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**CHAPTER 9**

2

**THE REWARDS OF  
HAPPINESS**

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4

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6 **SUCCESS**—OR the attainment of rewards valued in one’s culture—is assumed to foster happi-  
 7 ness. Many people believe that securing a promotion, getting married, or recovering from a  
 8 chronic illness will make them happier, and they are right to think so. Happiness is indeed  
 9 correlated with numerous positive characteristics, resources, and outcomes (Diener, Suh,  
 10 Lucas, & Smith, 1999), and enjoying them undoubtedly contributes to overall well-being.  
 11 However, the finding that happiness and success are correlated means that the opposite  
 12 causal direction may also hold. Being happy in the first place could cause people to be  
 13 more successful in a variety of domains. In other words, happiness may lead people to  
 14 accrue a great many rewards in life. In this chapter, we argue on behalf of this causal path-  
 15 way, and present evidence in its support (see Lyubomirsky, King, and Diener (2005) for a  
 16 more in-depth review).

17

**EARLY RESEARCH AND THEORETICAL  
BACKGROUND**

18

19 The study of happiness is a relatively new research area. Its roots can be traced back to  
 20 humanistic psychology, which arose as an alternative to behaviorist and clinical approaches  
 21 (e.g., Rogers, 1961). Humanistic psychology shone a light on the positive aspects of human  
 22 beings and their behavior, focusing on constructs such as health (as opposed to illness), self-  
 23 actualization (the realization of one’s true potential), and creativity (Aanstoos, Serlin, &  
 24 Greening, 2000). More recently, psychologists have begun to emphasize the study of people’s  
 25 strengths (as opposed to their weaknesses and pathologies) and the prevention of mental  
 26 disorders, rather than only their treatment (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). This new  
 27 focus has encouraged the growth of research on happiness and positive emotions, which  
 28 characterizes present-day positive psychology.





1 What, then, is happiness? For the purposes of this chapter, we define happiness as the  
 2 frequent experience of positive emotions (Diener, Sandvick, & Pavot, 1991). Accordingly,  
 3 we use terms such as positive affect, pleasant mood, and high well-being to refer to individu-  
 4 als who often experience positive emotions. Happiness is generally measured using self-  
 5 report questionnaires, such as the Subjective Happiness Scale (Lyubomirsky & Lepper,  
 6 1999), the Positive Activation and Negative Activation Schedule (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen,  
 7 1988), and the Satisfaction With Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985).  
 8 Although these scales are not tapping into the exact same construct, they do distinguish  
 9 between people who frequently experience positive emotions and those who do not.

10 Our central thesis is that being a happy person raises the likelihood of accruing rewards  
 11 in all the important life domains, such as relationships, work, and health. How does happi-  
 12 ness engender success? We argue that the key underlying mechanism, or ingredient, is *posi-*  
 13 *tive affect*. Happy people frequently experience positive emotions (Diener et al., 1991), and  
 14 positive emotions are associated with active, approach-oriented behavior. Accordingly,  
 15 those who experience positive emotions are more likely to go out and meet new people,  
 16 enter novel situations, and pursue important goals (Carver, 2003; Elliot & Thrash, 2002;  
 17 Lyubomirsky, 2001). According to the broaden-and-build theory (Fredrickson, 2001), posi-  
 18 tive emotions also broaden people’s “thought–action repertoires” (e.g., prompting them to  
 19 generate more ideas and instigate new actions) and allow them to build physical, social,  
 20 intellectual, and psychological resources. Thus, people who experience frequent positive  
 21 moods can presumably develop skills and relationships that help them to succeed in a vari-  
 22 ety of domains.

23 Furthermore, positive affect acts as a signal that things are going well—a situation that  
 24 grants individuals the opportunity and freedom to be active and sociable, to help others, to  
 25 be flexible and productive, and to engage in healthy behaviors and effective coping (Hill &  
 26 Buss, 2008; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). We argue that these very characteristics help people  
 27 to succeed at culturally-valued goals. This is in part because people are more likely to actively  
 28 work toward new goals while experiencing positive moods (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005).  
 29 Equally important is that those who habitually experience positive emotions are likely to  
 30 have accumulated skills and resources during their positive experiences. Consequently,  
 31 such individuals are both more likely to take steps in order to pursue their goals and to  
 32 succeed in attaining them.

33 In this chapter, our aim is to provide a brief review, with some key examples, of the  
 34 literature on the relationship between happiness and success, as well as to update the most  
 35 recent published comprehensive review (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). Readers are additionally  
 36 advised to consult analyses of more specific literatures, including those regarding health  
 37 (Pressman & Cohen, 2005), mortality (Chida & Steptoe, 2008), creativity (Amabile, Barsade,  
 38 Mueller, & Staw, 2005; Baas, De Dreu, & Nijstad, 2008), and job performance (Kaplan,  
 39 Bradley, Luchman, & Haynes, 2009).

40

## RESEARCH METHODS

41 A variety of research methods have been used to study the relationship between happiness  
 42 and success. Cross-sectional studies allow us to observe whether an association exists



1 between two variables (e.g., happiness and health), but cannot tell us the direction of the  
2 relationship (e.g., whether happiness leads to good health or good health leads to happi-  
3 ness). Thus, from these studies, we can determine that happiness is related to success, but  
4 we do not know if happiness causes success or if success causes happiness or if some third  
5 factor altogether causes both success and happiness. Accordingly, correlational studies can  
6 only answer questions like “Are happy people successful people?” and “Are long-term happi-  
7 ness and short-term positive affect associated with adaptive skills and characteristics?”  
8 Because cross-sectional studies are the least informative as to the causal nature of the rela-  
9 tionship, we will not review such studies in this chapter (however, see Lyubomirsky et al.  
10 (2005) for a comprehensive review of cross-sectional research in this area).

11 Longitudinal studies are more informative than cross-sectional ones because they exam-  
12 ine whether happiness precedes success during the course of time (e.g., happiness assessed  
13 at age 40 and health assessed at age 50). Thus, longitudinal studies can answer questions  
14 such as, “Does happiness precede success?” and “Do happiness and positive affect pave the  
15 way for behaviors paralleling success?” (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). However, longitudinal  
16 studies still cannot establish a causal relationship between happiness and success, because,  
17 like cross-sectional studies, longitudinal investigations are subject to the “third-variable”  
18 problem. In other words, because such studies do not take place in a controlled environ-  
19 ment, where only positive affect is manipulated, there may be other variables (e.g., personal-  
20 ity, biological, or family characteristics) that account for the relationship between happiness  
21 and success. Thus, we cannot conclude that happiness causes success from longitudinal  
22 studies.

23 Fortunately, experimental studies, which typically induce people to experience positive  
24 emotions and then assess the consequences, do allow us to establish the direction of causal-  
25 ity. Although experiments are not perfect either—for example, the laboratory typically lacks  
26 what researchers call “ecological validity” and is sometimes problematic to generalize to  
27 real-world naturalistic settings—they can answer questions like “Does positive affect lead to  
28 behaviors paralleling success?” (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). For example, if we make some-  
29 one happy temporarily, will he or she show signs of a momentarily strengthened immune  
30 system?

31 The ideal method, however, for answering our causal question involves an “experimental  
32 longitudinal” design. These types of studies—also called randomized controlled interven-  
33 tions—aim to increase long-term happiness and follow people over time in the “real world”  
34 to measure how they and their lives have changed as a result. Accordingly, such investiga-  
35 tions are able to test for a long-term causal relationship, answering questions like, “Does  
36 induced happiness lead to behaviors paralleling success several weeks, months, or years  
37 from now?”

38 The small but growing area of happiness intervention research provides indirect evidence  
39 for a link between happiness and success. If such interventions increase happiness, then it is  
40 reasonable to conclude that they should also bolster the rewards of happiness—for example,  
41 stronger interpersonal relationships, superior physical health, or more helping behavior.  
42 As just one example, studies have shown that practicing gratitude boosts happiness (e.g.,  
43 Emmons & McCullough, 2003; Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, & Schkade, 2005). At the same time,  
44 gratitude predicts more prosocial behavior (McCullough, Kilpatrick, Emmons, & Larsen,  
45 2001), lower depression (Woodward, Moua, & Watkins, 1998), fewer post-traumatic stress  
46 disorder symptoms (Masingale et al., 2001), and stronger social bonds (Emmons & Shelton,



1 2002; McCullough et al., 2001; McCullough & Tsang, 2004; see Lambert, Graham, and  
2 Fincham (2009) for a review). However, it is important to show that gratitude has these  
3 benefits via its effects on happiness. In one study with suggestive findings in this respect,  
4 life satisfaction was found to mediate—or underlie—the relationship between gratitude and  
5 materialism (Lambert, Fincham, Stillman, & Dean, 2009). Thus, expressing gratitude both  
6 increased people's life satisfaction and lowered their materialism, and life satisfaction was  
7 found to be responsible for the gratitude-materialism link.

8 Another long-term intervention found that people randomly assigned to practice loving-  
9 kindness meditation for 9 weeks experienced more positive emotions over time (Cohn,  
10 Fredrickson, Brown, Mikels, & Conway, 2009). These positive emotions further produced  
11 increases in personal resources, such as greater social support and diminished illness  
12 symptoms, which predicted increased life satisfaction. In other words, individuals who were  
13 experimentally induced to be happier were able to “build” their psychological and social  
14 resources, which in turn led to increases in life satisfaction. Although still largely indirect,  
15 such research is beginning to suggest that boosting long-term happiness may have positive  
16 effects on other important aspects of people's lives.

17 In the following sections, we review some of the more direct longitudinal and experi-  
18 mental studies that provide support for the hypothesis that happiness causes successful out-  
19 comes and behaviors.

## 20 LONGITUDINAL RESEARCH

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### 21 Social relationships

22 To begin, happiness has been found to predict success in a variety of social settings. As one  
23 important example, how happy a person is raises the probability that he or she will eventu-  
24 ally marry. In a 15-year Australian study, unmarried participants whose happiness levels  
25 were one standard deviation above the mean were 1.5 times more likely to be married at a  
26 later point in time than those whose happiness levels were at the mean (Marks & Fleming,  
27 1999). Those who were two standard deviations above the mean were twice as likely to be  
28 married later. In a 16-year German study, people who reported high life satisfaction were  
29 more likely to get married 4 or more years later than those who reported lower life satisfac-  
30 tion (Lucas, Clark, Georgellis, & Diener, 2003). Another study with a similar design mea-  
31 sured subjective well-being in young single individuals. Those who eventually married had  
32 higher subjective well-being as young adults than those who remained single (Stutzer &  
33 Frey, 2006). Taken together, the evidence suggests that happy single people are more likely  
34 to eventually find marriage partners than their less happy single peers.

35 Being happy apparently predicts not only the likelihood of getting married but having a  
36 strong marriage. A 6-year-long Australian investigation found that respondents' happiness  
37 early in the study was associated with higher marital satisfaction later (Headey & Veenhoven,  
38 1989). In an intriguing study with a US sample, Harker and Keltner (2001) examined dis-  
39 plays of positive affect in female college senior yearbook photos. They found that women  
40 who expressed sincere positive affect (i.e., “Duchenne” smiles) at age 21 were more likely to  
41 be married 6 years later and less likely to be single 22 years later. The expression of genuine





1 positive affect in the photos also predicted marital satisfaction 31 years later. However, a  
2 recent study that used high school yearbook photos with respondents in their 50s was unable  
3 to replicate these results (Freese, Meland, & Irwin, 2007).

4 Happiness is also related to higher levels of activity and social interaction. In a sample of  
5 older adults, those who were happier at one point in time were more likely to participate in  
6 activities 18 months later (Kozma & Stones, 1983; Stones & Kozma, 1986). Similarly, in  
7 another study, positive affect measured at the start predicted the amount of time people par-  
8 ticipated in recreational and social activities later in the study, even after taking into account  
9 their initial activity levels (Lucas, 2001). And, in a 4-week study of nursing home residents,  
10 positive affect (specifically, interest rather than pleasure) was related to activity levels  
11 (Meeks, Young, & Looney, 2007). So, people who are happy and experience frequent good  
12 moods tend to be more active in social and recreational activities, even when the latter are  
13 assessed much later.

## 14 **Work life**

15 A number of studies have also longitudinally examined the relationships between happi-  
16 ness, positive emotions, and employment outcomes. Roberts, Caspi, and Moffitt (2003)  
17 found that positive affect measured at age 18 predicted several work-related outcomes, such  
18 as obtaining a job, having high job satisfaction, and feeling financially independent, at age  
19 26. These positive job outcomes also triggered increases in positive affect, so the relationship  
20 was apparently bidirectional. High positive affect has also been shown to predict less absen-  
21 teeism from the job 5 months later (Pelled & Xin, 1999) and better supervisor evaluations  
22 1.5 years later (Staw, Sutton, & Pelled, 1995). Furthermore, a study that tracked participants  
23 over the course of 2 months found that positive affect predicted self-rated work productivity  
24 over this period (Zelenski, Murphy, & Jenkins, 2008). Taken together, this research shows  
25 that workers who are high in positive affect experience more success in the workplace and  
26 display more behaviors that promote success.

27 One such success-promoting behavior is creative thinking. Good moods have been found  
28 to prospectively predict creativity, especially in the workplace. In one study, positive affect  
29 expressed by employees at work predicted their creativity levels, as rated by their supervi-  
30 sors, 1.5 years later (Staw et al., 1995). In another investigation of employee creativity,  
31 Amabile and colleagues (2005) followed employees from seven companies for an average of  
32 19 weeks. Self-reported positive affect preceded creative thought by up to 2 days, but creative  
33 thought did not predict later positive affect. So it appears that positive moods lead to cre-  
34 ativity, but creativity may not lead to positive moods.

35 A similar relationship has been established between happiness and income. In a 15-year  
36 Australian panel study, self-reported happiness predicted increases in income during later  
37 periods (Marks & Fleming, 1999). Replicating and extending this finding, a Russian panel  
38 study found that people's happiness in the first year of the study was associated with higher  
39 income and lower unemployment 5 years later (Graham, Eggers, & Sukhtankar, 2004).  
40 Researchers have also found that higher levels of cheerfulness, measured during the first  
41 year of college, predict greater income 16 years later, even after controlling for parental  
42 income (Diener, Nickerson, Lucas, & Sandvik, 2002). This evidence leads us to conclude  
43 that being a happy person is associated with earning a higher income many years later.





## 1 Health

2 Happiness has also been shown to predict people's physical health; in other words, people  
3 who are happier at a particular point in time have been found to be healthier months or  
4 years down the road. For instance, in a Finnish twin study, higher life satisfaction predicted  
5 a lower risk of suicide 20 years later, even after controlling for other risk factors, (Koivumaa-  
6 Honkanen, Honkanen, Koskenvuo, Viinamaeki, & Kaprio, 2001). Also, happier people have  
7 been found to have better self-reported health, to miss fewer days at work due to sickness,  
8 and to have fewer hospital visits 5 years later than their less happy peers (Graham et al.,  
9 2004). Positive mood has been shown to predict a lower incidence of stroke 6 years later  
10 (especially for men; Ostir, Markides, Peek, & Goodwin, 2000), and, in another study, indi-  
11 viduals with higher life satisfaction and more positive perceptions of future happiness (and  
12 no mobility limitations) reported relatively fewer mobility limitations 8 years later (Collins,  
13 Goldman, & Rodriguez, 2008). In a diabetic sample, higher levels of positive affect were  
14 found to predict lower levels of glycosylated hemoglobin, an indicator of how well one's dia-  
15 betes is under control (Tsenkova, Love, Singer, & Ryff, 2008). In addition, positive affect in  
16 this study was found to be the key ingredient responsible for the relationship between  
17 effective coping and chemical indicators of well-controlled diabetes. As a final example of  
18 research in this area, in a diary investigation of patients with sickle cell disease, positive  
19 affect during Day 1 was associated with lower self-reported pain during Day 3 (Gil et al.,  
20 2004). All of these studies support the idea that happiness at Time 1 is associated with supe-  
21 rior physical health outcomes at Time 2.

22 Perhaps most impressive is research showing that we can predict how long a person will  
23 live from how happy he or she currently is. Unhappiness has been found to be associated  
24 with higher mortality rates in studies of healthy individuals, those who suffer from medical  
25 conditions, and even those who have experienced sudden accidents. For example, low sub-  
26 jective well-being was revealed to be associated with more automobile fatalities (Kirkcaldy  
27 & Furnham, 2000), and low satisfaction with life predicted both unintentional and inten-  
28 tional injuries over a 19-year period (Koivumaa-Honkanen, Honkanen, Koskenvuo,  
29 Viinamaeki, & Kaprio, 2002). In an oft-cited study of nuns, those who expressed more posi-  
30 tive affect in autobiographies written as young adults had a 2.5 times lower risk of mortality  
31 when they were in their 80s and 90s (Danner, Snowdon, & Friesen, 2001). So relative happi-  
32 ness in one's youth is related to longevity.

33 Happiness has also been found to be associated with reduced mortality in people suffer-  
34 ing from various illnesses, such as end-stage renal disease (Devins, Mann, Mandin, &  
35 Leonard, 1990), breast cancer (Levy, Lee, Bagley, & Lippman, 1988), spinal cord injuries  
36 (Krause, Sternberg, Lottes, & Maides, 1997), diabetes (Moskowitz, Epel, & Acree, 2008), and  
37 HIV (Ickovics et al., 2006). A recent meta-analytic review found that happiness was associ-  
38 ated with reduced mortality in both sick and healthy populations (Chida & Steptoe, 2008).

39 One of the likely reasons—or “mechanisms”—that happiness fosters longevity and health  
40 is by bolstering an individual's immune function. For example, an oft-cited study found that  
41 healthy volunteers with a positive emotional style were relatively less likely to develop a  
42 cold after exposure to a cold virus—an effect that interestingly was independent of negative  
43 emotional style, or other health-related variables like age, sex, and body mass (Cohen,  
44 Doyle, Turner, Alper, & Skoner, 2003). Other research showed that positive affect and other  
45 psychological resources were negatively related to declines in T-cell counts, indicating







1 stronger immunity, in people with HIV (Ickovics et al., 2006). Thus, happiness appears to  
2 predict stronger immune function, which is associated with a lower risk of becoming ill.

3 Another relevant line of research addresses the question of whether happiness measured  
4 at one point in time is related to how well a person copes with problems in his or her life at a  
5 later point. In this way, superior coping skills could also explain why happier people are  
6 healthier. For example, in women who were getting a biopsy for potential breast cancer,  
7 positive mood predicted so-called “engaged” coping (Chen et al., 1996). In another longitu-  
8 dinal investigation, positive affect, measured weekly, was associated with an effective type of  
9 coping called “active” coping in a sample of women with rheumatoid arthritis (Hamilton,  
10 Zautra, & Reich, 2005). Several studies have even found evidence for an “upward spiral”  
11 effect involving positive emotion and coping. Fredrickson and Joiner (2002) found that pos-  
12 itive affect assessed at the outset of the study predicted effective coping and even more posi-  
13 tive experiences later in the study. Corroborating these results, positive affect and positive  
14 coping were found to build on each other over the course of 2 months (Burns et al., 2008).  
15 Another study measured people’s resilience over a 1-month period (Cohn et al., 2009).  
16 Positive emotions were found to predict increases in resilience and to mediate (i.e., explain)  
17 the relationship between initial and final resilience. Such studies provide evidence for an  
18 upward spiral, in which positive affect leads to effective coping, and coping helps bring about  
19 later positive experiences.

20

## EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH

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### 21 Social relationships

22 Corroborating and extending the longitudinal data, experimental studies provide evidence  
23 for a causal relationship between happy mood and a variety of positive resources and  
24 outcomes. For example, in the domain of interpersonal relationships, people induced to  
25 feel happy tend to recall positive information about another person and are more apt to  
26 report having positive feelings toward a stranger than those induced to feel sad (Baron,  
27 1987, 1993; Griffitt, 1970). People made to feel happy are also more outgoing and active.  
28 Participants induced into a positive mood have been found to be more sociable and to self-  
29 disclose more to strangers (Cunningham, 1988b; Isen, 1970). Also, when people are induced  
30 to feel happy, they report more interest in leisure activities (Cunningham, 1988a), and are  
31 more likely to acknowledge enjoying a boring task (Hirt, Melton, McDonald, Harackiewicz,  
32 1996). Overall, people put in a good mood have more positive perceptions of others, are  
33 more sociable and active, and are more likely to enjoy their activities than those not in a  
34 good mood.

35 Positive mood also appears to be beneficial for negotiation and conflict resolution—  
36 behaviors that are critical for the maintenance of interpersonal relationships. Studies have  
37 shown that people who are induced to experience positive affect prefer to resolve conflicts  
38 through collaboration rather than avoidance (Baron, Fortin, Frei, Hauver, & Shack, 1990), to  
39 make relatively more concessions during negotiations (Baron, 1990), and to be relatively  
40 more cooperative and less competitive in bargaining tasks (Forgas, 1998). Furthermore,  
41 when put in a positive mood, both individuals and groups have been found to be relatively





1 more likely to reach the most optimal agreements and less likely to stop negotiation and use  
2 more aggressive strategies (Carnevale & Isen, 1986; Carnevale, 2008). Thus, research sug-  
3 gests that the experience of positive affect stimulates people to be relatively better able to  
4 resolve problems and to cooperate with their peers.

## 5 Prosocial behavior

6 People who are induced into positive moods are more likely to contribute to charity  
7 (Cunningham, Steinberg, & Grev, 1980; Isen, 1970) and to needy children (Rosenhan,  
8 Underwood, & Moore, 1974), and to give significantly more money when they do contrib-  
9 ute, than those induced into negative moods (Isen, 1970). In general, a wealth of experimen-  
10 tal research shows that those put in a happy mood are relatively more likely to engage in all  
11 kinds of helpful behaviors, such as donating blood (O'Malley & Andrews, 1983) and helping  
12 an experimenter with a boring task (Berkowitz, 1987). Indeed, an event as trivial as finding a  
13 dime can boost people's moods and stimulate them to assist a stranger who has dropped  
14 some papers (Cunningham et al., 1980). For example, in one study, researchers found that  
15 individuals induced into a positive mood were not only more likely to help, but also to help  
16 for a longer period of time, than a control group (Baron & Bronfen, 1994). Thus, good moods  
17 galvanize people to engage in relatively more prosocial behavior.

## 18 Creativity

19 Although longitudinal evidence is lacking in this area, experiments show that happy people  
20 tend to be relatively more creative. When laboratory participants are induced into a happy  
21 mood, they receive relatively higher scores on originality and flexibility (see Isen (1993) for a  
22 review). For example, people put in a good mood scored relatively higher on a creativity  
23 measure (Estrada, Isen, & Young, 1994) and showed relatively more variety-seeking behav-  
24 ior (Kahn & Isen, 1993). This may be because positive affect leads people to feel secure and  
25 thus to seek novel experiences and variety (Isen, 1993; cf. Hill & Buss, 2008). Dreisbach and  
26 Goschke (2004) found that participants put in a positive mood, rather than a negative or  
27 neutral mood, had greater cognitive flexibility, but also had increased distractibility.  
28 A review of creativity experiments concluded that induced positive affect produces more  
29 creativity than neutral affect, but, interestingly, not more than negative affect (Baas, De  
30 Dreu, & Nijstad, 2008).

## 31 Health

32 Experimental studies also reveal that being in a positive mood—even temporarily—has  
33 health benefits. For example, individuals induced into a happy mood have relatively higher  
34 pain thresholds (Alden, Dale, & DeGood, 2001; Cogan, Cogan, Waltz, & McCue, 1987) and  
35 lower blood pressure reactivity in response to stress (Smith, Ruiz, & Uchino, 2004). In  
36 another study, participants were asked to imagine that they had kidney cancer and then were  
37 induced into a positive or negative mood. Relative to those in negative moods, those in posi-  
38 tive moods reported greater optimism about their prognosis and ability to deal with the dis-  
39 ease, as well as a stronger intent to overcome the illness and follow the treatment protocol





1 (Schuettler & Kiviniemi, 2006). Another study found that, among participants low in  
 2 trait seriousness, those induced into a positive mood felt less stressed, reported better  
 3 physical health, and had lower blood pressure than those who had not received the inter-  
 4 vention (Papousek & Schuler, 2008). Thus, being happy appears not only to make people  
 5 feel healthier, but prompts them to react to stress in more adaptive ways.

6 Positive mood is also related to healthy behavior, although few studies have been con-  
 7 ducted to examine this relationship. Tice and colleagues, for example, have discovered the  
 8 role of positive emotion in counteracting so-called ego depletion, which occurs when  
 9 people experience a loss of cognitive (i.e., thinking) capacity when trying to control their  
 10 behavior (Tice, Baumeister, Schmeuli, & Muraven, 2007). For example, turning down an  
 11 appetizing snack becomes more difficult the longer one is exposed to it and the more one is  
 12 distracted by a demanding task. However, when participants are induced into a positive  
 13 mood after an ego depletion task, they perform as well as non-depleted participants and  
 14 significantly better than those who do not receive the positive mood induction (Tice et al.,  
 15 2007; Tice & Wallace, 2000). So, positive affect may boost our cognitive resources after they  
 16 have been depleted, which increases our capacity to resist behaviors that hold immediate  
 17 gratification but long-term health costs, like excessive eating, drinking, and smoking.

18 Finally, research shows that immune functioning can be improved by positive mood. For  
 19 example, a small sample of actors was instructed to reflect on certain scenarios, in order to  
 20 induce different emotions. Those put in a good mood showed stronger immune function  
 21 than those in a neutral mood (Futterman, Kemeny, Shapiro, & Fahey, 1994). Also, partici-  
 22 pants who watched an amusing video had increased immune function afterward (Dillon,  
 23 Minchoff, & Baker, 1985; Lefcourt, Davidson-Katz, & Kueneman, 1990; McClelland &  
 24 Cheriff, 1997; however, see Martin (2002) for a critique of these data). In other words, a good  
 25 mood strengthens people's immune systems—at least temporarily—which is associated  
 26 with better health.

## 27 CONCLUSIONS

28 Taken together, the empirical evidence suggests that happiness plays a causal role in the  
 29 attainment of success, as well as in the practice of behaviors related to success. This occurs,  
 30 we argue, through the frequent experience of positive affect, which makes happy individuals  
 31 more likely to approach people and situations, and helps build their intellectual, social,  
 32 physical, and psychological resources and skills (Carver, 2003; Elliot & Thrash, 2002;  
 33 Fredrickson, 2001; Lyubomirsky, 2001). Positive emotions also signal that things are going  
 34 well, which allows people to feel more safe and secure as they approach others and novel sit-  
 35 uations, thus affording them the opportunity to be more creative, productive, sociable, and  
 36 active, as well as to engage in prosocial and healthful behaviors.

37 The evidence reviewed in this chapter may easily give rise to the conclusion that the hap-  
 38 pier a person is, the better. However, we would caution readers not to draw such a broad  
 39 generalization. Indeed, Oishi, Diener, and Lucas (2007) suggest that the optimal level of  
 40 well-being depends on the domain. Their findings reveal that it is moderately happy peo-  
 41 ple—not extremely happy ones—who have the highest levels of income, education,  
 42 and political participation. A possible explanation is that the happiest individuals have less



1 motivation than moderately happy ones to improve their current standing in those domains.  
2 However, Oishi and colleagues also find that when it comes to relationships, it is best to be in  
3 the happiest group (i.e., a 9 or 10 on a 10-point scale). If a person is not completely satisfied  
4 with a relationship, he or she might try to change something, perhaps by seeking other  
5 partners or ending the relationship, which would obviously harm it. If a person is very highly  
6 satisfied, in contrast, he or she might idealize their partner in ways that could trigger self-  
7 fulfilling prophecies and upward spirals (Murray, Holmes, & Griffin, 1996). Thus, happiness,  
8 in general, appears to be valuable for achieving a range of successful outcomes, but the opti-  
9 mal level of happiness may depend on the particular outcome.

10 Our analysis further calls into question whether there exist any situations in which it  
11 might be beneficial to be unhappy or to experience particular negative emotions. For  
12 example, the experience of mild discontent may serve a critical function for activists who  
13 are protesting against the status quo. When it comes to short-term outcomes, negative emo-  
14 tions may also be valuable for specific circumstances. In certain social situations, such as a  
15 funeral or a vigil, or when a colleague has received news of loss or failure, displays of positive  
16 affect may be judged negatively by others. Thus, we are certainly not suggesting that only  
17 happy people can be successful. In fact, we would argue that chronic, or inflexible, happiness  
18 is not ideal. There is value to negative emotions (Clore, 1994), and happy, well-adjusted  
19 people tend to experience a mix of both positive and negative affect (Diener & Seligman,  
20 2002). In sum, any particular emotion may be beneficial in a narrow set of circumstances,  
21 but, as we have shown here, positive emotions appear to be beneficial in a wide variety of  
22 circumstances and life domains.

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