: Basic Books, 1992).
3. Arlene Skolnick. *Embattled Paradise: The American Family in an Age of Uncertainty* (Basic Books, 1991), p. 154. Skolnick (p. 153) also provides the 1850 statistic given in the previous sentence, and (p. 166) the data for the following sentence.
4. *Historical Statistics of the U.S., Colonial Times to 1970*, Pt. 1 (Washington, DC: Bureau of the Census, 1976).
5. R. G. Niemi, J. Mueller, and Tom W. Smith. *Trends in Public Opinion: A Compendium of Survey Data* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989).
6. John P. Robinson. "Who's Doing the Housework?" *American Demographics* (December 1988): 24-28, 63.
7. Increasing reports of child abuse/neglect: The National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse reported in early April, 1992, that reported child abuse cases have increased every year since 1976, from 669,000 to 2,694,000 million, and that only part of that increase is attributable to increased awareness and reporting. (Source: Deborah Daro & Karen McCurdy, "Current Trends in Child Abuse Reporting and Fatalities: The Results of the 1991 Annual Fifty-State Survey." Chicago: National Center on Child Abuse Prevention Research, 1992, and "Highlights of Official Child Neglect and Abuse Reporting 1986," a 1988 report by the American Association for Protecting Children published by the American Humane Association in Denver.) The U.S. Advisory Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect offers a similar statistic—2,855,691 children being the subjects of child protective services reports in 1992 (*Statistical Abstract of the United States 1994*).
8. Cohabitation increase: Larry L. Bumpass and James A. Sweet, "National Estimates of Cohabitation," *Demography*, 1989, 26, 615-625. Most of this increase occurred between 1970 and the present, when the number of unmarried couples increased from 523,000 to 2.8 million (as of 1989, according to the U.S. Bureau of the Census: *Statistical Abstract of the United States*).
9. Trial marriages followed by higher divorce rates: U.S. data (a third higher in a study of 13,000 adults): Bumpass and Sweet, *ibid*; Canadian data (54 percent higher in a study of 5400 Canadian women): T. R. Balakrishnan et al., "A Hazard Model Analysis of the Covariates of Marriage Dissolution in Canada," *Demography*, 1987, 24, 395-406; Swedish data (80 percent higher in a study of 4300 women): Neil G. Bennett, Ann K. Black, and David E. Bloom, "Commitment and the Modern Union: Assessing the Link Between Premarital Cohabitation and Subsequent Marital Stability," *American Sociological Review*,

1988, 53, 127-138. The cohabitation-divorce connection appears due to cohabitators taking marriage and divorce more lightly before and, especially, after cohabitating.

10. The doubled divorce rate: In 1960, the divorce rate was 2.2 per thousand. In 1992 it was 4.8 per thousand. (Bureau of the Census: *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1994*). The divorce rate tapered off slightly during the 1980s, perhaps due to the increasing age at marriage and the declining rate of marriage.

11. Declining happiness of surviving marriages: National survey data summarized by Norval Glenn, "The Social and Cultural Meaning of Contemporary Marriage," in *The Retreat from Marriage*, ed. Bryce Christensen (Rockford, IL: The Rockford Institute, 1990).

12. Teen sexual activity doubled: From 29 percent in 1970 (surely, even lower before the 60's) to 52 percent in 1988, reports the Centers for Disease Control, as summarized by the Associated Press, January 5, 1991.

13. Births to single mothers soared to 30.1 percent in 1992, as reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Monthly Vital Statistics Report*, October 25, 1994 (Advance Report of Final Natality Statistics, 1992). See also *Vital Statistics of the United States*, Vol. 1, Natality. This trend, though more pronounced in urban areas, is culture-wide. The community hospital in my own conservative midwestern town experienced a sixfold increase in the percent of births to unwed parents, from 3 percent in 1960 to 18 percent in 1991.

14. Children not living with two parents: In 1960, 87.7 percent of children lived with two parents. In 1991, 71.7 percent did. These are Bureau of the Census survey data. 1960 data reported in Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 445, *Marital Status and Living Arrangements: March 1989*, Table C (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1990). 1991 data reported in Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 461, *Marital Status and Living Arrangements: March 1991*, Table F (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992).

15. American Psychological Association membership survey: *Survey of American Psychological Association Members*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 1990.

16. Teen suicide tripled: From 3.6 per 100,000 among 15- to 19-year olds in 1960 to 11.3 in 1988, as reported by Victor R. Fuchs and Diane M. Reklis, "America's Children: Economic Perspectives and Policy Options," *Science*, 1992, 255, 41-46.

17. Rape rate quadrupled: From 9.6 per 100,000 in 1960 to 41.2 in 1990, as reported in the annual *FBI Uniform Crime Reports*. Rape reports underrepresent actual rapes, especially acquaintance rapes. To some extent, the quadrupled reporting of rapes may overstate the actual increased incidence of rapes. National Crime Surveys suggest that

rapes are actually decreasing, but critics view the survey data as "uninterpretable. . . given the deficits in their approach to rape" (Mary Koss, May 17, 1993, personal correspondence). Moreover, the percentage of rape victims revealed by the periodic National Crime Survey who reported their rape to police has apparently not increased over time--which suggests that the quadrupled FBI statistic mostly represents actual increases in stranger rapes (Mary P. Koss, "The underdetection of rape: Methodological choices influence incidence estimates," *Journal of Social Issues*, 1992, 48, 61-75). Also, the rape increase parallels the increase in other violent crimes. Finally, if the real rape rate has actually not increased, then older women—having had more years of vulnerability to possible rape—should be more likely to report ever having been raped. But the opposite is true: today's younger women (who are much more often victimized) are much more likely to report ever having been raped than are older women (who were younger women in previous decades). Ergo, the increased rate of reported rapes seems to reflect, in large part, an *actual* increase in women's suffering sexual coercion and violence.

18. Violent crime reports quintupled: From 160.9 per 100,000 in 1960 to 731.8 in 1990, as reported by the annual *FBI Uniform Crime Reports*. National Crime Victim Surveys (by the Census Bureau for the Department of Justice) since 1973 reveal a much smaller increase in violent crime. More on this disparity in Chapter 5.

19. Juvenile violent crime increased from 16,000 arrests in 1960 to 96,000 in 1992 (years when, thanks to decline birth rates, the juvenile population hardly changed). Data from *FBI Uniform Crime Report*.

20. Soaring depression: Cross-National Collaborative Group, "The Changing Rate of Major Depression," *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 1992, 268, 3098-3105. See also Martin E. P. Seligman's *Learned Optimism* (New York: Knopf, 1991) and "Boomer Blues," *Psychology Today*, October, 1988, pp. 50-55. In North America, the odds of today's young adults recalling having ever suffered depression are more than three times greater than for their grandparents (despite the grandparents having had many more years at risk). In one National Institute of Mental Health study of 18,244 Americans, only 1 percent of those born before 1905 had suffered major depression by age 75. Of those born since 1955, 6 percent had been depressed by age 25.

Darrel Regier of the National Institute of Mental Health believes (personal communication) that further research is needed to confirm that the increased recall and reporting of depression in younger samples indeed reflects an actual depression increase. The presumed increasing rate of depression is, however, confirmed by a dramatic rise in the proportion of psychiatric patients with mood disorder. In a survey of North American psychiatric teaching hospitals, mood disorder diagnoses rose from 10 percent of patients in 1972 to 44 percent in 1990 (A. L. Stoll and others, "Shifts in Diagnostic Frequencies of Schizophrenia and Major Affective Disorders at Six North American Psychiatric Hospitals, 1972-1988," *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 1993, 150, 1668-1673).

21. Al Gore, *Earth in the Balance* (Houghton Mifflin, 1992), pp. 221-222.

22. Edward F. Zigler & Elizabeth P. Gilman, "An agenda for the 1990s: Supporting families." In D. Blankenhorn, S. Bayme, & J. B. Elshtain (Eds.), *Rebuilding the Nest: A New Commitment to the American Family*. (Milwaukee, WI: Family Service America, 1990.)
23. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1994*, updated by more recent U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics data.
24. Marian Wright Edelman. *The Measure of Our Success: A Letter to My Children and Yours* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), pp. 65-66.
25. Pat Robertson, as reported by Amitai Etzioni, "A Communitarian Campaign," *The Responsive Community* 2(4), pp. 6-8.
26. James Dobson's November, 1992 letter was mass-mailed by Focus on the Family, Colorado Spring, CO 80995. His 8-page March, 1993 letter encourages his readers to do battle with secular humanism. "At what point *will* you rise to defend what you believe? . . . Will you object if Christian business people are required to satisfy a quota of homosexual and lesbian employees? Will you object if churches are not exempt from that quota obligation? Will object if universities refuse to grant degrees to outspoken Christian students?"
27. The second sentence in "An Urgent Note from Donald E. Wildmon," received December, 1992.
28. C. S. Lewis, *Screwtape Letters* (London: The Centenary Press, 1942), pp. 128-9.

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THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

How happy are most people? Who is happiest?

New research reveals some surprising answers.

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Does happiness favor those of a particular age, sex, or income level? Does happiness come with certain traits? with satisfying close relationships? with religious faith? What attitudes, activities, and priorities engender a sense of well-being?

Such questions not only went unanswered during psychology's first century, they went largely unasked. Psychology's focus has been more on the negative emotions than the positive. From 1967 through 1994, *Psychological Abstracts* included 5099 abstracts mentioning anger, 36,851 mentioning anxiety, and 46,380 mentioning depression—but only 2389 mentioning happiness, 2340 life satisfaction, and 405 joy. This 17 to 1 ratio of negative to positive emotions, which psychology textbooks mirror, is now changing. A new cadre of researchers is offering a fresh perspective on an old puzzle: Who is happy—and why?

Although the scientific pursuit of happiness has recently mushroomed, speculations about happiness are ages-old. Ancient philosophers believed that happiness accompanied a life of intelligent reflection. "There is no fool who is happy, and no wise man who is not," said the Roman philosopher, Cicero. The Epicurean and Stoic philosophers offered variations on this song of happy, serene contemplation.

In the centuries since, other sages offered differing ideas about the roots of happiness. They told us that happiness comes from living a virtuous life and from indulging pleasures; that it comes from knowing the truth and from preserving illusions; that it comes from restraint and from purging ourselves of pent-up rage and misery. They also told us that happiness comes from living for the present and living for the future; from making others happy and from enjoying our enemies' misery; from being with others and from living in solitude. The list goes on, but the implication is clear: To sift the true

myths from the false, we must ask how the competing ideas map onto reality. Enter the new scientific study of happiness.

ASSESSING HAPPINESS

We social scientists can count crimes. We can measure memories. We can assess intelligence. But how do we gauge happiness?

To probe people's "subjective well-being," researchers have asked them to report their *feelings* of happiness or unhappiness along with their *thoughts* about how satisfying their lives are. Like tangerines and oranges, happiness and life satisfaction are subtly different, yet they share much in common.

Sometimes researchers probe with a simple, single question. Imagine yourself one of the tens of thousands of Americans approached by survey research teams from the Universities of Michigan and Chicago: "Taking all things together, how would you say things are these days—would you say that you are very happy, pretty happy, or not too happy?" And "How satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days? Are you very satisfied? satisfied? not very satisfied? not at all satisfied?"

Other researchers probe with scales that probe the relative frequencies of people's positive, happy feelings and negative, depressed feelings, or their sense of global satisfaction. Surprisingly, positive and negative emotions correlate only weakly (and are predicted by differing variables). Knowing how much good feeling a person experiences over time does not predict how much bad feeling the person experiences. Some people who experience intense good moods but also intense bad moods. Their high highs alternate with low lows. Others are characteristically happy, or melancholy, or unemotional. Thus

THE SATISFACTION WITH LIFE SCALE

Below are five statements with which you may agree or disagree. Using the 1-7 scale, indicate your agreement with each. Please be open and honest.

- 1 = strongly agree
- 2 = disagree
- 3 = slightly disagree
- 4 = neither agree nor disagree
- 5 = slightly agree
- 6 = agree
- 7 = strongly agree

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

Approximate total scores in diverse populations:

- Printing trade workers = 24
- American and Canadian collegians = 24
- Russian university students = 18
- Psychological outpatients at intake = 14
- Alcoholic inpatients = 12
- Male prison inmates = 12

positive well-being is more than the absence of negative emotions.

Although swayed by temporary mood, people's self-reported well-being on such measures is moderately consistent over years of retesting. The stability suggests the influence of enduring traits and circumstances, and the changes indicate the influence of recent life events.

Do the measures have validity as well as reliability? Or are "happy" people merely "in denial" of their actual misery? Those who report themselves happy and satisfied indeed *seem* happy to their close friends, their family members, and to a psychologist-interviewer.

Their daily mood ratings reveal more positive emotions. They smile more. Their ratings are responsive to good and bad events, and to therapy. Self-reported happiness also predicts other indicators of well-being. Compared to those depressed, happy people are less self-focused, less hostile and abusive, and less vulnerable to disease. They also are more loving, forgiving, trusting, energetic, decisive, creative, sociable, and helpful.

Finally, bear in mind that the research concerns *subjective* well-being, as judged by whoever lives inside a person's skin. If you *feel* happy, assume the researchers, you *are* happy. If your friends confirm your apparent happiness, and if your life shows the marks of happiness, we would justifiably question someone's doubting your self-report. Likewise, if you and your friends agree that you are miserable, we might question a skeptic who thinks you are actually a very happy person who is "in denial of your inner joy."

Dozens of researchers across the world have now asked several hundred thousand representatively sampled people to reflect on their happiness and life satisfaction. By taking seriously their self-reports, we can ask the age-old questions: How happy are most people? And who are the happiest?

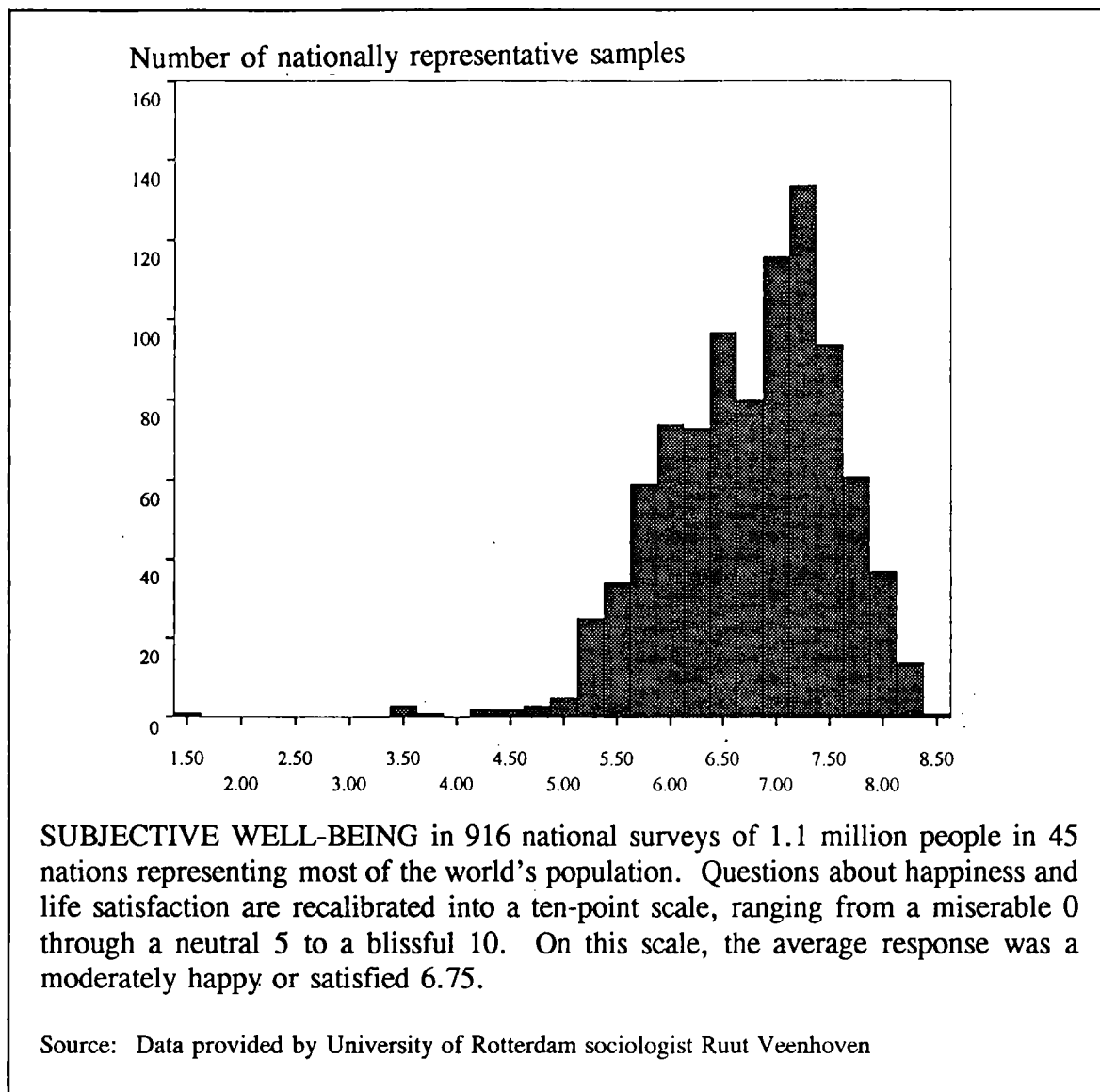
ARE MOST PEOPLE UNHAPPY?

There is a long tradition of viewing life as tragedy. It extends from Sophocles' writing (in *Oedipus at Colonus*) that "Not to be born is, past all prizing, best" to Woody Allen's discerning (in *Annie Hall*) two kinds of lives—the horrible and the merely miserable. Albert Camus, Tennessee Williams, Allen Drury, and other playwrights and novelists echo their unhappy picture of humanity.

So have many social observers. "Our pains greatly exceed our pleasures," it seemed to Rousseau, "so that, all things considered, human life is not at all a valuable gift." We are "not born for happiness," agreed Samuel Johnson. In *The Conquest of Happiness*, philosopher Bertrand Russell concurred that most people are *unhappy*. Recent warm-hearted books for the would-be-happy, mostly written by people who spend their days counseling the unhappy, concur. Dennis Wholey (*Are You Happy?*) reports that experts he interviewed believe that perhaps 20 percent of Americans are happy. "I'm surprised!," responded psychologist Archibald Hart in his *15 Principles for Achieving Happiness*. "I would have thought the proportion was much lower!" In *Happiness is an Inside Job*, Father John Powell agrees: "One-third of all Americans wake up depressed every day. Professionals estimate that only 10 to 15 percent of Americans think of themselves as truly happy." Small wonder, then, that Peggy Noonan could write (in her 1993 *Reader's Digest* article, "Why Are We So Unhappy When We Have It So Good?") that "We weren't put here to be happy."

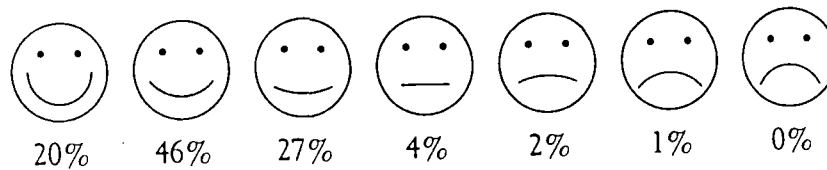
But when asked about their happiness, random samples of people across the world paint a much rosier picture. For example, in national surveys a third of Americans say they are *very* happy. Only 1 in 10 say "not too happy." The remainder—the majority—describe themselves as "pretty happy."

Most people are similarly upbeat about their satisfaction with life. In western Europe and North America, 8 in 10 rate themselves as "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their lives. Likewise, some three-fourths of people say, yes, they've felt excited, proud, or pleased at some point during the past few weeks; no more than a third say they've felt



lonely, bored, or depressed.

To probe people's well-being in yet another way, University of Michigan researchers asked a national sample of Americans to express their feelings nonverbally: "Here are some faces expressing various feelings. Which face comes closest to expressing how you feel about your life as a whole?"



Once again, we see that most people report feeling happy.

Even more surprising, the above-neutral reports characterize all age groups, and virtually all economic groups, all races studied, and all strategies for assessing subjective well-being, including those that sample people's experience by "beeping" them at random times. (The few exceptions include hospitalized alcoholics, newly incarcerated inmates, new therapy clients, South African blacks during apartheid, and students living under conditions of economic and political suppression.) This positivity contradicts the intuitions of psychology students, half of whom think the elderly are "mostly unhappy." Another third of students guess the same of African-Americans as do 9 in 10 students of "unemployed men."

But aren't depression rates on the rise? They are. Yet clinical researcher Ian Gotlib estimates that less than 2 percent of the world's population suffers clinically recognizable depression each year. In a recent multi-nation census of psychiatric disorders, the *lifetime* rate of depression was only nine percent in the most vulnerable group.

Although negative emotions are adaptive when the organism is under stress, these data suggest the possibility of a slightly positive biological set-point for mood. Positive emotions serve to energize individuals. They define an emotional background against which negative emotions would acquire maximum information value. And they are conducive

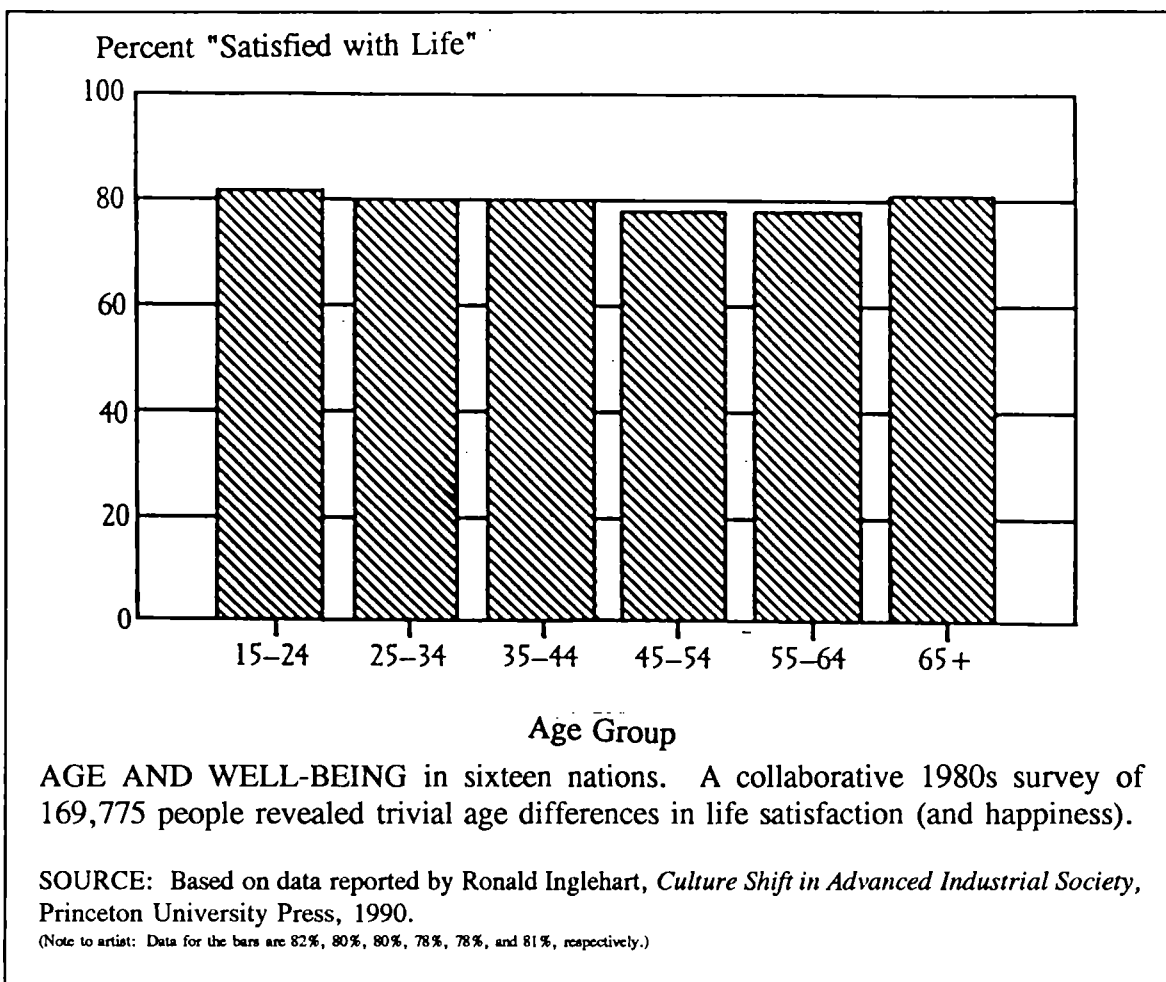
to other adaptive reactions, including strong immune responses, sociability, and the positive thinking that underlies optimistic goal-striving.

WHO IS HAPPY?

So, who are the happy people? By identifying predictors of happiness and life satisfaction, social scientists have exploded some myths.

Many people believe there are unhappy times of life—typically the stress-filled teen years, the "midlife crisis" years, or the declining years of old age. But interviews with representative samples of people of all ages reveal that no time of life is notably happier or unhappier. The emotional terrain does change with age: Satisfaction with social relations and health become more important in later life. And teens, unlike adults, typically rebound up from gloom or down from elation within an hour's time. Yet knowing someone's age gives no clue to the person's enduring sense of well-being. Moreover, rates of depression, suicide, and divorce show no increase during the mythical midlife crisis years.

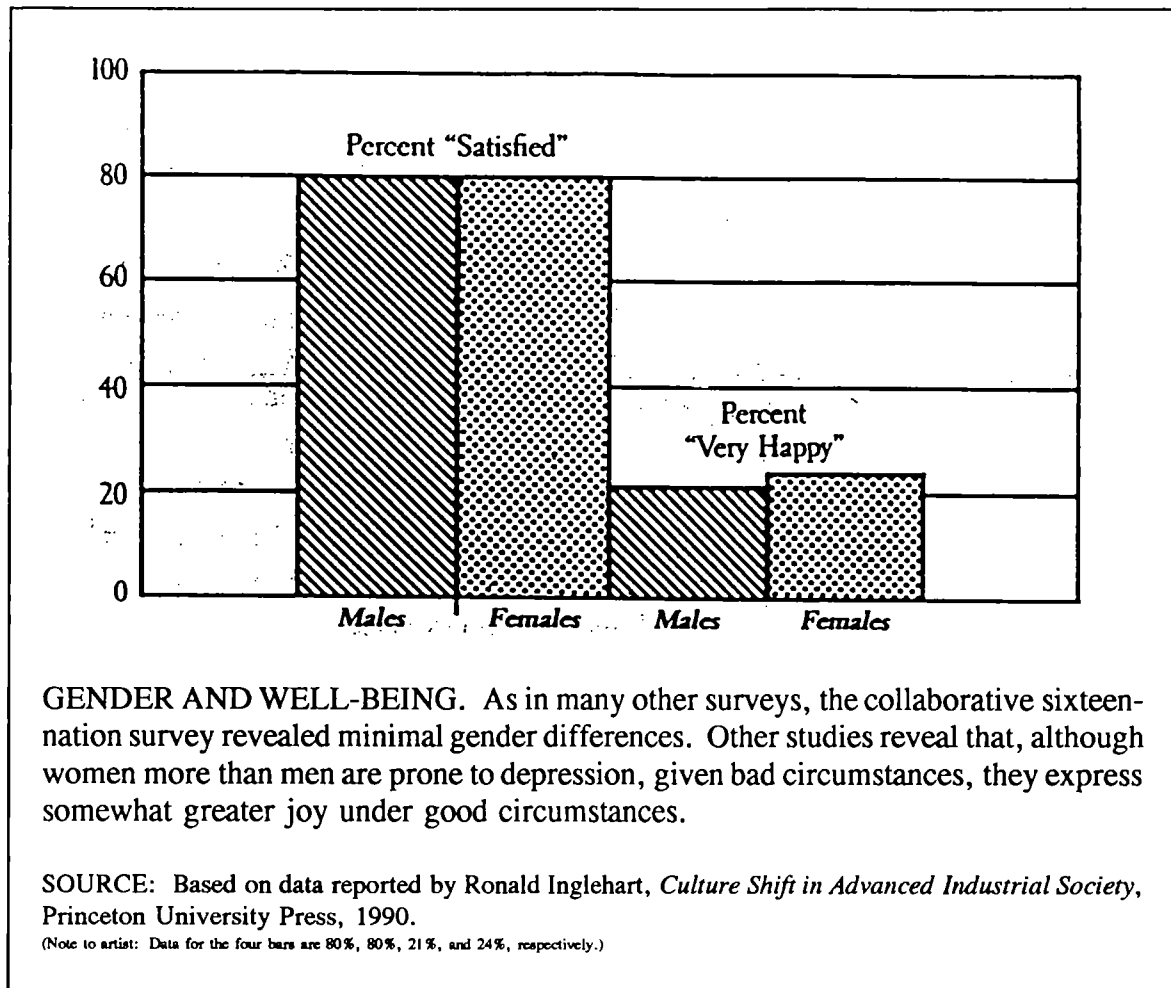
Does happiness have a favorite sex? Are men happier, because of their greater incomes and social power? Are women happier because of their reputedly greater capacity for intimacy and social connection? Like age, gender gives no clue to subjective well-being. There are gender gaps in misery: When troubled, men more often become alcoholic, women more often ruminate and get depressed or anxious. Yet men and women are equally likely to declare themselves "very happy" and "satisfied" with life. This conclusion is grounded in a statistical digest of 146 studies by Marilyn Haring, William



Stock, and Morris Okun, and in newer surveys of 18,000 university students in 39 countries reported by Alex Michalos and of 170,000 adults in 16 countries reported by Ronald Inglehart.

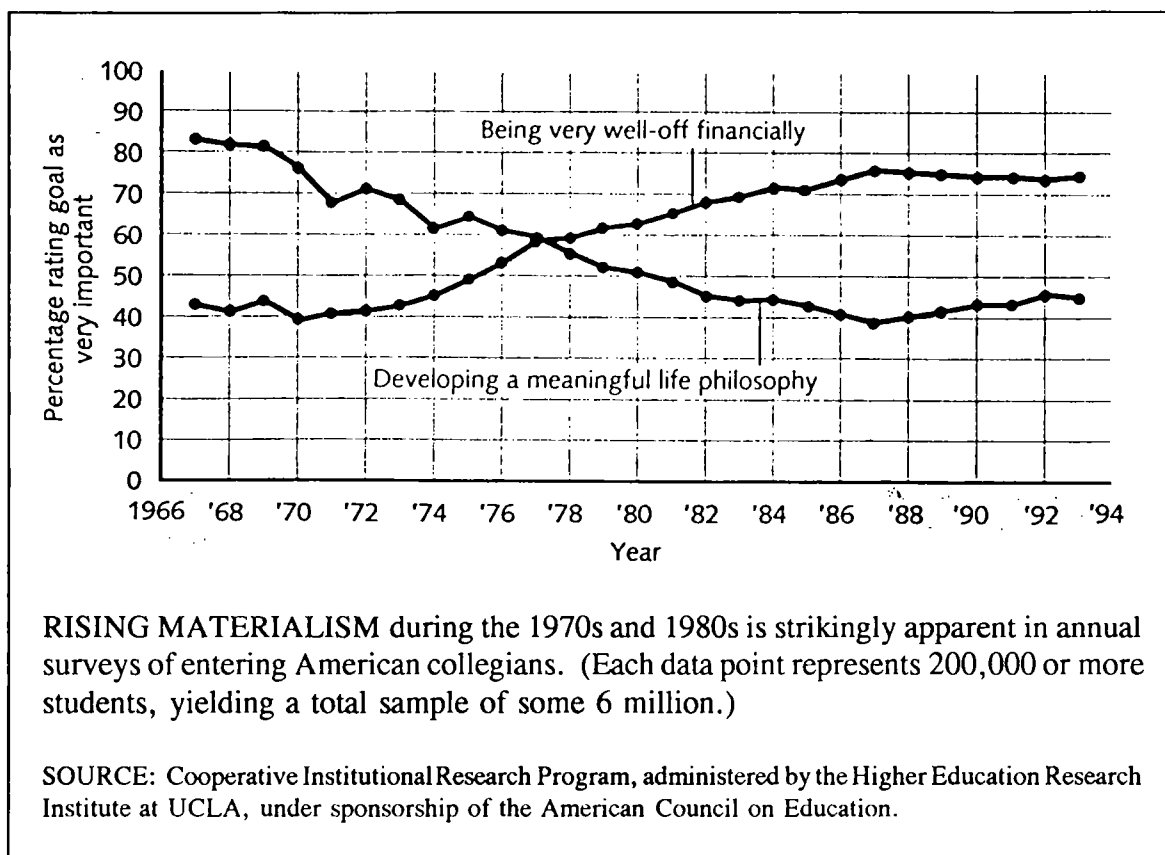
Contrary to many people's hunches, knowing someone's ethnicity also gives little clue to subjective well-being. African-Americans, for example, are only slightly less likely than European-Americans to feel very happy. How could this be, given what everyone knows—that disadvantaged groups suffer impoverished self-esteem and resulting depression?

It's because what "everyone knows" is wrong. Social psychologists Jennifer Crocker and Brenda Major explain: "A host of studies conclude that blacks have levels of self-



esteem equal to or higher than that of whites." People in disadvantaged groups maintain self-esteem by valuing the things at which they excel, by making comparisons within their own groups, and by attributing problems to external sources such as prejudice. Thus the National Institute of Mental Health's survey revealed that rates of depression and alcoholism among blacks and whites are roughly equal.

Still in pursuit of an elusive happiness, we might wonder whether wealth predicts well-being. Although few agree that money can literally buy happiness, many agree that a *little* more money would make them a *little* happier. Moreover, the American dream since 1970



seems increasingly to have become life, liberty, and the purchase of happiness. In 1993, 75 percent of America's entering collegians declared that an "essential" or "very important" life goal was "being very well off financially"—nearly double the 39 percent who said the same in 1970. This topped a list of 19 rated life objectives, exceeding even "raising a family" and "helping others in difficulty."

Are wealth and well-being indeed connected? We have triangulated on this question, by asking three more specific questions: First, are people in rich countries happier than people in not-so-rich countries? There are striking national differences in well-being, ranging from Portugal, where 1 in 10 people say they are very happy, to the Netherlands where 4 in 10 people say the same. Might economic wealth account for these variations?

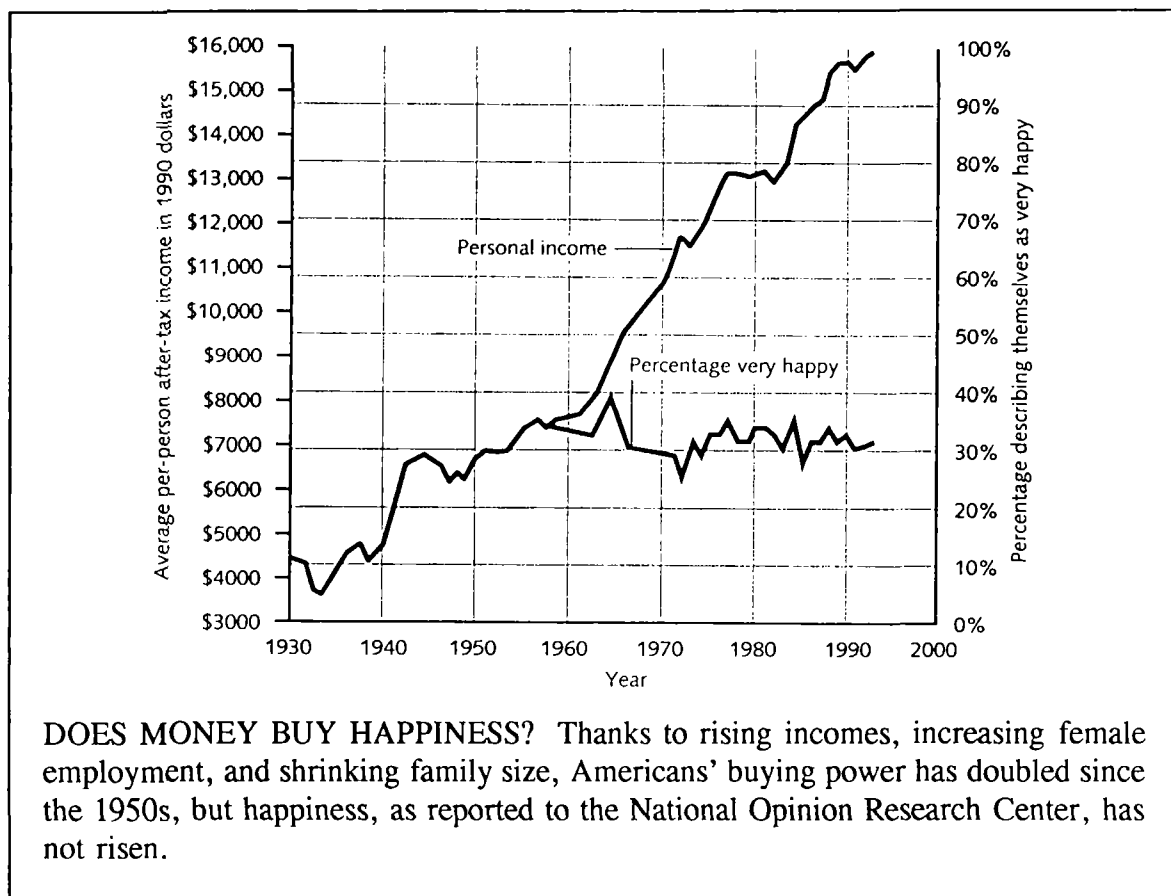
The correlation between national wealth and well-being is positive (despite curious reversals, such as the Irish during the 1980s consistently reporting greater life satisfaction than the wealthier West Germans). But national wealth is confounded with other factors, such as civil rights, literacy, and number of continuous years of democracy, which also correlate with average life satisfaction.

Second, within any country are rich individuals happiest? In poor countries, such as Bangladesh and India, satisfaction with finances is a moderate predictor of well-being. But once able to afford life's necessities, increasing affluence matters surprisingly little. In the USA and in Europe, the correlation between income and happiness is, as Ronald Inglehart has noted, "surprisingly weak (indeed, virtually negligible)." Even very rich people—those surveyed among Forbes' 100 wealthiest Americans—are only slightly happier than the average American. Those whose income has increased over a 10-year period are not happier than those whose income has not increased. And studies suggest that lottery winners gain but a temporary jolt of joy. Wealth, it seems, is like health: Although its utter absence can breed misery, possessing it is no guarantee of happiness. Happiness seems less a matter of getting what we want than of wanting what we have.

At the other end of life's circumstances are the victims of tragedies. We have been astonished by the negligible long-term impact of negative as well as positive life circumstances. People with disabilities usually report a near-normal level of well-being. Even the trauma of a paralyzing car accident typically gives way to a return of normal happiness. So great is our adaptive capacity that, within three months, the emotional impact of most good and bad events wanes and emotions again fluctuate with more recent

events. As Benjamin Franklin surmised, happiness "is produc'd not so much by great Pieces of good Fortune that seldom happen, as by little Advantages that occur every day."

Feeling the short-run influence of events and circumstances, people use such to explain their happiness, all the while missing subtler but bigger influences on their long-run well-being. Noticing that an influx of cash feels good, they may therefore mistakenly accept the Hollywood, Robin Leach image of who is happy—the rich, famous, and beautiful. (Despite the presumptions underlying the billions spent on cosmetics, clothes, and diets, even the very attractive are barely happier than the unattractive.)



Third, we can ask whether, over time, people have little by little become happier as their cultures have become little by little more affluent. In 1957, as economist John Galbraith was about to describe the United States as *The Affluent Society*, Americans' per person income, expressed in today's dollars, was less than \$8000. Today it is more than \$16,000, defining a "doubly affluent society"—with double what money buys, including twice as many cars per person, more abundant air conditioning, CD sound systems, and color TVs.

So, are we happier than 38 years ago? We are not. Since 1957, those telling the University of Chicago's National Opinion Research Center that they are "very happy" have declined slightly, from 35 to 32 percent. Meanwhile, divorce has doubled, teen suicide has tripled, arrests for juvenile violent crime have increased sixfold, and depression rates have soared. The same is true of European countries and Japan: Although people in affluent countries enjoy better nutrition, health care, education, and science, and are somewhat happier than people in very poor countries, increasing real incomes have *not* been accompanied by increasing happiness. The findings lob a bombshell at our culture's materialism: *economic growth in affluent countries provides no apparent boost to human morale.*

If happiness is similarly available to those of any age, sex, or race, and to those of all but the lowest income levels, then who are the very happy people? Through life's ups and downs, some people's capacity for joy persists undiminished. In one National Institute on Aging study of 5000 adults, the happiest of people in 1973 were still relatively happy a decade later, despite changes in their work, their residence, and their family status.

In study after study, four traits characterize happy people. First, happy people, especially in individualistic western cultures, like themselves. On *self-esteem* tests, they agree with statements such as "I'm a lot of fun to be with" and "I have good ideas." As we might expect from the typically better-than-neutral levels of well-being, most people do report positive self-esteem. Indeed, they usually exhibit a self-serving bias: they believe themselves more ethical, more intelligent, less prejudiced, better able to get along with others, and healthier than the average person. (Such findings bring to mind Freud's joke about the man who told his wife, "If one of us should die, I think I would go live in Paris.")

Second, happy people typically feel *personal control*. Feeling empowered rather than helpless, they also do better in school, achieve more at work, and cope better with stress. Deprived of control over one's life—an experience studied in prisoners, nursing home patients, and people living under totalitarian regimes—people suffer lower morale and worse health. Severe poverty demoralizes when it erodes people's sense of control over their life circumstances.

Third, happy people are usually *optimistic*. One could reason that pessimists, whose low expectations are so often exceeded, would constantly be surprised by joy. "Blessed is he who expects nothing, for he shall never be disappointed," counseled poet Alexander Pope in a 1727 letter. Nevertheless, positive thinking optimists—those who agree, for example, that "when I undertake something new, I expect to succeed"—tend to be more successful, healthier, and happier.

Fourth, happy people tend to be *extraverted*. Although we might have expected that introverts would live more happily in the serenity of their less stressed contemplative lives, extraverts are happier—whether alone or with others, whether living in rural or metropolitan areas, and whether working in solitary or social occupations.

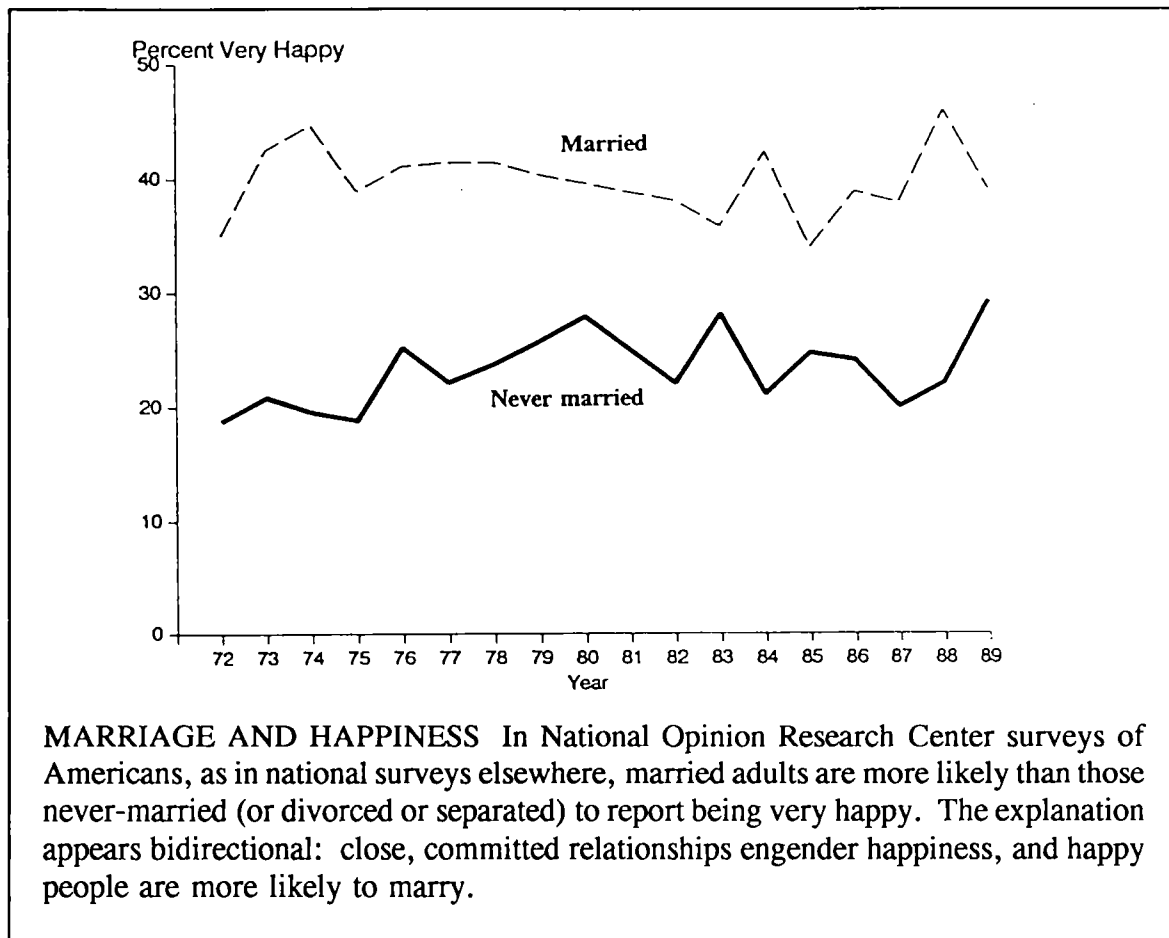
With each of these trait-happiness correlations, the causal arrows are uncertain. For example, does happiness make people more outgoing? Or are outgoing people temperamentally more high-spirited and less anxious about reaching out to others—tendencies that may explain their marrying sooner, getting better jobs, and making more friends. If these traits indeed predispose happiness, could people become happier by acting as if they had the desired traits? (Although traits such as extraversion are genetically influenced, actions can influence attitudes and dispositions. In experiments, people who feign high self-esteem begin feeling better about themselves, and people manipulated into a smiling expression feel happier.)

Close relationships also characterize happy lives. One could easily imagine why the stress of close relationships might exacerbate illness and misery. "Hell is other people," mused Jean-Paul Sartre. Thankfully, however, the benefits of close relationships with friends and family usually outweigh the strains. Compared to people bereft of such relationships, those who can name several intimate friends are healthier, less likely to die prematurely, and happier. Psychologist William Pavot reports that people report happier feelings when with others. In experiments by James Pennebaker, people relax and have better functioning immune systems after confiding painful experiences.

Clinical researcher Martin Seligman contends that today's historically high levels of depression stem partly from impoverished social connections throughout increasingly individualistic western societies. Individualistic societies do offer greater personal control and more opportunity to express one's feelings and talents, but at the price of a less embedded, more detached self. Today, 25 percent of Americans live alone, triple the 8 percent of half a century ago.

For more than 9 in 10 people, the most significant alternative to aloneness is marriage. Although broken marital relationships are a source of much misery, a supportive, intimate, committed relationship is among life's greatest satisfactions. To paraphrase Henry Ward Beecher, "well-married a person is winged; ill-matched, shackled." Fortunately, National Opinion Research Center surveys summarized by sociologists Andrew Greeley and Norval Glenn reveal that 3 in 4 married people say their spouse is their best friend, and 4 out of 5 say they would marry the same person again. Such feelings help explain why over the 1970s and 1980s, 24 percent of never-married adults, but 39 percent of married adults, said they were "very happy."

Is marriage, as is so often supposed, more strongly associated with men's happiness than women's? In both European and North American national surveys, the happiness gap between the married and never-married is similar for women and men. A statistical digest of 93 other studies, by Wendy Wood, Nancy Rhodes, and Melanie Whelan, confirms that, although a bad marriage may be more depressing to a woman than a man, the myth that single women report greater happiness than married women can be laid to rest. Throughout the western world, married people of both sexes report more happiness than those never



married, divorced, or separated.

"Joy is the serious business of heaven," said C. S. Lewis. Freud had an opposite opinion: Religion, he said, is an illusion that *erodes* happiness or even becomes a sort of sickness--an "obsessional neurosis" accompanied by guilt, repressed sexuality, and suppressed emotions. Accumulating data contradict Freud's surmise. Actively religious people are much less likely to become delinquent, to abuse drugs and alcohol, to divorce, and to commit suicide. In Europe and North America, religiously active people also report greater happiness. In one Gallup survey, highly spiritual people (who, for example, agreed that "My religious faith is the most important influence in my life") were twice as

likely as those lowest in spiritual commitment to declare themselves very happy. Other surveys find that happiness and life satisfaction rise with strength of religious affiliation and frequency of worship attendance. One statistical digest of research among the elderly found that one of the best predictors of life satisfaction is religiousness.

Other studies have probed the connection between faith and coping with a crisis. Compared to religiously inactive widows, recently widowed women who worship regularly report more joy in their lives. Compared to irreligious mothers of disabled children, those with a deep religious faith are less vulnerable to depression. Those with a strong faith also recover greater happiness after suffering divorce, unemployment, or serious illness.

What explains these positive links between faith and well-being? Is it the supportive close relationships often enjoyed by those active in faith communities (of which there are 258,000 in the United States alone)? Is it the sense of meaning and purpose that many people derive from their faith? Is it the motivation to focus beyond self (as reflected in the Gallup Organization's consistent finding of doubled rates of volunteerism and quadrupled rates of charitable giving among weekly church attenders compared to non-attenders)? Is it a religious worldview which offers answers to life's deepest questions and an optimistic appraisal of life events? Is it the hope that faith offers when people suffer or face what social psychologists Sheldon Solomon, Jeffery Greenberg, and Tom Pyszczynski call "the terror resulting from our awareness of vulnerability and death"? Such proposed explanations await further exploration.

So, knowing people's age, sex, race, and income (assuming they have enough to afford life's necessities) hardly clues us to their happiness. William Cowper's 1782 hunch has

proven right: "Happiness depends, as Nature shows, Less on exterior things than most suppose." Better clues come from knowing a person's traits, whether the person enjoys a supportive network of close relationships, and whether the person has a faith that entails social support, purpose, and hope. Additional studies have defined the marks of satisfying work and leisure experiences—experiences that typically engage an unself-conscious "flow" state in which challenges engage skills. Still more studies examine happy people's exercise patterns, cultural worldviews, and goal-strivings.

This new research on subjective well-being is a welcome complement both to societal emphases on physical and material well-being and to psychology's historic preoccupation with negative emotions. By asking who is happy, and why, the scientific study of well-being can help people rethink their priorities. And it can help us all better understand how to build a world that enhances human well-being.

DAVID G. MYERS is professor of psychology at Michigan's Hope College. Since winning the Gordon Allport Prize for his studies of group influence, he has focused on digesting psychological research for the lay public. Myers' ten books include texts for introductory and social psychology and *The Pursuit of Happiness* (Avon, 1993). ED DIENER is professor of psychology at the University of Illinois. He and his collaborators have been studying the definition and measurement of subjective well-being (happiness and life-satisfaction) for more than a decade. His current work focuses on cross-cultural differences in subjective well-being, and on adaptation to life events.

FURTHER READING

SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING: A STOCKS AND FLOWS FRAMEWORK. Bruce Headey and Alex Wearing in *Subjective Well-Being: An Interdisciplinary Perspective*. Edited by Fritz Strack, Michael Argyle, and Norbert Schwarz. Oxford, 1990.

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THE EXPERIENCE OF EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING. Ed Diener and Randy J. Larsen in *Handbook of Emotions*. Edited by M. Lewis and J. M. Haviland. Guilford, 1993.

ASSESSING SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING: PROGRESS AND OPPORTUNITIES. Ed Diener in *Social Indicators Research*, Vol. 31, pages 103-157; 1994

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