



Behavioral Decision Making Group Colloquium Series

is pleased to present



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Bliss is Ignorance: Perceptions of Extreme versus Moderate Happiness

ABSTRACT

Across five studies, we examine how the magnitude of expressed happiness influences social perception and interpersonal behavior. We find that happiness evokes different judgments when expressed at high levels than when expressed at moderate levels, and that these judgments influence opportunistic behavior. Specifically, people perceive very happy individuals to be more naïve than moderately happy individuals. These perceptions reflect the belief that very happy individuals shelter themselves from negative information about the world. As a result of these inferences, relative to moderately happy people, very happy people are more likely to receive biased advice from advisors with a conflict of interest. Our findings challenge existing assumptions in organizational behavior and psychology about the benefits of happiness by revealing the importance of examining emotional expressions at different magnitudes. We call for future work to explore how the same emotion, experienced or expressed at different levels, influences human behavior.

FRIDAY, MARCH 11, 2016 | 12:15-1:30pm | CORNELL HALL - D307