



PART 37:

THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

HEBREWS

PAY CLOSE ATTENTION, LEST YOU DRIFT



Positive Psychology and the Science of Sustained Happiness: Evidence-Based Strategies to Get Best Client Outcomes Fast

1-day workshop

Presented by David Nowell, PhD



Fifteen years into the Positive Psychology revolution and what do we know about helping clients to get and stay happy and mentally healthy? How do we use the evidence-based interventions which support our clients' enduring well-being? How do we assist our clients to achieve a fulfilling and meaningful life rather than just simple remission of symptoms?

Join neuropsychologist Dr. David Nowell in this engaging hands-on workshop, and leave with specific positive psychology practical strategies for connecting the brain-based science of happiness to your clients' lived experience – and move closer to the actual phenomenology of using positive psychology to motivate, achieve happiness and well-being. This workshop will provide participants with specific clinical practice and evidence-based strategies and applications

HAPPINESS
& its causes

29-30 MAY 2014, SEYMOUR CENTRE, SYDNEY



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Dr Russ Harris

Russ Harris debunks myths
around the pursuit of happiness



DEBRA KILLALEA



July 23, 2013 9:59AM

Dr Russ Harris

- "For the first time we're living in a feel good society whereas in the past we were living in a do good society"
- "The happiness trap is the notion or idea that we are supposed to be happy, but it just makes us miserable."



Dr Russ Harris says society has become too obsessed with feeling good instead of doing good. Picture: Supplied

Dr Harris' Suggestions

- Accept pain, even if it means putting up with it and knowing it's a normal part of life
- Develop mindfulness skills: Open up and let negative or sad thoughts flow, don't fight them
- Life is painful but dealing with it allows us to have a more meaningful life
- Learn behavioural therapy - it teaches skills to help overcome depression
- Focus on what you can control (your actions) rather than what you can't (environment, others)
- Shift the emphasis back from feeling good to doing good

Blaise Pascal

“All men seek happiness. This is without exception. Whatever different means they employ, they all tend to this end. The cause of some going to war, and of others avoiding it, is the same desire in both, attending with different views. The will never takes the least step but to this object. This is the motive of every man, even of those who hang themselves.”

It is a law of the human heart as gravity is a law of nature.

Pascal Continues

“There once was in man a true happiness of which now remain to him only the mark and empty trace, which he in vain tries to fill from all his surroundings, seeking from things absent the help he does not obtain in things present. But these are all inadequate, because the infinite abyss can only be filled by and infinite and immutable object, that is to say, only by God himself.”

C S Lewis

If you asked twenty good men to-day what they thought the highest of the virtues, nineteen of them would reply, Unselfishness. But if you asked almost any of the great Christians of old he would have replied, Love. You see what has happened? A negative term has been substituted for a positive, and this is of more than philological importance. The negative ideal of Unselfishness carries with it the suggestion not primarily of securing good things for others, but of going without them ourselves, as if our abstinence and not their happiness was the important point. I do not think this is the Christian virtue of Love. The New Testament has lots to say about self-denial, but not about self-denial as an end in itself. We are told to deny ourselves and to take up our crosses in order that we may follow Christ; and nearly every description of what we shall ultimately find if we do so contains an appeal to desire. (The Weight of Glory)

If there lurks in most modern minds the notion that to desire our own good and earnestly to hope for the enjoyment of it is a hard thing, I submit that this notion has crept in from Kant and the Stoics and is no part of the Christian faith. Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that Our Lord finds our desires, not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.

Hebrews 11:4-7

By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks. By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God.

And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

Deny yourself?????

Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done. Matthew 16:24–27

Made to Find Greatest Pleasure in God

- For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God ... 1 Peter 3:18
- The greatest joy is God

Delight and Reward

- Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart. Psalm 37:4
- As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. Psalm 42:1–2
- They feast on the abundance of your house, and you give them drink from the river of your delights. Psalm 36:8

- Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Psalm 34:8
- Then I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy ...
Psalm 43:4
- You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.
Psalm 16:11
- ... then the Almighty will be your gold and your precious silver.
Job 22:25

Psalm 103

- Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.
- Those who walk with Jesus – what are the benefits? Come on? Testify?? Give evidence of what cannot always be seen?

C S Lewis on Praise

But the most obvious fact about praise – whether of God or anything – strangely escaped me. I thought of it in terms of compliment, approval, or the giving of honour. I had never noticed that all enjoyment spontaneously overflows into praise unless . . . shyness or the fear of boring others is deliberately brought in to check it. The world rings with praise – lovers praising their mistresses [Romeo praising Juliet and vice versa], readers their favourite poet, walkers praising the countryside, players praising their favourite game – praise of weather, wines, dishes, actors, motors, horses, colleges, countries, historical personages, children, flowers, mountains, rare stamps, rare beetles, even sometimes politicians or scholars. . . . Except where intolerably adverse circumstances interfere, praise almost seems to be inner health made audible. . . .

I had not noticed either that just as men spontaneously praise whatever they value, so they spontaneously urge us to join them in praising it: 'Isn't she lovely? Wasn't it glorious? Don't you think that magnificent?' The Psalmists in telling everyone to praise God are doing what all men do when they speak of what they care about. My whole, more general, difficulty about the praise of God depended on my absurdly denying to us, as regards the supremely Valuable, what we delight to do, what indeed we can't help doing, about everything else we value."

I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation. It is not out of compliment that lovers keep on telling one another how beautiful they are; the delight is incomplete till it is expressed. It is frustrating to have discovered a new author and not to be able to tell anyone how good he is; to come suddenly, at the turn of the road, upon some mountain valley of unexpected grandeur and then to have to keep silent because the people with you care for it no more than for a tin can in the ditch; to hear a good joke and find no one to share it with.

Back to Hebrews - Enoch

By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God.

Hebrews 11:5

When Enoch had lived 65 years, he fathered Methuselah. Enoch walked with God after he fathered Methuselah 300 years and had other sons and daughters. Thus all the days of Enoch were 365 years. Enoch walked with God (as above), and he was not, for God took him. Genesis 5:21–24