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Are You Happy?

By Sue M. Halpern

The How of Happiness: A Scientific Approach to Getting the Life You Want
by Sonja Lyubomirsky
Penguin, 366 pp., $25.95

Happier: Learn the Secrets to Daily Joy and Lasting Fulfillment
by Tal Ben-Shahar
McGraw-Hill, 224 pp., $21.95

Stumbling on Happiness
by Daniel Gilbert
Vintage, 310 pp., $14.95 (paper)

Against Happiness: In Praise of Melancholy
by Eric G. Wilson
Sarah Crichton Books/Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 166 pp., $20.00

What Is Emotion?: History, Measures, and Meanings
by Jerome Kagan
Yale University Press, 271 pp., $27.50

Chances are if someone were to ask you, right now, if you were happy, you'd say you were.[1] Claiming that you're happy—that is, to an interviewer who is asking you to rate your "life satisfaction" on a scale from zero to ten—appears to be nearly universal, as long as you're not living in a war zone, on the street, or in extreme emotional or physical pain. The Maasai of Kenya, soccer moms of Scarsdale, the Amish, the Inughuit of Greenland, European businessmen—all report that they are happy. When happiness researcher Ed Diener, the past president of the International Society of Quality of Life Studies, synthesized 916 surveys of over a million people in forty-five countries, he found that, on average, people placed themselves at seven on the zero-to-ten scale.[2]

No doubt the conditions in which these 916 surveys were taken, and their methodologies and measures, were inconsistent. In some cases, respondents were approached face-to-face, at home. In others, they were interviewed by phone. Some conversations were mediated by translators, others by village elders. In some surveys, people were asked, "Generally speaking would you say you are very happy, fairly happy, not too happy?" In others they were asked how they'd rank, on a one-to-seven scale, the conditions of their life. In yet another they were asked to locate themselves on a ladder of self-satisfaction, where the bottom rung, zero, was "the worst possible life" and the top rung, ten, was "the best possible life."

This ladder was constructed by demographers at the Gallup organization as part of its World Poll, begun in 2005, in which a representative sampling of adults in 132 countries were asked the same set of questions in an effort to serve up consistent cross-cultural data. Whether that kind of consistency is possible is questionable—but so is pinning down happiness and its various proxies like life satisfaction and well-being. As Steve Crabtree, one of the researchers involved in the development of the World Poll, wrote recently in the *Gallup Management Journal*, "If ever there was a concept that sounds 'fuzzy,' well-being is it."[3] (In the same survey, respondents were also asked if they smiled a lot the previous day and if they had been treated with respect that day.)

Nonetheless, Crabtree was confident that his colleagues had "cracked the code," and developed ways to get valid measures of happiness, both individ-ually and nationally, and across income groups and genders and age cohorts. Diener is too. In an essay called "Subjective Well-Being: The Science of Happiness and Life Satisfaction," he observes that self-reports of happiness mirror "expert" analyses, which he considers to be a good indication of their reliability. He also notes that people *like* being asked how they are feeling because calling on them to rate themselves is "democratic" and "grants respect."[4] Of course, this may lead some to wonder if there isn't a kind of Heisenberg effect in play here: if being asked how one feels enhances one's sense of well-being, one might be inclined just then to feel pretty good. I say this only partially in jest since, as Diener notes in the same essay, "estimates of happiness and reports of affect over time are likely to be influenced by a person's current mood."[5]

Still, since nearly all of us say we're happy (especially if we live in Puerto Rico, Mexico, Denmark, Ireland, Iceland, and Switzerland, which are among the happiest of happy places), it is somewhat disconcerting to observe the burgeoning library of "get happy" books. Individually and together, they suggest, first, that we may not be as happy as we say we are, and second, that if we're not, it may be our own fault. These books, many of which have similar, bright yellow aspects to their covers—yellow being the sign of warmth, enthusiasm, and, yes, happiness, according to color researchers—are, to a large extent, the popular expression of a decade-old subdiscipline of academic and clinical psychology that seeks practical wisdom through the study of healthy, rather than pathological, behaviors and adaptations. Called positive psychology, it was conceived of by Martin Seligman of the University of Pennsylvania, who wedded the postwar humanist approaches of Erich Fromm and Abraham Maslow to the seemingly more rigorous—which is to say ostensibly measurable—methodologies now allowed by high-speed computers and brain scanners.

More than anything, positive psychologists are keen to be seen as *scientists*, part of a broader movement in social science that, as Christopher Peterson explained in the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* a few years ago, "assumes that human goodness and excellence are as authentic as disease, disorder, and distress...[and] relies on empirical research to understand people and their lives."[6] Working alongside Seligman, Peterson and a handful of other members of what they called the Positive Psychology Steering Committee created what he describes as an "aspirational classification" of human goodness called *Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification*. At nearly eight hundred pages long, the *CSV* is a kind of good cop to the bad cop of the traditional *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (*DSM*), which is primarily a taxonomy of disease and despair.

Rather than a catalog of all that can go wrong in a life—alcoholism, anorexia, schizophrenia, kleptomania, to name a few—the *CSV* offers an inventory of traits, behaviors, and conditions that lead not only to mental health but also, according to its authors, to "the good life." These include such core characteristics as wisdom, courage, justice, transcendence, and temperance, and the numerous routes —what the authors call character strengths—that lead to these virtues: creativity, love of learning, and curiosity among them. The authors, who make no attempt to disguise their normative intentions, say they looked to the writings of historical figures like Benjamin Franklin, and contemporary figures such as Sir John Templeton (the mutual fund tycoon who bankrolled a good chunk of the endeavor), as well as the insights found in Hallmark cards, bumper stickers, and *Harry Potter*, to come up with their lists of virtues and strengths.

Positive psychology, which is founded on the belief that "good character can be cultivated,"[7] has, not surprisingly, spawned numerous, less hefty volumes than the *CSV*, each aimed at leading readers to the good life. This is not the good life of easy money and fast women (and men) but, rather, a life of self-reported contentment and fulfillment. In this it is not only reminiscent of the concerns of moral philosophy but heir, too, to the kind of popular evangelical individualism promoted by Norman Vincent Peale (author of *The Power of Positive Thinking*) in the last century and Rick Warren (*The Purpose Driven Life*) in this one.

Though Seligman and his peers are quick to point out that they are not championing a secular or any other kind of religion, and reiterate their allegiance to science to back up their claims,[8] and while their intercessions invoke no deity, their work is cut from the same uniquely American cloth of entitled self-actualization—the idea that you can be whoever you want to be, that the gold ring of happiness is yours for the taking. Consider Professor Sonja Lyubomirsky of the University of California, Riverside, for example. An acolyte of Seligman's who contributed to the formulation of the *CSV*, and the author of *The How of Happiness: A Scientific Approach to Getting the Life You*

Want, she contends that "a full 40 percent of the capacity for happiness is within your power to change."

To arrive at this precise formulation Lyubomirsky conceives of a pie chart divided into three parts. Half of the pie is taken up by genetics, a sliver by circumstance, and the rest by you and your willpower. By genetics, Lyubomirsky means a shared, familial temperament rather than a known set of genes. Like Martin Seligman before her (in *Authentic Happiness*, his popular exegesis of positive psychology), Lyubomirsky's understanding of what she calls the "set point" for happiness—the inherent "baseline or potential for happiness to which we are bound to return, even after major setbacks or triumphs"—draws on a host of studies of identical and fraternal twins by the late David Lykken (who coined the set-point metaphor) and his colleagues at the Minnesota Center for Twin and Family Studies.

Lykken had been surprised to learn from the work of Ed Diener and others[9] that the answer to the questions "Are those people who go to work in suits happier and more fulfilled than those who go to work in overalls? Do people higher on the socioeconomic ladder enjoy life more than those lower down? Can money buy happiness? Are black Americans less contented on average than white Americans? Are men happier than women?" was a resounding no. If socioeconomic status wasn't driving one's sense of happiness, what was? Beginning in the 1980s, Lykken and his colleagues surveyed 2,310 pairs of identical and fraternal twins, some reared together, others brought up apart, looking to see how closely mood, affect, temperament, and other traits tracked with shared genes and/or a shared environment.

What they found (from a smaller subset of the original group) was that the "reported well-being of one's identical twin, either now or 10 years earlier, is a far better predictor of one's self-rated happiness than one's own educational achievement, income, or status." This held not only for identical twins raised together but for those brought up apart, while for fraternal twins raised in the same household, the likelihood that one's sense of well-being matched one's twin's was, statistically speaking, not much greater than chance.

The second piece of Lybuomirsky's pie, the shard of circumstance, is the fallout from the questions about working in overalls or suits, about money buying happiness, about class and gender. As Diener's work, as well as Nobel Prize–winning economist Daniel Kahneman's pioneering research into what is now sometimes called hedonistic psychology, showed, for most people one's circumstances in life are not the main determinants of one's sense of happiness. Bad turns of events, such as accidents, job loss, and divorce, cause unhappiness, just as good turns, like getting a promotion, winning the lottery, or moving into a new house, can cause joy. In both cases, however, once the initial emotional response fades—if it does—one's sense of well-being returns to where it had been before. More is only more for a while, then becomes the status quo. It is the same with loss. (Which is why, for instance, a year or

so after an accident, people with paralyzing spinal cord injuries tend to be, on average, no more or less happy than anyone else.)

Putting aside the trickiness of making a single pie chart out of a mélange of studies, Lyubomirsky's central point is clear: a significant portion of what is called happiness—the 40 percent of what's left after birth and circumstance have had their say—is up for grabs. Taking some pages out of the positive psychology playbook, she coaches readers on how to snag it: find meaningful work, count your blessings, smile, do good. Curiously, this was not the conclusion reached by David Lykken and his collaborator Auke Tellegen, who found that over time the nonnegotiable biological aspects of temperament increased to the point where "it may be that trying to be happier is as futile as trying to be taller and therefore is counterproductive." If that were true, the how of happiness would be a fait accompli, determined at birth. One could be led to drink from the cup half full by books like Lyubomirsky's and it wouldn't matter in the long run.

Still, it's in the shorter run that we live, driven by assumptions of free will, which may be why positive psychology, which is inherently optimistic, is so appealing. Tal Ben-Shahar's *Happier: Learn the Secrets to Daily Joy and Lasting Fulfillment* is a nearly ecstatic ambassador of this point of view. The book is pitched as "the backbone of the most popular course at Harvard," Psychology 1504, "Positive Psychology," a claim made on the basis of the number of students who fill Sanders Theatre to listen to Ben-Shahar's lectures and go off to write

papers in which they grapple with their fears and reflect on their strengths, set ambitious goals for the week and for the coming decade [and are] encouraged to take risks and find their stretch zone.

It is full of exercises like "creating a hap-piness map" and thought experiments that he calls "time-ins"—meant no doubt to suggest the popular parenting technique of giving misbehaving children "time-outs"—that are intended to bring people closer to fulfillment. (But probably not, Ben-Shahar points out, those who are suffering from depression, acute anxiety, exceeding poverty, or political oppression.)

"Do you, at times, feel part of the rat race?" one time-in asks. "Looking at your life from the outside, what advice would you give yourself?" While time-ins and happiness maps may sound hokey, depending on your set point for bunkum, Ben-Shahar is simply repackaging what the happiness researchers now know—that the people who say they are happy are those who are part of a community, have purpose-driven lives, and don't sweat the small stuff. (The researchers also know from their surveys that the happiest of happy Americans are Republicans, social butterflies, and bigots.)

We are living a happy life when we derive pleasure and meaning while spending time with our loved ones, or learning something new, or engaging in a project at work. The more our days are filled with these experiences, the happier we become. *This is all there is to it.*

Sonja Lyubomirsky would not disagree. Unhappy people, she says, can become happier by "learning the habits of happy people." "Deciding to become happier entails making a choice about which perspective you take and acknowledging that the choice is *in your hands*." Like Ben-Shahar, Lyu-bomirsky sees people as autonomous creatures operating with unfettered free will: "The focus of this book is on the individual, on you," she reminds readers about halfway through. This is true, she says, even for those endowed with the so-called "depression" gene (the short allele of 5-HTTLPR), which predisposes bearers to despair when they're under duress because stress triggers the expression of the gene, which interferes with the production of the neurotransmitter serotonin (the same neurotransmitter that popular anti-depressants like Zoloft and Prozac are said to enhance). But, she argues, since individuals can avoid stressful situations by choosing instead to put themselves into constructive environments, "this means that no matter what your genetic predisposition, whether or not that predisposition is expressed is in *your* hands."

Well, maybe, up to a point. But one doesn't choose to be in car accidents, or even to witness them, or know that one's wonderful spouse will develop Alzheimer's thirty years down the line or choke on a chicken bone. One of the great frustrations and paradoxes of this you-have-the-power approach is that while it looks to community to relieve anomie, it often fails to place individual lives in a believable setting. It's not that it assumes a kind of emotional or even economically level playing field where everyone is basically the same; it's that it takes for granted that because particular circumstances —that smallest piece of Lyubomirsky's pie—do not significantly make people more or less happy over time, they do not matter to us as individuals at any time.

But it cannot be true that we can always choose to turn on the switch for happiness any more than we can choose, in advance, that our lives will be untouched by the events of the day. Certainly, those events and often their consequences fade—this has been one of the most robust findings of the happiness researchers. But when they occur, and in their immediate aftermath, they are very real, and sometimes they are lasting, or followed the next day by other distressing events, and the antidotes of "activities like practicing daily gratitude, focusing on the best person you can possibly be, being generous, and spending quality time with loved ones" not only may be unavailable, their unavailability may be the very cause of unhappiness.

In one of his book's first "time-ins," Tal Ben-Shahar poses this query to his readers: "How would you define happiness?" It's a reasonable question, and one that would seem central to the whole happy-making enterprise. It would be impossible to know if

you were happy, or happier, until you knew what happiness was. By posing it this way—by asking *you* to define happiness for yourself, and me to define it for myself—he's suggesting that happiness is unique and individual and means different things to different people. It's not like asking people to define "thermometer" or "radio" or some other tangible phenomenon that exists or has existed in the physical world and whose properties are commonly known and agreed upon.

Happiness, which has no physical attributes (even if some neuroscientists claim they can see it in the brain), is a feeling, not a thing. This may account for the fuzziness and disagreement that occur when definitions are proposed. Philosophers, psychologists, and econ-omists all come at it from their particular ideological perspectives (how it relates to the common good, for example, or to the function of markets), while regular folks come at it as it relates to them. As Charlie Brown and his pals well knew, happiness is two kinds of ice cream, finding a pencil, having a sister, anything and anyone that's loved by you.

Of course, we all know people who are not made happy by having a sister, finding a pencil, or any kind of ice cream. As Daniel Gilbert points out in his charming best-seller *Stumbling on Happiness*, "all claims of happiness are claims from someone's *point of view*." While this may not matter when we talk to each other, it may matter when researchers ask respondents to rate how happy they are on a scale of one to ten, since not only is happiness itself subjective, so are the numbers intended to "measure" its intensity. My five may be your three. Your three may be his seven. The variability of human experience is why social science can be so ungainly. Gilbert thinks the way around this is to ask a lot of people the same question, which is what he calls "the law of large numbers," but others (among them certain "hard" scientists), unconvinced that the same fuzzy question asked of lots of folks will yield more clarity than the same fuzzy question asked of fewer of them, might call it the law of diminishing returns.

Daniel Gilbert, however, is a psychologist—a Harvard psychologist, though not, it should be noted, a positive psychologist—and aggregate data are what he has to work with. As imperfect as they are, they still offer insights into the human condition, and it's the human condition with which he's most concerned. Individuals matter—most of the book is spoken directly and jocularly to *you*, as in "You've had an awful day—the cat peed on the rug, the dog peed on the cat, the washing machine is busted, *World Wrestling* has been preempted by *Masterpiece Theatre*—and you naturally feel out of sorts"—but only, really, to the extent that what can be said about one person's experience can pretty much be applied to someone else's. Unlike the positive psychologists, and despite the title of his book, the part of the human condition that intrigues Gilbert the most is not how we get happy, but why happiness eludes us when it does. For Gilbert, it has to do with time.

Gilbert's issue with time is not the same as, say Ben-Shahar's. It's not because of supply and demand (too little supply, too much demand) but, rather, of epistemology: we don't really understand it. Living in the present as we do, we're

constantly required to project ourselves into the future with decisions small and large: should I study math, should I have a Snickers bar, should I have another one? We make these calculations all the time, hurling ourselves headlong from now to then, over and over again, most of the time failing to recognize we're doing something so automatic.

Even when it's not, though, and we agonize over a decision, we go about assessing the choices in the same, and according to Gilbert, faulty, way. For one thing, we tend to believe that how we feel now is how we felt before as well as how we'll feel next month. And then next month comes, and our feelings are different, and we can't understand why we're not happy. (Gilbert calls this misstep "presentism," and our self-propulsion into the future, "nexting.") For him, imagination, the conduit of both presentism and nexting, is a weak link, as is memory, which tends to be a spotty catalog of unusual events, experiences, and feelings, rather than a complete and unbiased record.

If we take account of the inadequacies of memory and imagination, happiness, when it comes, would seem to be the product of either false consciousness or dumb luck. Even so, like the positive psychologists, Gilbert believes that it's within our power to make ourselves happier, or at least make better and more accurate and ultimately more satisfying choices (which will therefore make us happier, at least with our choices), and in a similar way—by copying. But while his colleague Ben-Shahar and other positive psychologists propose emulating the habits of successfully happy people, Gilbert suggests something much more modest: find your dopple-gänger, a person who has done the thing you're considering doing, and ask if he or she is happy. "If you believe (as I do)," he writes,

that people can generally say how they are feeling at the moment they are asked, then one way to make predictions about our own emotional futures is to find someone who is having the experience we are contemplating and ask them how they feel.

Thinking of moving from Manhattan to Sun City? Then ask someone who did. Wondering if you should take up yodeling? Talk to a yodeler.

Of course, relying on a sample of one is probably not going to tell you too much, especially when the sample is intrinsically biased. (Instead of talking to a yodeler, why not talk to someone who dropped out of yodeling class?) But this is not the objection Gilbert anticipates. He supposes that we'll reject the idea of surrogacy on the grounds that "other people are not me" and so our experiences can't be comparable. According to him,

...we spend so much time searching for, attending to, thinking about, and remembering [individual] differences, we tend to overestimate their magnitude and frequency, and thus end up thinking of people as more varied than they actually are.

In fact, the growth and popularity of the Internet can be attributed in large measure to its promotion of surrogacy, with sites like Trip Advisor, Amazon, and the Internet Movie Database that let us see what others have to say about the Red Roof Inn at LAX and a Sharp 1.4 cubic foot silver microwave and *It Happened One Night*. If in the past we relied on critics, whose judgment we may have trusted because we considered it to be expert, now we go to the opinions and experiences of everyday folk—people like us—and it's nearly obligatory these days to consult them.

Leaving aside whether a night at an airport motel or a new microwave will contribute to our immediate, long-term, or overall happiness, the real problem with surrogacy is that when it really matters it's often unavailable. If the question is "should I marry Joe?" who is my surrogate if no one has been married to Joe before? Is it all married women, half of whom are destined to be ex-wives at some point in their lives? And what if there is a former Mrs. Joe? Do I ask her? Or consider dog ownership. I'm thinking about getting a mutt from the pound. Do I simply talk to others who have gotten dogs that way, or do I need to find someone whose profile is similar to mine (travels a lot, no near neighbors) or a dog whose profile is similar to my prospective pet's (part pit bull, part chow, part who knows what) or both? It may be that the reason people don't use surrogates for much besides shopping or dining out is because dependent variables matter, but no one has yet developed the kind of analyses that would clue us in on which ones matter most.

Still, there are some situations that are so universal that they'd seem ideal for surrogacy. If I'm thinking of having a child, I can ask friends, or siblings, or even my parents if they think it's a good idea. Chances are, most of them will tell me to "go for it" because motherhood is one of the great joys of life. Survey data, however, does not bear this out. As Gilbert reports,

careful studies of how women feel as they go about their daily activities show that they are less happy when taking care of their chil-dren than when eating, exercising, shopping, napping, or watching television.

If Gilbert is correct that the only time a person can accurately say how he or she is feeling is right now, then this fact about the moment-to-moment unhappiness of mothers may suggest that another reason we don't rely on surrogates is that evolution doesn't want us to be happy all the time.

Neither, for that matter, does Eric Wilson. His short and gleefully peevish volume, *Against Happiness*, is an inventory of complaints about people who pursue happiness as a vocation, a birthright, or both. They're deluded, he says, unrealistic, inauthentic. They fail to acknowledge the misery in the world, and live in emotionally gated communities. Their intentional obtuseness is the cause of cultural vapidity, environmental destruction, blandness, cupidity. Better to be "born to the blues," as he is, he declares, and experience the world in all its dimensions.

Though Wilson calls himself "melancholic," a reader, encountering *Against Happiness*, might sense, in addition, his anger, and sometimes his rage. Anger and rage describe certain emotional states, ones that are related to each other, but are not the same thing. Similarly, there is happiness, and also joy and glee and delight and contentment and exhilaration—a whole thesaurus page of words that are similar but not irreducible. For writers, this diversity of language is often a good thing, but for social scientists it can be tricky. As Jerome Kagan observes in his blessedly nuanced, provocative study, *What Is Emotion?*:

The rational numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 have an aesthetic quality that is shared with the purity of the terms *sad*, *angry*, *fearful*, and *happy*, tempting us to assume that each word names only one phenomenon.

That they don't results in all sorts of messiness, including disagreements about what constitutes the basic human emotions and even what emotion is. Kagan, a professor emeritus of psychology at Harvard, would like to table those discussions for the time being; simply acknowledging the wiliness of words and concepts, he suggests, would bring some coherence to a field that is being further muddled by the introduction of brain scans as evidence of specific feelings. As he puts it:

A colored photograph of a brain state created with the help of a brain scanner is no more equivalent to an emotion than a picture of an apple represents the texture and taste of the fruit.

Kagan, who is a graceful and incisive writer, is doing something unusual here: he's writing a kind of valedictory letter to younger psychologists, neurobiologists, and social scientists, cautioning them not to get ahead of themselves: to find a common language, to not be seduced by the pretty pictures coming out of the brain scanner. For those of us lucky enough to eavesdrop, it's instructive as well—part caveat emptor, part intellectual high bar. Emotions like happiness and sadness, which we all assume we understand because we've personally experienced them, may be less intuitively obvious than we think. In addition to the insufficiencies of language, there are cultural, gender, and social variations that are not always taken into account, so that meanings are not universal. This is what Ed Diener and his colleagues were getting at when they attempted to determine precisely what the Maasai, the Amish, and the Inuit of Greenland meant when they said they were happy. The Amish, for example, reported relatively low "self-satisfaction," which could be accepted on its face, or seen as the manifestation of a culture that considers pride and self-promotion sinful.

Even cultures that are more accessible and seemingly well known are not necessarily transparent. Consider an upwardly mobile American who works hard throughout school and college and then continues to work hard in his profession, even after making more than enough money to cut back or retire. Conventional wisdom says

that this poor soul is engaged in the joyless pursuit of joy because he believes that more money and more stuff will make him more happy. Kagan, however, suggests that his motivation may be something else altogether—that having established a pattern of hard work and reward early on that has been historically associated with pleasant feelings, he may feel some sort of psychological distress if he does otherwise. Working hard may be its own reward, but not for the obvious reason.

Sensitive to all kinds of glibness, Kagan is especially wary of the use of animal models to describe or mirror human emotions. Rats exposed to electric shocks when a light turns on learn to fear the light, but it is another thing altogether to suppose that a conditioned fear response in a rat is comparable to anxiety in a human, or that a drug that neutralizes the rat's fear will have the same effect on people—though those are both common assumptions. "It is worth noting that rats can be conditioned to avoid eating a particular food," Kagan writes,

but no one has argued that this fact provides a useful model for understanding women who avoid eating fats and carbohydrates because they want to be physically more attractive.

That dogs with separation anxiety are given Prozac may have less to do with the similarities between human and canine anxiety and more to do with a general tendency to treat symptoms, not causes.

And so it comes back to the problem of relying on overly broad, categorical, static words like fear and happiness to describe, diagnose, predict, and expound, words that don't get us very far, as patients, as subjects, as readers. This problem with language may explain why, though we all say we're happy, the library of how-to-get-happy books and why-we're-not-happy books is expanding. Anyone who spends time in that section of the stacks is likely to cheer Jerome Kagan's transcendent (hopeful, gracious) and courageous (brave, valiant, courteous) request:

Let us agree to a moratorium on the use of single words, such as *fear*, *anger*, *joy*, and *sad*, and write about emotional processes with full sentences rather than ambiguous, naked concepts that burden readers with the task of deciding who, whom, why, and especially what.

Notes

[1] "Are We Happy Yet?," a report by the Pew Research Center, February 13, 2006; cited in Eric G. Wilson, *Against Happiness*, p. 5.

[2] Robert Biswas-Diener, Joar Vittersø, and Ed Diener, "Most People are Pretty Happy, But There Is Cultural Variation: The Inughuit, the Amish, and the Maasai," *Journal of Happiness Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (September 2005).

[3] "The Well-Being Revolution," *Gallup Management Journal* (gmj.gallup.com), December 13, 2007.

[4] Ed Diener, Richard E. Lucas, and Shigehiro Oishi, "Subjective Well-Being: The Science of Happiness and Life Satisfaction," in *Handbook of Positive Psychology*, edited by C.R. Snyder and Shane J. Lopez (Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 64–65.

[5] Diener et al., "Subjective Well-Being," p. 65.

[6] Christopher Peterson, "Positive Social Science," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 591, No. 1 (January 2004), pp. 187–188.

[7] *CSV*, p. 3.

[8] Martin E.P. Seligman, *Authentic Happiness* (Free Press, 2002), p. 288, note 96.

[9] David G. Myers and Ed Diener, "Who Is Happy?" *Psychological Science*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (1995).