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UC Riverside

Whither Happiness? When, How, and Why Might Positive Activities Boost vs. Undermine Well-Being

Happiness not only feels good; it is good. Happy people have more stable marriages, superior health, and higher incomes. Fortunately, experiments have shown that people can intentionally increase their happiness. In this presentation, I will introduce the positive activity model (Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2013), which describes when and why positive activities like gratitude or kindness can promote well-being. Finally, I will propose several ways by which engaging in presumably happiness-increasing activities may backfire.

BIO

Sonja Lyubomirsky (A.B., summa cum laude, Harvard; PhD, social psychology, Stanford) is Professor and Vice Chair of Psychology at the University of California, Riverside and author of *The How of Happiness* and *The Myths of Happiness*, translated in 34 countries. Lyubomirsky's teaching has been recognized with the Faculty of the Year (twice) and Faculty Mentor of the Year Awards. Her research – on the possibility of lastingly increasing happiness – has received many honors, including the Diener Award for Outstanding Midcareer Contributions in Personality Psychology, the Distinguished Research Lecturer Award, and a Positive Psychology Prize.

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