

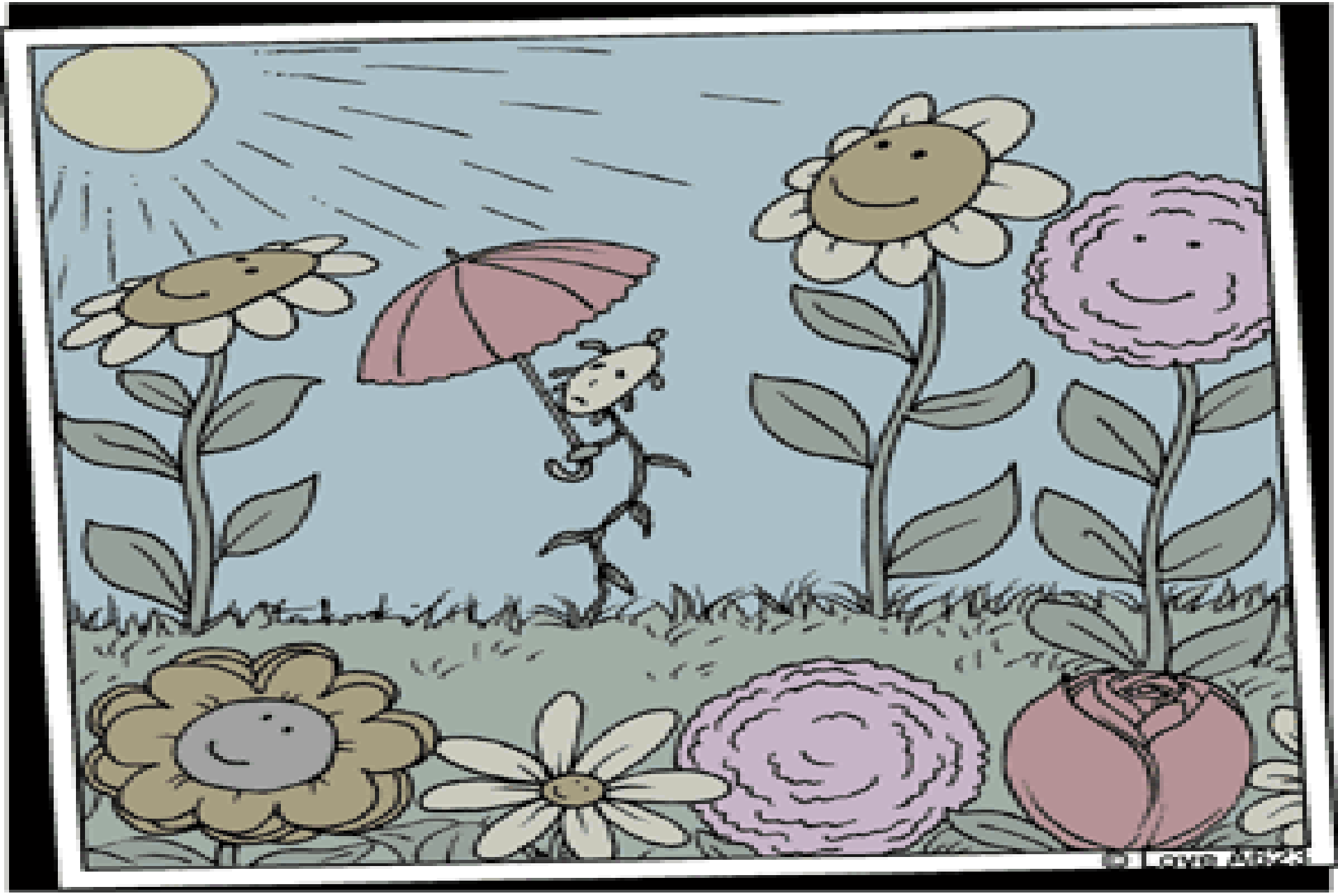
HAPPINESS:
connecting physical and psychological health

Helena Águeda Marujo
Luis Miguel Neto
Psychology Department
Lisbon University

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Anorexic flora.


ABOUT THE URGENCY OF THE A POSITIVE,
PROMOTIONAL APPROACH TO HEALTH AND LIFE

“SOLUTION-FOCUSED CONVERSATIONS”

- What was the most beautiful thing you saw today?
- What do you enjoy doing in your free time?
- To whom or what have you been paying more attention lately?
- If you received a year’s salary doubled, and if you decided to travel to one or more countries, where would you choose to go and why?
- During that time, what would your colleagues at work miss because you were not there, what would be different?
- What about your family and friends: what would they miss because you were away?
- Share the funniest story you lived in your professional life.
- What gives meaning to your life?
- What would be the smallest step you could take that will enhance your happiness?





It appears that happiness does not predict longevity in sick populations, but that it does predict longevity among healthy populations. So, happiness does not cure illness but it does protect against becoming ill.

The effect of happiness on longevity in healthy populations is remarkably strong. The size of the effect is comparable to that of smoking or not.

Current public health policies seem only to affect happiness marginally.





If so, public health can also be promoted by policies that aim at greater happiness of a

greater number. That can be done by strengthening individual life-abilities and by

improving the livability of the social environment.





Humor as a tool for change

www.glasbergen.com



"Good news — they found you a donor for a smile transplant!"

Happiness can be advanced in several ways: At the individual level happiness can be furthered by means of :

1) providing information about consequences of life-choices on happiness
2) training in art-of-living skills, and
3) professional life-counselling.

At the level of society greater happiness for a greater number can be achieved by policies that aim at a decent material standard of living, the fostering of freedom and democracy and good governance. Evidence based happiness engineering requires more research.

(Ruut Veenhoven, 2006)





DATA ON UNHAPPINESS AND PSYCHOTROPIC MEDICATION IN CHILDREN AND YOUTH



"In the last decade, psychotropic drug prescription in children and adolescents raised exponentially" (Sparks & Duncan, 2008)

"Studies with more then one million children and adolescents in North-America show that in the last twenty years prescription of drugs for emotional and behavioral problems more then tripled"

Zito et al., 2003

"Only in 2002 there were 11 million prescriptions of anti-depressive drugs to children less than 18 years in the USA."

n Sparks & Duncan, 2008







One in every Americans aged less than 12 years of age were medicated with anti-depressives (National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, 2005-2006).

In children younger than 6 years there was an increase of 580% in anti-depressive medication.







WHY POSITIVE AND APPRECIATIVE APPROACHES?

Negative versus positive topics in psychology journal articles 1887 to 2001:

- 9,760 on “anger”
- 65,531 on “anxiety”
- 79,154 on “depression”
- 20,868 on “fear”
- 207,110 on “treatment”

- 1,021 on “joy”
- 4,129 on “life satisfaction”
- 3,522 on “happiness”
- 781 on “courage
- 31,019 on “prevention





“We see what we look for and we miss much of what we are not looking for even though it is there... Our experience of the world is heavily influenced by where we place our attention.”

Stavros and Torres, 2007







Prison for people who lack imagination.



WELL-BEING: POSITIVE EMOTIONS, ENGAGED LIVES AND PURPOSE



Authentic Happiness

The 3 'happy' lives:

- The pleasant life - positive emotion & the skills to amplify it (pleasure, enjoying life, sports, hobbies, relationships, etc..)

- The good life - engagement, absorption, 'flow'; confidence and satisfaction in accomplishing tasks;

- The meaningful life – using your strengths in the service of something greater than yourself; contributing to something bigger



(Martin Seligman, 2003)





1. The Pleasant Life

- Positive subjective experience

- The Importance of Cultivating Positive Emotions
  - Fredrickson: Broaden-and-Build Theory

- Positive Emotions
  - About the past (gratitude, forgiveness)
  - About the present (mindfulness, savoring)
  - About the future (hope, optimism)







VIA Classification of Character Strengths

(Peterson and Seligman)

Wisdom
- -Creativity
- -Curiosity
- -Judgment
- -Love of Learning
- -Perspective

Courage
- -Bravery
- -Industry
- -Authenticity
- -Zest

Love
- -Intimacy
- -Kindness
- -Social Intelligence

Justice
- -Citizenship
- -Fairness
- -Leadership

Temperance
- -Forgiveness
- -Humility
- -Prudence
- -Self-Control

Transcendence
- -Awe
- -Gratitude
- -Hope
- -Humor
- -Spirituality





Are all Strengths Equal?

- The key 5 most closely related to Life Satisfaction:
    - Optimism
    - Gratitude
    - Zest
    - Curiosity
    - Ability to love and be loved

www.viacharacter.org







"I expect you all to be independent, innovative, critical thinkers who will do exactly as I say!"

Positive Interventions

- Is it possible to cultivate more happiness?
- Three blessings exercise
- Gratitude visit
- Identify your signature strengths and use them in a new way.







ACTIVE STRATEGIES FOR HAPPINESS (Lyubomirsky, 2007)

EXPRESS GRATITUDE

CULTIVATE OPTIMISM AND HOPE

STOP RUMINATING AND COMPARING WITH WHOM HAS MOST

GROW WITH CHALLENGES

FORGIVE

ENGAGE IN OBJECTIVES

BE GENEROUS

ENHANCE POSITIVE RELATIONS

INTENSIFY MOMENTS OF FLOW

SAVOR THE MOMENT/

MINDFULNESS

TAKE CARE OF BODY/SPORTS AND DEVELOP HUMOR

INVEST IN A SPIRITUAL PATH IN LIFE




off the mark
by Mark Parisi
www.offthemark.com
I JUST LOVE HAPPY ENDINGS
TITANIC
MarkParisi@aol.com
www.offthemark.com

For More Information

- Positive Psychology Center: www.positivepsychology.org
- VIA Signature Strengths Survey: www.authentichappiness.org
- Master of Applied Positive Psychology: www.pennpositivepsych.org





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Contacts:

lenaamarujo@yahoo.com

netoebom@gmail.com