**What is happiness?**

**happiness** noun /ˈhæp.ɪ.nəs/ n [U]  
the feeling of being happy

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**What is happiness?**

When I was a small child, I thought that success spelled happiness. I was wrong. Happiness is like a butterfly which appears and delights us for one brief moment, but soon flits away – Anna Pavlova

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**What is happiness?**

Finding happiness is like finding yourself. You don’t find happiness, you make happiness. Self-actualisation is a process of discovering who you are, who you want to be and paving the way to happiness by doing what brings you the most meaning and contentment to your life over the long run. – David Leonhardt

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**Hedonia and Eudamonia**

- Essentially, Anna Pavlova was speaking from a hedonic stance, where happiness comes from psychological experiences and the feeling of pleasure.
  - From a hedonic stance, the object or source of happiness is not important.
- While David Leonhardt was speaking from a eudaimonic stance, where happiness is about fulfilling a process of life, striving for the good-life; happiness is not an end-product or goal, but is achieved through action.

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**Brickman and Campbell (1971)**

Based on the concept of the hedonic treadmill, they suggest that there is little people can do to change their long-term levels of happiness.

Lottery Winners are no more happy than non winners and paraplegic individuals are no less happy than those who can walk.

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**Is it true?**

Hedonia is associated with subjective experiences such as feeling relaxed, excited, and content, losing track of time, such measures seem relatively unconscious and uncontrollable.

Eudaimonia is associated with developing one’s potentials, with investing effort, with having clear goals, and with feeling challenged. It may therefore be possible to create happiness. – Waterman, 1993

**Is either stance correct?**
Hedonism and Happiness


Introduction

- This paper focuses on the effects on hedonism on happiness.
- The term “hedonism” can be defined in several different ways
  - In this paper it is defined as “a way of life in which pleasure plays an important role”.
- Contradictory claims have been made about hedonism:
  - some positive and some negative.

Negative views of hedonism

- The negative view of hedonism: associated with religion, avoiding a lustful life.
- Critique of hedonism breaks down into two lines. One states that it is bad for the environment or society. The other that it is bad for the individual.

Hedonism harms the individual

- Again, there are two lines of critique.
- The first is that hedonism contributes to bad health, through smoking, drinking and eating calorific foods.
- The second is that hedonism actually reduces long-term happiness, the so-called paradox of hedonism.

The paradox of hedonism

- Pleasure becoming dull over time may lead either to seeking stronger sensations (potentially dangerous) or to disappointment.
- Hedonism may lead to addiction.
- Hedonists may become idle, their lives follow no cause or path of self development. Enjoyment is a by-product of self-actualisation.
- Happiness may require that one first sees meaning in one’s life and there is little meaning in mere enjoyment.
- Hedonism may erode social bonds, as the hedonist is less sensitive to the needs of others.

Positive views on hedonism

- Less work in this area, perhaps the benefits of hedonism are taken to be self-evident.
- Pleasure may reduce stress and so lead to better health.
- Enjoyment enhances our ability to cope with problems in life and to use more reality control over emotion focused coping.
- Enjoyment makes us more social and this strengthens social bonds and leads to a better support network.
## Hedonic Mind-set and Happiness

- Hedonism manifests itself in two ways
  - A general mind set
  - Specific behaviors
- Visible in values (Fordyce, 1972)
  - Happy students mentioned hedonic themes more often
- Visible in life goals (Sears, 1977)

## Hedonic Mind-set and Happiness

- Reflected in personality (Gorman, 1971)
  - Sensation seekers are happier
- Degree of activities that bring you pleasure without feeling guilt (Arise, 1996)
  - More enjoyment is seen in happier countries that do not feel guilt

### Stimulant findings

- For all stimulants data was collected at three levels: those who abstained, moderate users and heavy users. Though in the case of drugs, the scale ranged through the classes of drugs.
- In all cases data was taken from the longitudinal study and compared high school self-reported happiness against stimulate usage in later life. Bachman et al (1978)

### Stimulant findings continued...

- **Alcohol findings**: moderate drinking was found to be optimum (2-3 glasses a day) for happiness levels.
- **Tobacco findings**: non-smokers and moderate smokers had equal levels of happiness, while heavy smokers were less happy, with a correlation between earlier unhappiness and later smoking.
- **Psychotropic drugs**: use of drugs is negatively related to happiness (especially in hard drug use) and early unhappiness predicted later drug use.

### Hedonism and the use of Stimulants

- Focusing on 3 separate stimulants: Alcohol, Tobacco and Psychotropic drugs.
- Though it may be claimed coffee, sweets and food may produce significant effects, these stimulants have yet to be studied.

### Stimulant findings

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### Diagram

![Figure 1: Average enjoyment of moderate pleasures and happiness in relation to stimulants](image-url)
Hedonism and Leisure

- Those who tend to deem leisure time to be very important in day to day life, are considered to be happier.
- Especially those who partake in outdoor activities or who participate in sports.
- Clark and Watson (1988) show that those who are most involved in leisure activities report a better mood on average.

Hedonism and Sex

- Hedonism will manifest itself in a permissive attitude towards sex
  - Premarital sex and homosexuality
  - Ventegodt(1995)
- People that are sexually active are happier than those that are not

Eudaimonia

- “The highest of all goods achievable by human action”
  – (Aristotle, 1925)
- Involves pursuing activities that are goal-directed and have purpose, with the essential end-point being “to achieve the best that is within us”

Lost in Translation

- Eudaimonia was long translated to mean happiness and studies focused on the extent to which people felt satisfied with their lives.
- This, however, neglected what Aristotle felt to be the essence of eudaimonia, striving towards excellence based on one’s unique potential

What is Eudaimonia?

- “the highest of all goods achievable by human action”
  – (Aristotle, 1925)
- Involves pursuing activities that are goal-directed and have purpose, with the essential end-point being “to achieve the best that is within us”

Psychological Well-being

- Ryff drew on the work of Aristotle and others who have examined eudaimonia to better understand the meanings of positive human functioning
- Her model shows the various forms that well-being can take and focuses on two main aspects:
  - the contexts of people’s lives
  - consequences for health outcomes
Core dimensions of PWB

6 Key Dimensions of PWB

- Self-Acceptance
  - Long-term self-evaluation involving awareness and acceptance of personal strengths and weaknesses
- Purpose in Life
  - Search for meaning, even in the face of adversity
- Environmental Mastery
  - Acting on, and altering, the surrounding world through the mental and physical activities

Consequences for Health Outcomes

- In a study conducted by Ryff et al. (2004) on a sample of women aged 61-91, it was found that those with higher levels of eudaimonic well-being had:
  - Longer duration of, faster entry into, and less body movement during REM sleep. These are associated with environmental mastery, positive relations with others, and high purpose in life
  - Better neuroendocrine regulation, e.g., lower cardiovascular risk. These are associated with personal growth and purpose in life
  - Higher levels of HDL cholesterol. This was associated with personal growth and purpose in life

Eudaimonic and Hedonistic Happiness

- Recap
- Flow experiences
- Ceiling effects
- How to be happier
- Other things to consider
Recap
• 2 conceptions (or types) of happiness

• Hedonism – greater the pleasure the better; regardless of source

• Eudoimonia – Aristotle, in the pursuit of fulfilment of personal potentials in ways that further an individual's purpose in living
  • Happiness is the product or by-product of the pursuit of personal achievement
  • [The short term search – the long-term search]

Flow Experiences
• When challenge is well-balanced to skills
• Esp. If suited to personal best and likes and interest.
• Challenge yourself → Improve → Challenges are no longer challenging → Boredom → Strive to improve & enhance self-realization of personal potential → Find new harder challenges

Ceiling Effect?
• It's the striving itself not the achievement
• Frustration??
• Find a new challenge
• Take time and complete?
• Doesn’t matter if you never quite get there....

Can I make myself happier? (and healthier)
• Eudaimonic – sustainable, can always make more challenges, correlates with good health.
• Hedonistic – has less useful implication if someone wants to be happier.

Maybe we should consider.....
• WHY are some people more focused on personal development? Is it linked to personality? Control?
• Mechanism. How they work together?? People experience both! Correlate well...
• A clearer explanation of the positives of Hedonism (eg/ spontaneity)
  – Are things that are not to do with pursuit of fulfilling personal skill potential but still bring you pleasure are always bad??
Thanks for listening.....

Any Questions?