

LS 160V: Human Happiness Lecture Notes

Week 1: Lecture 1 Intro (1/19)

What is Happiness?

- Foundational concept
 - Declaration of Independence: right to pursuit of happiness
 - Highest end of our mind/brain and social living
 - Economic systems, political systems, evaluate principles, ethical systems
- In the world
 - Health care institutions measure how much patients feel about care
 - Track people happiness in tech, worries about "social recession" and emotional well-being shifted by the pandemic
- Globalization paradox
 - Hyperstressed
- Why??
 - Problems of Hyper Individualism, unconstrained capitalism
 - Illusion of wealth = happiness
 - Loss of social ties, community
 - Hyper self focus
 - Digital life on screens
 - Loss of sense of larger purpose
- The Happiness Equation
 - Happiness: feeling good/bad about life
 - Positive emotion + social connection + resilient Mind
 - Compassion, gratitude, cooperate, awe
- Develop your life philosophy, practice systems

Week 2: Lecture 2 Wisdom of the Ages (1/24)

Contemplative exercises

- Foundation is breadth
- Mindfulness: open, kind, nonjudgemental to contents of mind
- Move to
 - Body awareness
 - Senses
 - Feelings
 - Thoughts

The Great Transformation (Karen Armstrong 2007)

- Axial Age: emergence of Judeo-Christian, Hebrew Prophets, Classical Greek, Buddhist, Hindu, Buddhist, Hindu Taoist, Confucian Thought
- Expanding markets, materialism, disease, violence, break down of community
- Themes
 - Prosocial Emotions
 - Compassion, reverence, mystical experience
 - Social Connectivity
 - Sharing, empathy, kindness
 - Resilient, Calm mind
 - Focus attention, acceptance

Buddhism: Compassion, "Right mind"

- Siddhartha Gautama after encountering old man, diseases, corpse
- Nirvana - bliss/contentment and 4 truths
 1. Life as we live it is suffering, frustration
 2. Cause of suffering, clinging, grasping, ignorance
 3. Release: nirvana, disengage from grasping
 4. Eightfold path
 - a. friendship/Loving Kindness
 - b. Equanimity or balance
 - c. Compassion
 - d. Joy
 - e. Kind speech
 - f. Nonjudgmental mindfulness

Intuitive Ethics of Buddhism

- Natural Mind, Beginner's mind

Tibetan Buddhism

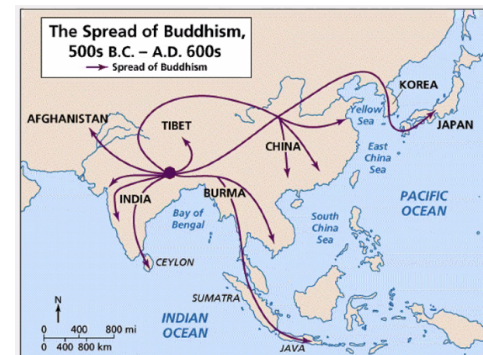
- Mahayana; Theravada
- - if you want others to be happy, practice compassion, if you want to be happy practice compassion

Confucianism and Jen

- Person of Jen, Confucius observes, "wishing to establish his own character, also establishes the character of others"
- "Brings the good things of others to completion and does not bring the bad things of others to completion"
- Reverence for Humanity
 - Happiness found social rituals (Li) patterned ways of interacting and bringing out good in others

Taoism

- Tao: Mysterious life force, deep meaning
 - What animates us, gives us purpose, sensed intuitively



- Early mystics, spiritual properties of the world
- Happiness found in observing nature
- Happiness in natural unfolding of being

Hinduism

- Upanishads: atman (divinity within self), Brahman (divine force)
- All forms share this force

Bhagavad Gita

- Prince Arjuna in conversation with Krishna about great questions, soul, mind, desire, ego
- Abandon attachment to goals, sense
- Selfless service

Yogas: one of six major schools of hinduism

- 2500 years old
- Yamas: ethical rules
- Niyamas: virtuous habits
- Asanas: postures
- Pranayama: breathing
- Pratyahara: attention away from senses
- Dharana: concentration
- Dhyana: contemplation
- Samadhi: oneness with mind, body, spirit

Aristotle: Moderation, Virtue

- Eudaimonia: Happiness is action grounded in virtue that aligns with your reason within the context. Contrast to pleasure
- Moderation as Resilience (Nicomachean ethics)
 - Anybody can become angry - that is easy but angry with right person, right degree at the right time and the right purpose in the right way
 - Temper desires, accept passions of different kinds
- Feeling of virtue at the end of life
 - Courage, justice, friendliness, honesty, wit, liberality, magnificence, good temper, truthfulness

Appropriate Pleasure, Tranquility: epicurean philosophy

- Happiness is the sum of our sensory pleasures, absence of pain
- Natural pleasures: friendship, food

Utilitarianism:

- Age of Enlightenment: reason, individual rights, science, freedom, industrialization all rise
- Happiness is freedom
- Happiness = actions that promote happiness for the greatest number of people

Big Insights

- Happiness is
 - Prosocial emotion, intuitions
 - Social connectivity/relationality: ethics, beyond self
 - Resilient, "right" mind

Week 2: Lecture 3 A Science Emerges (1/26)

Big Insights: Happiness is historically culturally constructed

- Happiness is
 - Emotions, passions, intuitions
 - Compassion (buddhism)
 - Social ethics, being part of something larger than your self
 - Resilient "right" mind

Precursors to a Science of Happiness

- Darwin: evolution of positive emotions – survival of the kindest
- Freud: pleasure found in sex, aggression; catharsis and the release of tension through art, dreams, therapeutic expression
- Marx: alienation, in particular for the working class, work thoughts, and values are controlled by those who control capital, means of production
- Humanistic movements: self-actualization
 - Maslow, Rogers on self expression, peak experiences and happiness as rooted in meeting basic and social needs, finding transcendence

New Science of happiness

- Uncharted scientific territory
 - Anger vs gratitude
 - Fear vs compassion

Attention Grabbing Finding #1: Well being matters

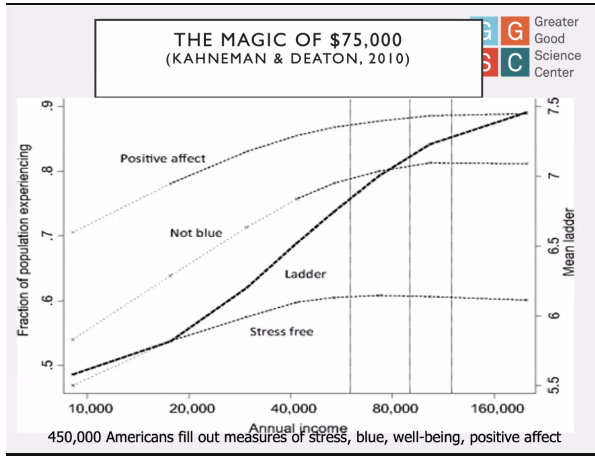
- "Overall how satisfied are you with life"
 - Dopamine: rewards for food, gratitude
 - Oxytocin: trust, cortisol and threat
- Physical health, life expectancy: 10 years for social ties
- Good will love in family collaboration in community
- Trust, productivity, positive social indicators of a culture
- Creativity, innovation, productivity in work

Activities done for more money

- Leave community for higher paying job
- Long distance relationships
- Long hours little leisure/vacation

Money Brings Happiness?

- Across nations, wealth of country correlates with self reported happiness
- 37% of Forbes wealthiest less happy than normal



Happiness is between

- Find happiness in social interactions

Myth: Happiness is found within

- Individualism:

Champions of Individualism

- Ayn Rand, Libertarian Philosopher, This god, one word: "I"

Report on what you did during day and how affects actions, social activities bring greater happiness, friends compared to work, housework commuting

| Activities | Mean affect rating | | | | | Mean hours/day | Proportion of sample reporting |
|----------------------------|--------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|-------|----------------|--------------------------------|
| | Positive | Negative | Competent | Impatient | Tired | | |
| Intimate relations | 5.10 | 0.36 | 4.57 | 0.74 | 3.09 | 0.2 | 0.11 |
| Socializing | 4.59 | 0.57 | 4.32 | 1.20 | 2.33 | 2.3 | 0.65 |
| Relaxing | 4.42 | 0.51 | 4.05 | 0.84 | 3.44 | 2.2 | 0.77 |
| Pray/worship/meditate | 4.35 | 0.59 | 4.45 | 1.04 | 2.95 | 0.4 | 0.23 |
| Eating | 4.34 | 0.59 | 4.12 | 0.95 | 2.55 | 2.2 | 0.94 |
| Exercising | 4.31 | 0.50 | 4.26 | 1.58 | 2.42 | 0.2 | 0.16 |
| Watching TV | 4.19 | 0.58 | 3.95 | 1.02 | 3.54 | 2.2 | 0.75 |
| Shopping | 3.95 | 0.74 | 4.26 | 2.08 | 2.66 | 0.4 | 0.30 |
| Preparing food | 3.93 | 0.69 | 4.20 | 1.54 | 3.11 | 1.1 | 0.62 |
| On the phone | 3.92 | 0.85 | 4.35 | 1.92 | 2.92 | 2.5 | 0.61 |
| Napping | 3.87 | 0.60 | 3.26 | 0.91 | 4.30 | 0.9 | 0.43 |
| Taking care of my children | 3.86 | 0.91 | 4.19 | 1.95 | 3.56 | 1.1 | 0.36 |
| Computer/e-mail/Internet | 3.81 | 0.80 | 4.57 | 1.93 | 2.62 | 1.9 | 0.47 |
| Housework | 3.73 | 0.77 | 4.23 | 2.11 | 3.40 | 1.1 | 0.49 |
| Working | 3.62 | 0.97 | 4.45 | 2.70 | 2.42 | 6.9 | 1.00 |
| Commuting | 3.45 | 0.89 | 4.09 | 2.60 | 2.75 | 1.6 | 0.87 |
| Interaction partners | | | | | | | |
| Friends | 4.36 | 0.67 | 4.37 | 1.61 | 2.59 | 2.6 | 0.65 |
| Relatives | 4.17 | 0.80 | 4.17 | 1.70 | 3.06 | 1.0 | 0.38 |
| Spouse/SO | 4.11 | 0.79 | 4.10 | 1.53 | 3.46 | 2.7 | 0.62 |
| Children | 4.04 | 0.75 | 4.13 | 1.65 | 3.40 | 2.3 | 0.53 |
| Clients/customers | 3.79 | 0.95 | 4.65 | 2.59 | 2.33 | 4.5 | 0.74 |
| Co-workers | 3.76 | 0.92 | 4.43 | 2.44 | 2.35 | 5.7 | 0.93 |
| Boss | 3.52 | 1.09 | 4.48 | 2.82 | 2.44 | 2.4 | 0.52 |
| Alone | 3.41 | 0.69 | 3.76 | 1.73 | 3.12 | 3.4 | 0.90 |
| Duration-weighted mean | 3.89 | 0.84 | 4.31 | 2.09 | 2.90 | | |
| % time > 0 | 97% | 66% | 90% | 59% | 76% | | |

Having Lived Life

- Less stress

Week 3: Lecture 4 The Happiness Equation (1/31)

- Happiness = feeling good/bad about life
- Positive emotion + social connection + calm mind

Questions to ask for good science

- Replicate?, big variables controlled for like wealth, education, rule out alternative explanations

Sympathy Breakthroughs (Jonathan Glover, Humanity, 1999)

- George Orwell felt when about to kill a fascist in Spain in 1930s
- 75% soldier refuse to shoot at enemy, prevalence of moral harm in veterans

Related States

- Compassion: feeling of concern and interest in elevating well-being of others
- Sympathy: feeling of concern for someone in need or who suffers
- Pity: feeling of compassion imbued with power dynamics
- Empathy: a knowing, feeling of what others feel
- Distress: feeling of pain, psychic distress at witnessing another suffer

Evolutionary Conundrum: where does goodness come from

- Alfred Russel-Wallace: human physicality shaped by evolution
- Sympathy created by God
- Thomas Huxley: a cultural construction, a norm or social contract

War on Compassion

- Freudian Mind:
 - commandment: thou shalt not kill, generations of murderers
- Libertarianism - Ayn Rand: morality of altruism that men have to reject
- Political theory - machiavelli
 - Greedy of gain
- Evolutionary survival of the fittest - George Williams
 - "Frothy immoral" natural selection

Darwin: survival of the kindest

- Sympathy
 - "Will have been increased through natural selection...included the greatest number of most sympathetic members would flourish best, and rear the greatest number of offspring"

Take Care or Die (HRDY, 2000)

- Our offspring are more vulnerable than those of primate relatives

Hyper Vulnerable offspring; carriers of our genes

- Born pre-mature due to expanding head size
- Require intensive care, resources
- Led to

- Cooperative childcare networks
- Emergence of compassion and filial love

Compassion as evolutionarily stable strategy (Axelrod, 1984; Goetz et al 2010, Keltner)

- Reliable identification: identify signs of compassion, to cooperate more effectively with others
- Contagious compassion: which converts competitive interaction into cooperative
- Wired to care: it's in our DNA

Mammalian Signs of compassion in the voice

- Coos: primates signal "compassion" to other primates who've lost an infant (Snowden, 2003)

Compassion in the voice (alancowen.com)

- Awe
- Interest
- Sympathy
- Triumph
- Contentment
- Love
- Ecstasy

Principle 1: universality in signal of compassion

- Match one of three vocal bursts to emotion specific stories

Principle 2: Contagious Compassion

- How does compassion spread to your social networks
- Neonate distress reactions to others' distress calls, not their own
- Altruism spreads in workplaces, when people work around more altruistic types, give more to charity

Week 3: Lecture 5 Empathy (2/2)

Compassion as Evolutionary stable strategy

- Reliable identification
- Contagious Compassion
- Wired to care

Principle 3: are we wired to care

- Fight or flight physiology
- Compassion activates inside the brain, the periaqueductal gray
- Vagus nerve as part of care giving system
 - Unique to mammals, slows heart rate, activated by vocalization
- Compassion elicits greater vagal activity than: pride state

Practicing compassionate thoughts towards others once a week boosts happiness and vagal tone over a 8-week period compared to a waitlist control

Empathy

- Understanding and feeling of what others feel
 - mimicry/contagion: mimic others' emotional behavior
 - Affective empathy: feel others' feelings
 - Cognitive empathy: understand others' feelings

Thurlow weed on abraham lincoln

- He sees all who go there, hears all they have to say, talks freely with everybody, reads whatever is written to him

Varieties of Empathy

- Affective empathy
- When two people's experiences of emotions resemble one another

Cognitive empathy

-

Week 4: Lecture 6 Empathy Reasons (2/7)

Empathy's Benefits

- Mimicry (synced behavior) affective (synced feeling) empathy predict better
- Positive emotions mimic those of toher team members
- Cognitive Empathy (measured in ability to judge emotion from faces, voices, body) predicts better grades, peer relations, lead effectively

What functions does empathy serve

- Enables provision of care to vulnerable offspring
- Coordination problem of collective behavior

The Empathic Brain

- Cognitive empathy

Gratitude

- Feeling of reverence (recognition of what is sacred) for thing sthat are given
- Appreciation of the value of someone or something

Gratitude as a moral sentiment

- Social glue of economic culture: moral sentiment
- Motive of reciprocal altruism amongst non-kin
- Moral affect
 - Appreciation rewards others' altruism
 - Signals to self what is sacred, given
- Jen: reveresnce appreciation for humanity

Week 4 Discussion (2/11)

Compassion

- Perceiving someone else's suffering
- Motivation to care for that person

Empathy

- Mimicry/contagion: mimic other
- Affective empathy
- Cognitive empathy

Science of self-compassion

1. Self-kindness: be gentle and understanding with ourselves rather than harshly critical and judgemental
 - a. Be gentle and understanding with ourselves
2. Recognition of common humanity
 - a. Connected with others in experience of life rather than feeling isolated and alienated by suffering
3. Mindfulness
 - a. Hold our experience in balanced awareness

Week 5: Lecture 7 Nature (2/14)

2nd wonder: nature

- Biophilia: love of life and living systems in nature

Emerson: Nature encounter with divine

- Deepest insights in mind come from nature
- Watching clouds = impermanence in identity
- Waves, stores: part whole relations
- Symmetry, fractals: animating force in design of things
- Interconnectedness

Benefits of nature

- Walking in woods, healing forests
 - Reduced cortisol, inflammation,
 - Better cardiovascular profile, attention, focus, happiness
- Living near green spaces, parks,
 - reduced depression, anxiety, increased well-being

3rd Wonder: collective effervescence

Musical and social bonding

- Coordinates action, synchronizes
- Symbolizes our cultural identity

Chills

- Goosebumps: neck arms: awe
- Cold shivers: shaking cold, alone alienated dread

5th wonder:

Week 5: Lecture 8 Mysticism, Spiritualism (2/16)

James's Varieties of Religious Experience

- Pluralism of Mysticism: many pathways to sacred
- Mystical Experience
 - Noetic: sense of truth, ineffable: can't describe with words

Psychedelic Awe

- 61% mystical experience, awe
- 13% fear predominant emotion

Mysticism, Spirituality, religion

- Mystical state: feeling of encountering the Divine
- Spirituality: sense of mystical feeling, the divine, and sacred
- Religion: beliefs, rituals, practices, institutionalized

Transforming Spirituality

- Found it in nature

Spirituality, Happiness, and health

- Spiritually inclined are happier

Week 5 Discussion (2/18)

What is awe

- Unrestricted
- Vastness
 - Feeling of being in the presence of something larger than yourself
- Accommodation
 - Experience is beyond our understanding of the world
 - New information has to be accommodated by either updating schemas or creating new ones
 - Restructure frames of reference, beliefs, causal understandings, and categories

Flavors of Awe

- Vastness and accommodation
 - supernatural :
 - Threat
 - Beauty
 - Other
- Not awe
 - Great skill, virtuous acts
 - Both have accommodation but not vastness

What does Awe do for us

- Psychologically
 - Jolts people outside of their usual routine
 - Integrates the self into the systems of life

- Provides a sense of connectedness and purpose
 - Helps relieve negative moods, improves happiness, and increases altruism
- Physiologically
 - Lowers inflammation
 - Increases vagal tone
- Research participants induced to feel awe
 - Reduced stress
 - Greater social wellbeing
 - Increased satisfaction with life
 - Reduced PTSD symptoms (in veterans)
- Goosebumps
 - Activation of minute muscles

Awe's cousin

- Elevation
- Haidt's definition: "warm uplifting feeling that people experience when they see unexpected acts of human goodness"
- Seeing someone give help to someone who is poor, sick, stranded

Moreality of behavior

- Awe is good for you

Week 7: Lecture 10 Passion for Justice (2/28)

A passion for near equality

- Dislike of inequality leads to "leveling mechanism" of equality
 - Modesty about big kill, teasing, gossip about boosters hoarders

Ultimatum game

- Most people give 39%
- 12 European societies: most give 40-50%

Inequality

- Proportion of wealth top
- Country or state or county's level of inequality correlates with increased violence, increased prejudice, decreased trust, poorer health

Perils of chronic injustice, anger

- Elevated blood pressure
- Chronic blame, distrust, cynicism,
- Anger leads to increased activism and when nonviolent, efficacy in protesting police violence, low wages, discrimination

Philosophy of life: passions for happiness

- Trust intuition, seek contexts for their experiences
- 3 positive emotions for 1 anger emotion

Happiness and Sociology

- Happiness is grounded in social
- Never learned language, social customs
- Did become attached to caring Dr. showed shame, crying, empathy, love, attachment

Solitary Confinement

- Often for decades 22-23 hours in cell

Solitary confinement

- Became closer with other gang members

Social connection as foundation of happiness

- I learned that to be with those that I like is enough - walt whitman
- Deepest principle in human nature is the craving to be appreciated - william james
- Some people go to priests, others to poetry, i go to my friends -
-

Week 7: Lecture 11 Social Connection (3/2)

Happiness and Social Connection

- Network analysis
- 1. More integrated into network = happier
- Happiness cluster
- Friends friends happiness makes you happy

Social Capital

- Collective value of all social networks and the inclination that arise from networks to do things for each other
- Declines in social capital: church, bowling, picnics
- Reductions in social capital are deleterious to health, increased crime in community

Loneliness

- Wanting but lacking social connection
- Increased tonic blood pressure, sympathetic, poor sleep, health, and expression of genes regulating glucocorticoid responses

Happiness and Social Connection

- Individuals with adequate social relationships have a 50% greater likelihood of survival compared to those with poor or insufficient social relationships

Losing our ultrasociality

- Divorce rate high
- Marital satisfaction has declined in past 30 years
- Rise in loneliness

Friendship

- Only thing that will redeem mankind is cooperation - russell
- Learned that to be with those I like is enough - walt whitman

Relationality within indigenous perspectives

- Deep relationality: all living beings are connected
- Interdependence: ecosystems of collaborative species
- Reverence: life cycles of nature, things are born, grow, pass on

Friendship: Deep Origins

- Hierarchy leveling mechanism: networks of friends counter potential abuses of alpha females, males
- Reciprocal Altruism: trade of resources, favors, assistance, kindness
- Sexual Selection theory: cooperative peer networks of potential reproductive partners; explore reproductive possibilities with cross sex friends

Friendship Principles

- Reciprocity: exchanging things for mutual benefit
 - Generosity of favors at work related to elevated status, strong alliances, and strong placement within work networks
 - Torch rituals activate reward circuits in brain
 - Shared laughter, story telling increases closeness of friendships
 - Compliments activate reward circuits in the brain
- Similarity
 - Behavioral mimicry, imitate others actions
 - Aniphonal laughter
 - Emotional mimicry
-

Week 7 Discussion Chimpanzee and Altruism (3/4)

Both Children and chimpanzees helped an unfamiliar human to a similar degree as infants rewarded

- Subjects helped unrelated conspecific by helping another
- Sharing, helping, informing

Romantic Relationships: 4 Horsemen of the Apocalypse

1. Contempt: look down on partner
2. Criticism: find fault & flaws in partner
3. Defensiveness: respond to critique by striking back
4. Stonewalling: shut down communication

92% likelihood of divorce when these 4 behaviors are present

5:1 Positive Negative

1. Humor: playful nicknames, word play, rough and tumble play
2. Gratitude: express reverence for what is given
3. Forgiveness: seek reconciliation over revenge; Offer effective apologies
4. Finding the Good: Noting what is good in a relationship & in daily life

Week 8: Lecture 12 Social Cooperation (3/7)

Romantic Pair Bond

- Human Universal: Serial Monogamy emerged in part to care for vulnerable offspring
- 98% will have some sort of intimate relationship
- 80-85% of American's marry

Oxytocin, Love, and the commitment problem

- How do we stay committed to others in face of attractive alternatives
- Romantic love solves this problem

4 Horsemen of love

- Critical, Defensiveness, Stonewall Contempt

Forgiveness

- Four components of forgiveness
 - Accepting transgression
 - Decline in punitive tendency
 - Decline in avoidance
- Increase in compassion toward partner

Week 9: Lecture 13 Love and Forgiveness, Kindness, Trust (3/14)

Universality of conflict

- Sibling, romantic

Evolution of Reconciliation

- Dispersal Hypothesis: conflicting parties separate spatially, seeking forgiveness

Forgiveness

- Accepting transgression
- Decline in punitive tendency
- Decline in avoidance
- Increase in compassion toward partner

Restorative Justice

- Offenders accountable, undo effects of harm, offenders reintegrate into community, respectful dialogue victim, offender
- Alternative: Prevent contact perpetrator, victim,
- Outcome:
 - Less revenge 4 times, more likely to forgive offender, reductions in juvenile offense

Kindness and Trust

Altruism and Kindness

- Volunteerism = Uncompensated assistance given to those in need

Health Benefits of Giving

- 3 weeks of spending money on others versus self lowers blood pressure
- 5 year longitudinal study of 423 elderly married couples

- People report on volunteering, 5 years later those who volunteered more were more likely to survive

Giving brings its own rewards (Haber & Knutson, 2010)

- Activated by various delights
 - Pretty faces, food, music, images of nature, art, winning money, heroin, cocaine

Kindness Activates Reward Circuitry

- Cooperation
 - When cooperating activated Nucleus accumbens
- Love
 - Think about the person you're intensely in love with, nucleus accumbens
- Social Esteem

Trust and Kindness in family: attachment theory

- Three evolved systems evolved to provide care to hyper-vulnerable offspring
 - Caregiving: for offspring
 - Reproductive: desire
 - Attachment: pair-bonding
- Set working model of world with the first interaction

Expanded circle of care

- Task of civilization is to expand to all sentient beings

Week 11: Lecture 14 Power, Stress (3/28)

Problems of today are disempowerment

- Mass incarceration
- Economic

Power Revolution

- Women, diversity
- India, China
- New forms of influence: facebook, instagram, twitter

Finding tools to be resilient to stress

Stress and resilience

- Stress: feeling unable to marshal the resources to respond to threats and challenges
- Resilience: cultivating the mental habits, social tendencies and life choices that bring resources to meet those challenges

Structural origins of stress

- racism, sexism, antisemitism, colonialism
- Bias in criminal justice system

Life Events

- Abuse, violence, divorce, death,

Thought and social patterns

- Threat to identity

- Social comparisons to others
- Self criticism
- Materialism

Week 11: Lecture 15 Stress (3/30)

Costs of Chronic stress, cortisol

- Increased rate of cancer spread, heart disease, cell death

Poverty and Stress

- US historic levels of economic inequality
- US Poverty: 4 person household \$24k

Galvanizing Discoveries

- Chronic stress of growing up poor elevates cortisol, cytokines (inflammation), 20-40% increased chance of death due to disease

SES and life events

- Increased exposure to violence, harsher punishment in criminal justice system
- More likely to be stopped and frisked
- Increased sense of threat
- Rise of well-being economy governing in the OECD
- Innovative policy to elevate well-being of citizens, sustainability goals

Week 11 Discussion: Lecture 15 Stress (4/1)

Tasks

- Social warmth: positive messages
 - Loving messages
- Pleasant touch:
 - Pleasantness
- Physical warmth
 - Warm pack, room temperature ball

Conclusion

- Physical warmth is processed introspectively
- Connection between social warmth and physical touch but many reasons that affect the feelings of social connection
- Further studies in neural activity to touch from a close person vs inanimate object can give more insight on this work of interpersonal touch
- Used to combat feelings of isolation and warmth

Week 12: Lecture 16 Illusions (4/4)

Strategies for savoring

- Savoring/satisficing: Enjoying the moment for what it is
- Share good feelings with others

- Slow down or stop, and take mental photograph
- Sharpen sensory perception
- How quickly time flies

Illusion of Materialism

Rise of Materialism

- Act of consumption equated with moral, spiritual, psychological progress and status
- Clothing production doubled worldwide from 2005 to 2020, dropping two family car households

Materialism vs experientialism

- Materialism = emphasis on material wealth as the center of life, source of happiness, criterion for success
- Materialism predicts greater self-focus, less empathy, less healthy relationships
- Correlates negatively with happiness
- Predicts increased stress
- Reduced environment friendly behaviors

Experiences over material focus

- Material purchase vs experiential purchase

Culture of fear

- Irrational fears, fear the wrong things

Week 12 Discussion: Article 7 Davidson (4/8)

Hypothesis: meditation decreases anxiety

Results - Mental

- Meditator group showed decrease in negative emotions over time

Results - Vaccination

- Meditator group Higher rise in antibody

Week 15: Lecture 23 Narratives (4/25)

Fiction and film

- Universal stories: Love, anger/justice, courage, wonder, community dissolution/creation, suffering

Music

- Allows members of cultures to make sense of the great themes of social living

Week 15: Lecture 24 Meaning (4/25)

Accept when narratives lead to insight,

Viewing Life as a story

Meaning, Purpose: Higher Happiness

- Meaning: passion, interest, wonder

- Purpose, What deep goals, intentions animate your life
- Eudaimonia: how do we find work, love, community that expresses our core strengths .. form of deep happiness

Happiness Practices: Breathe, Empathize, Accept, Revere, Serve
20s

- Takes time
- Be open, let it unfold, wander, meander,
- Don't worry about doubts, change, mistakes
- Listen to passions

Settling into community, work, and family, the 30s, 40s, 50s

Navigating the stresses of the middle of life

- Embrace, accept stress, suffering
- Find one form of mindfulness
-

End

Born to be Good (Dacher Keltner Notes)

Chapter 1: Jen Science

Darwinian lens into new science of positive emotion

- Confucian Jen: establishes the character of others and brings the good things of others to completion and does not bring the bad things of others to completion
- Jen ratio: balance of good and bad in. Your life, take stock of your attempt at living a meaningful life
- Engaging in five acts of kindness a week: evaluates personal well-being in lasting ways, leads to more happiness
- Give credit to partner and see hidden virtues accompanying partner's foibles and faults
- Nations fare better when citizens have higher Jen
-
-
- Broader ideology about human nature trending Jen ratio to 0'
- Societies of selfish, competitive gratification machines, prioritize the bad over good
- Negative things contaminate the positive more readily than vice versa

Midlife Crisis of Homo Economicus

- wired to pursue self-interest
- Money helps those who have very little be happy to avoid economic deprivation

- In middle class and above association between money and happiness is weak or nonexistent
 - More so the quality of romantic bonds, health of families, time we spend with good friends, connections we feel to communities, high Jen ratio

Jen of Blushes, Laughs, Smiles and Touch

- shift the numerator of Jen ration, many different types of happiness
- Identify essential emotions of compassion, gratitude, amusement, and wonder

Chapter 4: Survival of the Kindest

15% of WW2 fired at enemy

Our moral capacities are rooted in sympathy

- caregiving is very important, wired into nervous system in emotions, sympathy and filial love
- Tit for tat strategy for zer sum
- Principle of reliable identification - easy to real

Chapter 11: Compassion

Vagus nerve, produces a feeling of spreading, liquid warmth in the chest and lump in the throat

- Compassion can also be multiple motives
- Helping others can be driven by selfish motives to reduce distress we feel of someone else suffering
- Allure of social praise, helping those in need
- Kindness, Jen that make up healthy communicates rooted in never that
- Kindness is the most important quality women and men seek in romantic partners
- We survive socially and groups fare better when comprised of kinda individuals
- Compassion is strong, wired into our nervous systems and good for children, health and vital to marriage, may be a prerequisite to the pursuit of self-interested happiness

Chapter 12: awe

- thinkers liberated experience DoF awe, wonder, and religion'
- Awe produced through emotion of expanded thought, greatness of mind, literatures, poetry, painting, viewing landscapes, and perceptual experiences,
 - Nature, art, charismatic, famous people, experiences
- Experience of awe -> modesty, small self -> unity, common humanity -> respect, reverence
- modesty placing the self in larger context
- Awe requires vast objects, unexpected rare events
- Goose bumps is activation of minute muscles, automatic nervous system
- Warm swelling in the chest, profound shifts in the senses of an individuals place in the world
- Finding your place in the larger scheme of things

Evolution has produced a mind that evolves toward an appreciation of the vastness of our collective design, and emotions that enable us to enact these loftier notions, wired for good

End

The How of Happiness () Notes

Chapter 2: How Happy are you and why?

The Happiness Continuum

- lies on a continuum, everyone on the scale, determine present personal happiness level
- Definitions of happiness
 - Aristotle: happiness is "an expression of the soul in considered actions"
 - Freud: to love and to work
- Subjective happiness scale
 - I consider myself a happy person 1 - 7
 - 6
 - Compared with most of my peers, I consider myself more happy
 - 5
 - Some people are generally very happy. Enjoy life regardless of what is going on getting the most out of everything
 - 4
 - Some people not very happy. Not depressed, but never as happy as they might be.
 - 5'

Could you be depressed?

- Clinical depression is rising

What Determines Happiness? (10% circumstances, 40% intentional activity, 50% set point)

- Myth 1: Happiness must be "found"
 - If you're not happy today, then you won't be happy tomorrow unless you take things into your own hands and take action
 - 40% happiness from intentional activity appreciate the great impact you can make on your own life through intentional strategies you can implement to make yourself happier
- Myth 2: Happiness lies in changing our circumstances

- I would be happy IF—, I will be happy WHEN —
- Elements that determined our happiness in the past, and can make for future happiness are with us right now and are right here waiting to be taken advantage of.
- Myth 3: You Either have it or you don't
 - Believe that unhappiness is genetic or nothing you can do about it

The Limits of Life Circumstances

- Material Wealth
 - Extra space and gadgets don't make us happy
 - Those who expressed materialistic aspirations as freshman were less satisfied with their lives two decades later, more likely to suffer from a variety of mental disorders

Beauty

- being beautiful doesn't have a stronger effect on our well-being because we don't focus on our appearance when thinking about how happy we are
- People don't focus on weather or personal safety to figure out how happy they are

The Curious and Powerful Phenomenon of Hedonic Adaptation

- Focus on changing the circumstances of our lives to deliver happiness
- Hedonic adaptation to significant life events such as marriage, sudden wealth, or chronic illness, after a couple weeks used to it

The Altar, Lottery, and House in the 'Burbs

- marriage only has a temporary effect on happiness 2 year boost and return to baseline in happiness
- Hedonic adaptation from rising aspirations and social comparison dampens your happiness and satisfaction after any positive event or uplift but also after illness or accident

Summing Up

- cannot and will not adapt to everything but having children
- Unhappy with job friends marriage salary, keep those things aside and are not what is preventing you from getting happier
- Those of us who wish we were a great deal happier should be a little less hard on ourselves, u

Chapter 3: Rational irrationality

- Commitment problem
 - Must put aside self-interested courses of action, chances to gain at colleagues expenses in service of long-term commitments to one another
 - Must reliably identify who is committed to us, morally inclined individuals to enter into long-term bonds with
 - Emotion can overwhelm narrow calculations of self-interest

- Emotional displays provide reliable clues to others commitments, involuntary, costly, hard to fake bind in long-term mutually beneficial relationships
- 85-90 of people unable to move face muscles voluntarily
- Long term relationships require put aside utilitarian, cost-benefit analyses of self-interest
- Emotions are statements to others that we care

Chapter 4: Practicing Gratitude and Positive Thinking

- How you think about yourself, the world and other people is important to your happiness as is the objective circumstances
- Making a heaven of hell, finding something to be glad about, and not sweating the small stuff

1. Expressing Gratitude

- Metastrategy for achieving happiness
- Looking at the bright side of a setback
- Not taking things for granted
- Consistently grateful have more happier, energetic, hopeful, positive emotions

Chapter 9: Taking care of your body and your soul

- Practicing religion and spirituality
 - Religious people are happier, healthier and recover better
 - Greater social support and meaning
 - Sense that god has a purpose makes you find meaning in ordinary life events
 - Highly religious people more forgiving
- Benefits of spirituality
 - Meditation is powerful technique to boost both physical and psychological well-being by using a spiritual mantra

Chapter 6: Managing Stress, Hardship, and Trauma

Developing Strategies for coping

- Deem those happy who from experience of life have learned to bear its ills, without being overcome but them
- Coping: problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping

Problem-focused coping

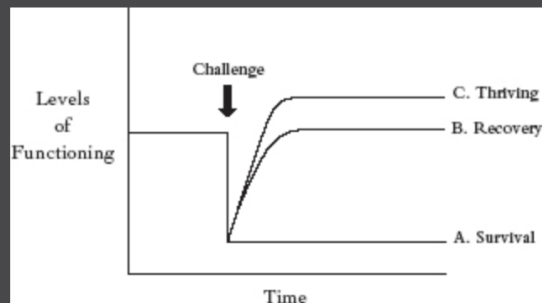
- solving problems: experience less depression during and after stressful situations

Emotion-focused coping

- distraction or physical exercise, seeking emotional support from people close to you
- Reinterpreting the situation, Turning to religion,
- Men benefits from emotion-focused strategies and women from problem focused ones
- Construing benefit in trauma involves seeing some value or gain in your loss or negative life event

- Post traumatic trauma survivors ends up with renewed believe in ability to endure, improved relationships, more comfortable with intimacy, and deeper, more sophisticated, and more satisfying philosophy of life

survival, recovery, or thriving.¹⁸ Survival involves a permanent impairment of functioning. This path shows a person who is merely surviving following a trauma, someone who may have lost much happiness and motivation to enjoy love, work, or leisure. Recovery describes a person who suffers in the aftermath of a trauma, perhaps unable to work productively or have satisfying relationships for a period of time, but who eventually returns to his original state. Finally, thriving involves someone who also suffers in the aftermath but who ultimately not only returns to her original state but rises above it! This person has experienced a transformation.



Social Support

- confided to others did better , quality of social support just as important as whether you have it

Finding Meaning

- Threat to assumption world, must rethinkg your assumptions and beliefs, must find meeting in their loss

Specific Strategies for coping

- Findign meaning through expressive writing
- Construing benefit in trauma through writing or conversing
 - Aknowlekdge loss, consider what you are proud of, how much you have grown as a result of your loss, how trauma has positively affected your resolutions
- Coping via thought disputation
 - Challenging pessimisstic thoughts
 - "For the next four days, I would like for you to write about your very deepest thoughts and feelings about the most traumatic experience of your entire life. In your writing, I'd like you to really let go and explore your very deepest emotions and thoughts. You might tie your topic to your relationships with others, including parents, lovers, friends, or relatives, to your past, your present, or your

future, or to who you have been, who you would like to be, or who you are now. You may write about the same general issues or experiences on all days of writing or on different traumas each day.”

- “Write down the nature of the adversity, the bad event or problem you are facing—e.g., “My best friend hasn’t called me in three weeks.” Identify any negative beliefs triggered by this problem—e.g., “She must hate me” or “I’m terrified that she thinks that I’m too boring.” Record the consequence of the problem, how you are feeling and acting as a result—e.g., “I feel miserable and lonely” or “I’ve never been good at keeping friends” or “I’ll skip the dinner party this weekend.” Dispute the negative belief, challenging it, thinking of other possible reasons for the problem—e.g., “Perhaps my friend has been extremely busy (I remember her mentioning a big contract at work),” or “Maybe she’s feeling down herself and wants me to call.”
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End

The Compassionate Instinct (Dacher Keltner) Notes

The Biological Basis of Compassion

- brain seems wired up to respond to others’ suffering — makes us feel good when we can alleviate that suffering
- Behaviors associated with compassionate love — warm smiles, friendly hand gestures, affirmative forward leans, produce more oxytocin

Signs of Compassion

- Paritular facial expression of compassion: oblique eyebrows and a concerned gaze, more likely to help others as well as touch
- Certain touches can trigger the release of oxytocin, feelings of warmth and pleasure, can compassion be communicated via touch

Motivating Altruism

- Does compassion promote altruistic behavior

End

[Quizlet by Eliza](#)

Good luck, everyone! <3 :)

KEY

They are all linked to make navigation easier. Hope it helps :)

Forgiveness

1

Stress and the stress response

Mindfulness

Meditation

Narrative/Purpose

Emotional Wisdom

Kindness, Love, Trust

Teasing

Self-Compassion

Savoring

Illusions and “toxic thoughts”

Power

Play

Empirical Articles

[Dunn et al. 2008](#) — Spending Money on Others Promotes Happiness

[Inagaki and Eisenberger, 2013](#) — Shared Neural Mechanisms Underlying Social Warmth and Physical Warmth

[Davidson et al. 2003](#) — Alterations in Brain and Immune Function produced by Mindfulness Meditation

[Brackett et al. 2012](#) — Enhancing academic performance and social and emotional competence with the RULER feeling words curriculum

[Kahneman and Deaton, 2010](#) — High income improves evaluation of life but not emotional well being

Born To Be Good

Ch. 5: Embarrassment

Ch. 7: Laughter

Ch. 8: Tease

Ch. 9: Touch

Ch. 10: Love

How of Happiness

Ch 1: The How of Happiness: “Is it possible to become happier”

Ch 6: The How of Happiness: “Managing Stress, Hardship, and Trauma

Ch 7: Living in the Present

Ch 8: The How of Happiness: “Committing to your Goals”

The Compassionate Instinct

pp., 26-35: Peace Among Primates (Robert Sapolsky)

pp., 45-50: Political Primates (Christopher Boehm)
pp., 51-71: The Forgiveness Instinct (Michael E. McCullough); The New Science of Forgiveness
(Everett L. Worthington Jr.)
pp . 72-76: Brain Trust (Michael Kosfeld)
pp., 133-149: Compassion Across Cubicles (Jill Suttie); Are you a Jerk at Work (Robert I. Sutton)
pp., 150-156: The Compassionate Instinct: "A feeling for Fiction" (Keith Oatley)
pp., 157-161: A Different View (Alfie Kohn)
pp. 203-212: America's Trust Fall (Jeremy Adam Smith and Pamela Paxton)
pp., 213-222: The Power Paradox (Dacher Keltner)
pp., 246-259: Making Peace Through Apology (Aaron Lazare); Truth + Reconciliation (Desmond
Tutu)
pp., 260-267: Why is there Peace? (Steven Pinker)

Forgiveness

How is forgiveness defined?

Forgiveness: a shift in thinking away from a desire for vengeance and avoidance

Forgiving: less motivated to retaliate and remain estranged but more motivated by feelings of goodwill

- Older and middle aged people forgive more often than younger adults and feel more forgiven by God

What does forgiveness entail? What does forgiveness *not* necessarily entail?

Source: Lecture, discussion, and The Compassionate Instinct "The New Science of Forgiveness"
Forgiveness does **not** necessarily entail reconciliation nor does it excuse the transgression; forgiving doesn't mean forgetting

Four components of forgiveness:

1. Accepting transgression
2. Decline punitive tendency/vengeance
3. Decline in avoidance
4. Increase in compassion toward partner

What are some benefits of forgiveness?

- Decline in fight or flight cardiovascular physiology
- Benefits health
- Increase happiness and ability to empathize (in study, people were happier 9 weeks later)
- Less likely to be depressed, hateful, anxious, hostile, angry, and neurotic

What do we mean when we say that both conflict and forgiveness are part of human nature/are universal?

Reasons why forgiveness is hard

- Vulnerability (evolutionary)
- Cultural norms about masculinity see forgiveness as "weak"
- Requires the victim to do the hard work
- Requires a generosity of spirit toward someone we might hate
- Our own personal journeys and timelines

We see conflict and forgiveness in sibling conflicts, romantic, parent child, workplace, political, tribal, and step relations globally

- Deeply rooted. People will always pursue personal self interest and these conflicting interests are at the heart of conflict. It's inevitable and human nature to have conflicting interests.

What is some evidence that this might be the case? Evolutionary theory?

- Reconciliation in chimpanzees (Lecture Day 13, page 17)
 - Bowing, open-handed gestures, exposure of vulnerable body parts, vocalization
 - Groom, embrace
- All mammals reconcile except domesticated cats
- e in order to end the conflict (in conflict conspecifics actually show more contact during reconciliation)
- “Valuable Relationship” Hypothesis → Animals forgive because it repairs important relationships that have been damaged by aggression

Relationship between embarrassment and forgiveness?

Source: Born to be Good “Embarrassment”

- Embarrassment reveals how much the individual cares about the rules that bind us to one another (gaze aversion, coy smile, face touch, head turn to side and down)
- Embarrassment displays are signs of moral commitment
- Embarrassment warns us of immoral acts and prevents us from mistakes that unsettle social harmony
 - It provokes ordinary acts of forgiveness and reconciliation
- Orbitofrontal patients lose this sense of embarrassment
- Embarrassment is the foundation of an ethic of modesty
- Forgiveness is usually of an act that violates social rules

Romantic relationships and forgiveness?

- Relationships with strong commitment forgive more because there is more to lose
- In longitudinal research, couples who forgave were happier 9 weeks later
- Those who forgive easier and quicker are more likely to offer social support to their romantic partner

Stress and the stress response

Stress: feeling unable to marshal the resources to respond to threats and challenges

- When the demands of the stressor exceed capacities, skills, & coping abilities

Resilience: cultivating the mental habits, social tendencies, and life choices that bring resources to meet those challenges

What is the difference between a challenge v.s. a threat? (discussion video 8)

Challenge: when a person perceives themselves as having the personal resources (e.g. – time, skills, energy) to meet the demands of the task at hand → “I can do it!”

- Emotionally: tends to be accompanied by feelings of confidence
- Physiologically: autonomic nervous system → increase cardiac efficiency

Threat: when a person perceives the demands of the task to outweigh the resources available to them → “I can NOT do this” :(((

- Emotionally: tends to be accompanied by feelings of anxiety or dread
- Physiologically: autonomic nervous system → decrease cardiac efficiency

What is the HPA axis? What organs are involved?

- Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Adrenal axis (HPA)
 - Short term = good. Prepares us for fight/flight
 - Long-term = chronic stress
 - Vulnerability, anxiety, fear, vigilance threats, elevated sympathetic autonomic nervous system action (increased heartbeat, blood pressure, shallow breath, greater wear on veins, altered digestion)
 - Part of endocrine system, releases cortisol into bloodstream, picks up signs of threats, sends signals to hypothalamus and pituitary, down to the adrenal glands (which release the cortisol)
- Hypothalamus, anterior pituitary, adrenal cortex
- **Amygdala:** almond shaped region in middle part of brain, takes sensory information, processes threat unconsciously & initiates stress response (threat center)
 - Vagus nerve calms amygdala stress response
 - Processes threat → signals pituitary gland and hypothalamus → adrenal glands release cortisol into bloodstream

What are the effects of cortisol on the body? How does it affect the reproductive, digestive, metabolic, immune, and cardiovascular systems?

- Physiological effects
 - Ulcers
 - Heart disease
 - Increased rate of cancer spread
 - Cell death in hippocampus
 - Memory loss
 - Shortened telomeres, protective tissue at end of chromosomes (aged by 10 years by chronic stress) (Eppel et al., 2004)
 - Compromised intellectual functioning
- Two social factors that increase cortisol
 - Lack of control
 - Social rejection
- Can lead to increases in...
 - Pain
 - Humiliation
 - Shame
 - Cytokine response

- Activation of the anterior cingulate
- Physiological effects of stress (short-term and chronic, but they have different consequences. More info from section 8 video)
 - Increase blood flow to muscles, tension of muscles
 - Short-Term:
 - Prepare to use muscles to run away
 - Guarding against injury/pain
 - Chronic
 - Tension headaches
 - Stress on skeletal system; muscle atrophy
 - Increase in blood pressure, heart rate, respiration rate
 - Short-Term
 - Transport more O₂ & nutrients to limbs and muscles more quickly
 - Chronic
 - CVD (cardiovascular disease), stroke, hyperventilation
 - Panic attacks
 - Increase in production of glucose from liver
 - Short-Term
 - Increase production of energy for body to use
 - Chronic
 - Increase susceptibility to Type II diabetes
 - Lowered activity of gastrointestinal, reproductive, immune systems
 - Short-Term
 - Focusing blood & energy to other organs in body needed for short-term survival
 - Chronic
 - Decreased appetite, nausea, acid reflux, heartburn
 - Decreased libido, decreased sperm production, erectile dysfunction, abnormal periods
 - Increased vulnerability to infection

What are some causes of stress at the three levels of analysis (structural, life event, thought pattern) we talked about in class? (lecture)

- **Structural:** lower SES have impoverished environments; fewer places to connect, feel joy, find calm (less nature, fewer healthcare centers, greater noise disruption)
- **Life events:** increased exposure to violence, harsher punishments in criminal justice system, more likely to be stopped and frisked
- **Thought pattern:** increased feelings of threat, reduced sense of agency, greater sense of stigma and bias
 - Thought and social pattern examples (Day 16, Slide 14)
 - Perfectionism, social comparison to others, self-criticism, materialism/consumerism, rumination, feelings of no control or agency

How is poverty related to the stress response system and long-term health outcomes?

- Stress Response System from Childhood Poverty
 - Elevated cortisol, cytokines
- Long-term Health Outcomes
 - More likely to die of cancer
 - Suffer chronic pain
 - Autoimmune disease
 - Human frailty syndrome: weak bones
 - 20-40% increased chance of death due to disease
 - First 25 years in poverty → 6 years of life expectancy lost
 - Increased prevalence of depression, anxiety disorders, reduced happiness

How can labeling, reappraisal, and distancing be used in our responses to stress?

- Labeling the negative stimuli
 - **Reduces amygdala activation that is ordinarily produced**
 - **Reduces anxiety of knowing what we feel**
 - **Focuses on actual causes and courses of actions, increasing well-being through this focusing (reappraisal, shifting thoughts on the stimuli, changing how it's viewed)**
 - **Reappraisal involves reframing**
- Perspective Distance
 - Imagine stress from third person perspective
 - Why (more distance) as opposed to how (more immerse) things are happening
 - Leads to less Sympathetic Autonomic Nervous System response, better conflict management, and less anger
- Temporal Distance
 - Imagine your best self five years from now
 - Leads to increased happiness, health, and reduced stress

Mindfulness

What are the core components of mindfulness?

- Non-judgmental awareness of contents of mind and body
- Kind attention to self, others
- Unbiased view of world, compassionate mind, and direct perception
- Building resilience

What physiological systems does research show are affected by mindfulness practice?

- Mindfulness practices can lead to...
 - Less chronic pain

- Reduced symptoms of anxiety “disorders”, distress and depression
- Quicker healing for psoriasis
- Better mood and stress in cancer patients
- Strengthened immune responses
- More Gamma waves
- Reduces anger, hostility and mood disturbances and helps with rehabilitation/reintegration
- Sharper attention
- Greater empathy, compassion (note- insula gives you signals about compassion)
- More awareness of people around you, less judgemental of them
- **MBSR (Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction)** - discussed in L. 19
 - Reduces symptoms of stress, anxiety, depression
- Affective labeling also shortens half-life of negative emotions (PFC inhibiting Amygdala activation)
- Effects of meditation on cellular aging
 - Chronically stressed people and those with mood disorders have shorter leukocyte telomeres [Mindfulness based treatment group showed 39% increase in telomerase activity & 18% increase in telomerase activity compared to waitlist control group over course of intervention]
 - More prone to cancer, etc.
- Brain regions involved:
 - Posterior Cingulate Cortex
 - Temporo Parietal Junction
 - Lateral Cerebellum
 - Cerebellar Vermis/brainstem

How is mindfulness practiced?

- Mindful attention to **breath**
 - Comfortable sitting
 - Attend to breath
- Mindful attention to **body**
 - Body scan, but direct attention to sensations
 - Tingles, heat, cold, tension, heaviness, maybe pain
- Mindful attention to **attention**
 - Comfortable sitting with open eyes
 - Attend to space six inches in front of eyes
- Mindful attention to **feeling**
 - Recall a positive experience (beauty, joy gratitude, awe) and trace where that feeling came from, where it goes, what was it like in your mind
- Mindful practices leads to
 - Activated regions of the brain involved in awareness of others
 - Sharper attention
 - Less stress

- Greater empathy, compassion
- More calmness

What are the key limitations of mindfulness literature?

- Numerous theoretical approaches to mindfulness, each with different ways to measure it
- No consensus on the best way to measure mindfulness !!! [source: section 9]

Meditation

Meditation = a practice that distances us from our thoughts, feelings, sensations that are constantly passing through us; state of non-judgmental awareness

Why meditate

- Loosen attachment to identification with and illusion of control over what is inevitably and constantly changing
- Gain deeper insights into the nature of existence/self

Types of meditation

- **Concentrative**: cultivate single-pointed attention on an object and nothing but that object
- **Open-awareness**: open mind into awareness of whatever is happening without a specific focus; often this awareness is compared to the spacious sky or river with objects floating by, non-directive
- **Mindfulness**: most popular meditation
 - Focuses on the breath, bodily sensations, thoughts, feelings, sounds, etc.
 - Focus is not as narrow as in concentrative, not just one thing
 - Simultaneous awareness of various phenomena
- **Loving-Kindness**: developing loving acceptance toward self first, then towards another person; helps cultivate gratitude, compassion

Common elements of meditation

- Non-judgemental acceptance
 - Observe the present moment impartially w/o attachment or evaluation
- Be non-striving
 - Focus on just being
 - Less about doing or achieving a particular goal and don't try to be a better you
- Patience
 - Allow things to unfold in their own time
- Trust
 - Trust yourself & that things will work out in life

- Openness
 - Pay attention to every little thing w/ a certain innocence
- Letting go
 - Set yourself free of rumination or attachment

Effects of meditation on happiness and health

- Enhanced activation in left-prefrontal cortex
- Reduced reactivity to stress
- Increased savoring of present moment
- Enhanced quality of relationships/more social support
- Boosted self-esteem and feelings of control
- Slower brain deterioration and increased cognitive flexibility among elderly
- Changes in intelligence and creativity
- Stronger immune system

Narrative/Purpose

What are ways that crafting a life narrative is beneficial?

- **Multiple perspectives:** society is a fabric of many different stories
- **Temporal perspective:** your life is one of many, really just a moment in time
- **Principle of change:** your circumstances will change
- **Self compassion:** you will do good things in the world

What are McAdams elements of narrative?

- A specific, structured interview that helps people articulate the story of their life [Source: Narrative discussion video]
 - Has various steps; dividing life into chapters, identify life events and significant people in your life, stressors, ideology

What are the key ideas of narrative? (i.e., catharsis, rasas)

- **Distancing:** fantasy world allows us to distance from our own world
 - We can take a step back from this world's conventions and believe in this fantasy world
- **Rasas:** when a person experiences an emotion through literature or performance without the usual, often self-interested, involvement
 - Allows the person to generate some unique social implication of an experience that they may not have experienced on their own
- **Empathy:** the idea that we can relate to another's experience
- **Catharsis:** introduced by Aristotle, defined as a purification or purging of emotion
 - Wisdom or insight

- The process of releasing emotions by the experience of art that might not be possible on our own

[Source: Narrative discussion video]

What is distancing?

- **Distancing:** fantasy world allows us to distance from our own world
 - Allows us to use empathy in a fictional piece

How can people adopt distanced perspectives on events that happen to them?

- **Temporal distancing:** Situating current stress and struggles within a broader context / timeframe (e.g. will my current situation matter to me in 5 or 10 years time?)
 - Imagine your best self five years from now
 - What will your current worries mean to you five years from now?
- **Perspective distancing:** Approaching stress from an outside POV, focuses on the “why” rather than the “how” because “why” questions have a depth or distance to them
 - “How” perspective → gives course of action
 - “Why” perspective → deeper contextualization
 - Shift out of your own egocentric perspective

What are the effects of adopting a distanced perspective?

- **Temporal distancing:** Increased happiness, reduced stress, better health
- **Perspective distancing:** Reduced SNS (sympathetic nervous system) activation, better conflict handling, less anger/frustration

How does engaging in works of fiction make people more prosocial?

- Reading fiction benefits our ability to read others’ emotions and understand social situations
- Simulates our own experience by utilizing leaps of imagination

What does the work of Pennebaker on expressive writing tell us about the effects of crafting a narrative?

- Instructions: Write about strongest emotions of trauma, or the facts of the event
- Effects: increased well-being, enhanced immune function, reduced visits to health center, reductions in anxiety, depression

Life narrative

- Broad concept that describes how a person integrates their life
 - Different from traits and roles, which are more specific but also more shared between people (i.e. autobiography, psychotherapy, structured therapy)

McAdams Life narrative

- A specific, structured interview that helps people articulate the story of their life
- Ideas that might come up
 - Post-traumatic growth
 - The idea that you don't just recover but actually come back stronger
 - Compartmentalization
 - When people psychologically distinguish a negative event from other parts of their lives
 - Cognitive dissonance
 - When internal beliefs don't match your awareness of your behavior/ the situation around you; a negative state that people seek to reduce

Side note: semantics in music

- Music has the emotional structure of emotion narratives (EG: songs of protest sound like anger and triumph, songs of loss/grief/longing sound like sadness)
 - When we enjoy music together, our bodies and minds are synchronized

Emotional wisdom - Peace, aggression, and positive culture

- **Wisdom** = ability to...
 - Take multiple perspectives upon context
 - Treat your own view with humility
 - Adapt to life's changing circumstances with flexibility

What does the story of the Forest Troop (TCI) tell us about the capacity of baboons for aggression and cooperation? What are the implications for humans?

- Forest Troop: baboons who ate garbage and all the aggressive males died. New males were socialized by females of the troop and were less aggressive + more social/cooperative
 - Implies this is learned behavior, as males from other troops which came to the Forest Troop learned to cooperate

What is the Positive Organizational Scholarship (POS) movement? What emotions are they primarily concerned with increasing?

- Source: Compassion Across Cubicles (The Compassionate Instinct)
 - Positive Organizational scholarship (POS) pg 134
 - Looks for examples of "positive deviance" - cases in which organizations successfully cultivate inspiration and productivity in workers— and then tries to figure out what makes these groups tick, so that others might emulate them
 - Works to build excitement and compassion

- Critique of POS: people say efforts to make work life more rewarding and pleasurable distract from what they consider bigger goals for workers (higher pay, shorter work weeks)

Why was there a decline in violence in the modern times (TCI p.263-265)?

- More civility (more developed society)
- More long-term thinking
- Proclivity for prosocial behavior → non-zero sum games & cooperation
- Evolution & Empathy
 - Basically we are naturally inclined to be empathic, but only to specific circles. One theory is that our circles have extended in modern times to include nations, humanity, other animals, etc. so now we're too empathetic to cause active/constant harm

Know the studies of the behavior of primates after switching troops by Hans Kumer and De Vaal and Johanowicz (TCI p.28-29).

- Kumer: Apes that were displaced into different groups originally demonstrated species-specific behavior, but quickly adjusted to their new environments (took ~ 1 hour to reorient behavior patterns)
- De Vaal: Rhesus monkeys (typically pretty aggressive but able to learn more prosocial behaviors (more reconciliatory behaviors))
 - Nice behavior persisted when they were introduced back into native environment but the changes were not contagious

What are the factors underlying the success of happiness increasing activities? (The How of Happiness, Ch.10)?

- Genetics
 - 40% under our control, 10% situational, 50% genetic
- Positive emotions
- Novelty (trying new things and switching things up)
- Social Support – informational, physical, emotional
- Motivation, effort and commitment
- Habits (but it also says to change things up so maybe everything in moderation?)

Kindness, love, and trust

Kindness: the intentional act of directing generous benevolence to a person (giving, sharing, believing the best of others, thinking well of them, etc); often involves empathy, compassion, and or altruism, but not required

Frederickson et al. (2008) study on loving kindness meditation increasing positive emotion.

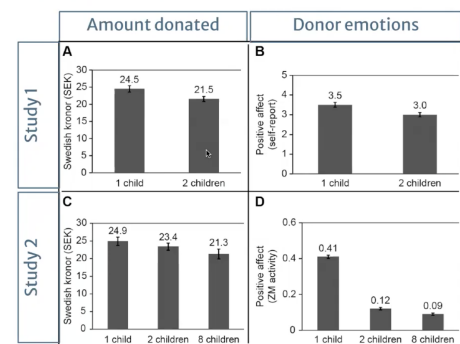
- Hypothesis: Peoples' daily experiences of positive emotions compound over time to build a variety of personal resources (increased sense of purpose of life, lowered depression, increased mindfulness)

What limitations of intuitive kindness did we discuss in section?

- Determining who “deserves” kindness
 - Subject to psychological biases
- People can be harsh judges
- Kindness is great, but it's not always a reliable guide

How does compassion fatigue/fade explain our tendency to feel less compassion towards larger groups?

- People begin to lose compassion or empathy as the number of individuals to feel for, increases
 - We have limitations to think about large groups of people and to feel compassion towards them
- Compassion Fatigue (Vastfjall, Slovic, Mayorga & Peters, 2014)
 - Participants presented w/ different scenarios & asked how they would feel about donating money to them
 - More people in need...
 - Participants less likely to donate as much money
 - Participants feel less positive emotions
- Issue with misallocation of needs in disasters
 - People are more likely to help one person
 - But in big disasters, people are more likely to lose sense of empathy & compassion



Does giving to others have health benefits? What examples were discussed in lecture?

- 3 weeks of spending money on others vs. self → Lowers blood pressure
- In a 5-year longitudinal study of 423 elderly married couples, those who volunteered more were more likely to survive

Teasing

What is teasing?

Source: born to be good “tease”

Tease: involves an act intended to provoke emotion, to discern another's commitment

- Stimulate emotion and reveal social commitment
- Offrecord markers: nonverbal actions that should not be taken seriously/literally, instead playfully
- Playful provocation + offrecord markers

What are the key characteristics of teasteasing?

- Exaggeration
- Repetition
- Idiomatic expressions (i.e. wink, nicknames)
- Vocal cues (sing-song voice, loud, rapid delivery, dramatized sighs, etc.)
- Intentionally violating Grice's Maxims
 - The maxim of **quantity**, where one tries to be as informative as one possibly can, and gives as much information as is needed, and no more.
 - The maxim of **quality**, where one tries to be truthful, and does not give information that is false or that is not supported by evidence.
 - The maxim of **relation**, where one tries to be relevant, and says things that are pertinent to the discussion.
 - The maxim of **manner**, when one tries to be as clear, as brief, and as orderly as one can in what one says, and where one avoids obscurity and ambiguity

What distinguishes teasing from bullying?

- Bullying is rooted in violence and humiliation, whereas teasing is for social bonding
- The right kind of teasing creates more friends, makes for happier relationships, EG: more nicknames amongst friends who tease

What social purpose does teasing serve?

- We tease to flirt (increases trust, connection, happiness)
- **"Negotiate social ambiguities"** (Is this when we're not sure about someone's intentions towards us?)
 - Testing our understanding of social and societal boundaries (what is okay to do, what is taboo, etc.)
 - "for example, if you don't know if this person likes you, then you would realize it if they tease you playfully versus them ignoring you or bullying you"
- Teasing can also be used as a symbolic means to negotiate rank among group members
- Establishes hierarchy
- Tests commitments to social norms
- Uncovers potential romantic interest
- Negotiating conflicts over work and resources
- Playful teasing and happiness
 - In summer camp, campers who teased more playfully have more friends
 - In couples, those couples who are happier have more nicknames for each other
 - Happier couples tease each other in more playful fashion

How do types of play help us learn about boundaries, explore identities, navigate conflict, and learn about the world?

- **Identity play:** play with different forms of identity (Thorne, 1993)
 - 6th grade girls play with their identities at the lunch table → go from acting very feminine to more masculine, etc.
- **Rough and tumble play:** explore boundaries in close spaces (Bekoff, 2001)
 - Boundary difference between affection v.s. harm
- **Language play:** using words to explore... (Leslie, 1983)
 - Multiple meanings of words
 - Multiple perspectives
- **Playing w/ Physical Substances** (fluids, dropping objects, etc.)
 - We learn about the world around us!

Self-compassion

What is self-compassion? What are the three components?

- Sees failures kindly
- Sees self as part of larger humanity
- Hold pain, stress in mindful attentiveness

What is the triple bind? How does it relate to self-compassion?

- Perfectionism in young women (The Triple Bind, Hinshaw, 2009)
 - Young women face the pressure of needing to be all...
 - Beautiful
 - Powerful
 - Athletic
 - Smart
- Consequence = rise in anxiety disorders, eating disorders, self-harm

What are the benefits of being self-compassionate?

- Reduced anxiety
- Reduced depression
- Reduced rumination
- Reduced neurotic perfectionism
- Promotes less regret
- Promotes desire to make amends for a past personal transgression
- Promotes self-improving health behavior

What are some tactics to counter perfectionistic tendencies?

- Take perspective of someone who supports you on struggles, failures
- “Stop” when ruminating about self problems
- Challenge sources of perfectionism with reason
 - Materialism, advertisements
 - Body Image
- Set intention in digital use: avoid comparing self to others

Savoring

What is the difference between maximizing and satisficing?

- **Maximizers:** Try to maximize pleasure at all times
 - Maximizers have more regret after purchase
 - Less satisfaction from success
 - Less optimistic
- **Satisfice:** Find delight in what life presents to you
 - Encounter and evaluate options until one is encountered that exceeds on acceptability threshold (ie. choosing something good instead of seeking “the best”)
 - Less stress
 - Increased happiness

What are some strategies for savoring?

Savoring: any thoughts or behaviors capable of generating, intensifying, and prolonging enjoyment

- **Savoring/Satisficing:** Enjoying the moment for what it is
 - Share good feelings with others
 - Slow down or stop and take a mental photograph
 - Slow down and sharpen sensory perception
 - Remind yourself how quickly time flies
- **Relish ordinary experiences:** appreciate and take pleasure in mundane, everyday experiences
- **Transport yourself:** imagination
 - Replay happy days
 - Be mindful
 - Take pleasure in the senses

Savoring leads to...

- An increase in self confidence, extraversion, gratification, happiness, longevity
- A decrease in hopelessness, neuroticism

What is the relationship between optimism and happiness?

Optimism: Expectations that the future will be socially desirable, good, pleasurable

- Optimistic people report higher levels of overall well-being and happiness and positive emotion.
- Optimistic people have higher resting vagal tone and better reports of health, better health 35 years later.
- Optimism is measured very intuitively ["in uncertain times, I usually expect the best" vs the opposite mindset "if something can go wrong, it will"]

Illusions and “toxic thoughts”

What are the toxic thoughts that we discussed in the class?

- **Perfectionism:** priming the overly ideal self leads to dejection (EG: parents who praise for being perfect/geniuses/etc..)
- **Maximizing:** try to weigh all possible options and focus on making the “optimal” choice at all times; experience more regret and dissatisfaction with their choices; tend to feel less optimistic and more depressed
- **Downward social comparison:** comparing yourself to someone who you believe to be less than you in some way; can lead to feelings of guilt and fears of suffering the same (equally bad) fate
- **Upward social comparison:** comparing yourself to someone you believe to be better than you in some way; leads to dissatisfaction, dejection, feelings of inferiority and loss of self-esteem
- **Overthinking/rumination:** needlessly, endlessly, excessively pondering the meaning, causes and consequences of events, feelings and problems; sustains or worsens sadness and fosters negative thinking
- **Materialism:** emphasis on material wealth as center of life, source of happiness and criterion for success

What are positive activities that remedy each type of toxic thought?

- Make time for thoughts
- Distract yourself
- Stop technique (shout/think/stop)
- Talk to a sympathetic and trusted person about your thoughts and troubles
- Ask yourself: will this matter in a year? (temporal distance)
- Writing about your negative thought patterns
- Consider the cause for each thought and counter with reasoning

What is rumination?

- Needlessly, endlessly, excessively pondering the meaning, causes and consequences of events, feelings and problems; sustains or worsens sadness and fosters negative thinking

What is the evidence for materialism promoting or not promoting happiness?

- **Materialism** = emphasis on material wealth as center of life, source of happiness and criterion for success
- Materialism predicts greater self-focus, less empathy, less healthy relationships
- Usually correlates negatively with happiness and predicts increased stress
- Predicts reduced environmentally friendly behavior
- Happiness from experience (experientialism) is greater than happiness from material items
 - Happiness from experience accumulates more over time
 - Opposite of the relationship between material value and satisfaction over time
- **The happiness equation: positive emotion + social ethics + resilient mind**

Power

What is power?

- The capacity to alter the state of others
 - Through information, social ties, or innovation

How do dominance, status, and reputation relate to power?

- **Dominance**
 - “In effect, these egalitarian bands did something very special about the problem of power. They arrived at a largely implicit ‘social contract,’ by which each political actor conceded his or her personal pursuit of **dominance** in order to remain at political parity with his or her peers. In doing so, hunter-gatherers were able to cooperate effectively because their societies were so small.” (Compassionate Instinct pdf page 56)
- **Status**: The relative social, professional, or other standing of someone or something
 - “They realize that their company has and should have a pecking order, but they do everything they can to downplay and **reduce status** and power differences among members.” (Compassionate Instinct pdf page 138)
 - “Individuals who are modest about their own power actually rise in hierarchies and maintain the **status** and respect of their peers, while individuals with an inflated, grandiose sense of power quickly fall to the bottom rungs.” (Compassionate Instinct pdf page 197)

- “A person’s power is only as strong as the **status** given to that person by others.” (Compassionate Instinct pdf page 198)
- **Reputation:** The beliefs or opinions that are generally held about someone or something.
 - “We’ve found that these individuals do not actually rise to positions of power. Instead, their peers quickly recognize that they will harm others in the pursuit of their own self-interest, and tag them with a **reputation** of being harmful to the group and not worthy of leadership.” (Compassionate Instinct page 198)
- Status and reputation are given to individuals and therefore, power is GIVEN to individuals, not acquired
 - You must give up dominance in order to gain status, reputation, and power

What does it mean to “use our power well” vs abuses of power?

- To esteem, dignify others (being esteemed activates safety network in the brain)
- Collaborative power yields better results than coercive power
- More justice-oriented, humane leaders give more effective speeches
- Anyone given slight power abuses the use of it
- Having elevated power leads to: stereotyping, lack of empathy, gambling risk taking, rudeness, swearing, shoplifting, sexual impropriety, irrational generosity
- We gain power through virtue
 - Humanity: kindness, sympathy
 - Courage: bold, persistence
 - Justice: fairness, teamwork
 - Temperance: humility, modesty

What are the virtues that are part of a virtue based approach to power?

- **Humanity:** Kindness, sympathy
- **Courage:** Bold, persistence
- **Justice:** Fairness, teamwork
- **Temperance:** Humility, Modesty

What psychological outcomes are associated with a sense of power?

- Greater happiness
- Less stress
- Greater sense of purpose
- Longer life expectancy
- Power leads to self-serving impulsivity
 - Having elevated power leads to ...
 - Stereotyping, lack of empathy, gambling, risk taking, sexual impropriety

Vice

- **Machiavellianism:** coercion, deception, manipulation
- **Sociopathy:** coldness, lack of caring, aggression
- **Narcissism:** self-focus, grandiosity

Play

What is play?

- A mammalian universal
- An alternative to serious purpose
- The 4th act of wisdom

What is play's relationship to mirth?

- **Mirth:**
 - Apparently purposeless
 - Voluntary
 - Inherent attraction
 - Freedom from time
 - Diminished consciousness of self
 - Improvisational
 - Signals safety
- Sources of resilience
- **Identity play:** play with different forms of identity (Thorne, 1993)
 - 6th grade girls play with their identities at the lunch table → go from acting very feminine to more masculine, etc.
- **Rough and tumble play:** explore boundaries in close spaces (Bekoff, 2001)
 - Boundary difference between affection v.s. harm
- **Language play:** using words to explore... (Leslie, 1983)
 - Multiple meanings of words
 - Multiple perspectives
- **Playing w/ Physical Substances** (fluids, dropping objects, etc.)
 - We learn about the world around us!
 - Physical laws of nature

Empirical Articles:

Dunn et al., 2008 - Spending Money on Others Promotes Happiness

Question

- How can disposable income be used to increase happiness? Does how people spend their money affect their levels of happiness?

Methodology

- Nationally representative sample of 632 Americans to report personal spending, prosocial spending and level of happiness.
- Examined the happiness of 16 employees before and after they received a bonus
- 46 Participants were given an envelope of cash and instructed whether to spend it on themselves (bills, gifts, etc) or charity

Results

- In the nationally representative sample, personal spending was unrelated to happiness but higher prosocial spending was associated with greater happiness
- Employees who devoted more of their bonus to prosocial spending experienced greater happiness. The manner in which they spent the bonus was a more important predictor of their happiness than the size of the bonus itself.
- There is a causal relationship between spending money on others and its effect on promoting happiness
- Majority of people wrongly believe that personal spending would make them happier than prosocial spending

Happiness implications

- How people choose to spend their money is at least as important as how much money they make
- The historical focus on life circumstances as predictors of happiness may be misplaced; intentional activities may represent a more promising route to lasting happiness

Inagaki & Eisenberger, 2013 - Shared Neural Mechanisms Underlying Social Warmth and Physical Warmth

Question

- the impact that social connectedness has on people
- test two consequences of the overlap that social connection and physical warmth may have.
 - One being, to investigate whether experiencing social warmth increases feelings of warmth and whether experiencing tangible warmth increases feelings of social connectedness.

- The second one being, whether physical and social warmth shared overlapping neural activity in the insula (a region associated with processing interoceptive cues) and the ventral striatum (the coding for rewarding components of warmth)

Methodology

- Physical warmth manipulation
 - Having participants hold a warm pack v.s. a neutral ball
- Social warmth manipulation
 - Participants were asked to read positive v.s. neutral messages given by close friends and relatives
- Participants were asked to rate their feelings of warmth and connection in response to each task.

Results

- Post scan self report
 - Participants felt more connected and a greater sense of warmth after reading the positive messages compared to the neutral messages.
 - participants rated the warm pack as warmer than the room temperature ball.
 - As for pleasantness, the physical touch of the brush was ranked as number one, the positive messages were rated as number two, and then lastly, the warm pack that was held was rated as number three.
- Neural activity to physical warmth
 - Greater activity in the bilateral ventral striatum, left middle insula, and left anterior insula when the participants held a warm pack compared to when they held the room temperature ball.
 - An increase in activity in the right posterior insula and the primary and secondary somatosensory cortices as well which is consistent with results of studies that involve warm, cutaneous sensory stimuli
- Neural activity to social warmth
 - Extensive activity in the ventral striatum, the anterior and middle insula, the pACC and the ventral tegmental area after reading positive messages (vs. neutral messages)
- Neural activity to pleasant touch
 - Pleasant touch manipulation there was not an increase in activity in the ventral striatum, but brushing did lead to an increase in activity in the right posterior insula and the primary and secondary somatosensory cortices.
- Shared neural activity across tasks
 - There was a shared neural activity in the left ventral striatum and left middle insula when participants read the positive messages and held the warm pack.
 - There was also a shared neural activity during the physical warmth and physical touch task in the left posterior insula extending into the secondary somatosensory cortex.
 - “Participants felt warmer after reading the positive messages and more connected after holding the warm pack”

- “Neural activity during social warmth overlapped with neural activity during physical warmth...but neural activity did not overlap during another pleasant task (soft touch)”
 - Shared activity in left VS and middle insula

Happiness implications

- “Suggest a potential mechanism by which social warmth...has become such a pleasant experience”
- Need future research to show neural activity to touch from a close other instead of from an inanimate object
- Possible interventions to combat feelings of isolation/loneliness through temperature manipulations
- **Human bonds develop from socially warm exchanges and the warm feeling related to being socially connected**

Davidson et al., 2003 - Alterations in Brain and Immune Function Produced by Mindfulness Meditation

Question

- examined if there is an **increase** of activation on the **left-side of the brain** when meditation occurs and participants along with this study participants were **vaccinated**.
- Predicted: that because meditation decreases anxiety, and increases positive affect, subjects who were practicing meditation should show increased left sided activation in these territories compared w those in a wait-list control group

Methodology

- Measured brain electrical activity before and immediately after and then 4 months after an 8-week training program in meditation
- 41 subjects total:
 - 25 subjects were tested in the meditation group
 - 16 in the wait-list control group
- Subjects in both groups were vaccinated with the influenza vaccine at the end of the 8-week period.

Results

- Significant increases in in the meditators compared with the non meditators. Found significant increases in antibody titers to influenza vaccine among subjects in the meditation compared to the control group.

Happiness implications

- Short program in mindfulness meditation produces demonstrable effects on brain and immune function.

Brackett et al., 2012 - Enhancing Academic Performance and Social and Emotional Competence with the RULER Feeling Words Curriculum

Question

- determine if the RULER curriculum leads to gains of achievement in ELA, work habits, and social development.
- to determine the effect size for emotional and social competencies and other outcomes
 - Hypothesis 1: students in RULER classrooms would have greater gains in teacher ratings of social and emotional competencies compared to students in classrooms not using RULER
 - Expect to see gains in grades assessing performance in ELA but not in an unrelated subject, like math.
 - Students in RULER classrooms would demonstrate greater gains in grades in these areas (work habits and social development)

Methodology

- n=273, 5th and 6th grade students in 15 classrooms in 3 schools (Long Island, NY)
 - Ethnically diverse
 - n=155 RULER, n=118 control
- RULER curriculum (Recognizing, Understanding, Labeling, Expressing, Regulating)
 - 30-week curriculum
 - Designed to help students gain deep understanding of feelings words -words that characterize the gamut of human experience (help label, express, and regulate emotions)
- Sample curriculum for middle school classrooms
 - Teachers introduce feeling word with personalized connection
 - Students interpret an abstract design using the feeling word
 - Students connect the feeling word to academic material or current events
 - Students discuss the feeling word with family members and write a short paragraph about the conversation
 - The class discusses the feeling word and its relationship to the family discussions, academic material, or current events
 - Students write a short essay using the feeling word
- Measurement
 - 6 weeks before start of academic year vs. 6 weeks prior to end of academic year
 - Academic performance - report card grades
 - Social and emotional competence - teacher reports of student behavior

Results

- Conducted paired sample t-tests for each outcome variable
 - Control - teacher reports of externalizing, internalizing, and school problems increased over time but no significant change in adaptive skills

- RULER - teacher reports of externalizing, internalizing, and adaptive skills increased over time but no significant change in school problems
- **“Students in the RULER group had significantly higher adaptability scores and significantly lower school problem scores at post-test”**
- Students in RULER classrooms had higher year-end grades and teacher ratings

Happiness implications

- Evidence of effectiveness of RULER curriculum
- Implications for substance abuse or bullying?
- Test different intensity of interventions
- Test individual vs. small-group level interventions
- Limitations
 - Schools, not students, were assigned to intervention group but analyses conducted at student level
 - Didn't analyze effects of gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic background, neighborhood type
 - Effects examined after just 7 months of implementation
 - How does RULER affect teaching quality?
 - Effects on standardized test scores?
 - Teachers assign grades but also implement the intervention → potential bias?

Kahneman et al., 2010 - High Income Improves Evaluation of Life but not Emotional Well-Being

Question

- Examine possible differences between correlates of emotional well-being and life evaluation
- Specifically looking at the effects of household income

Methodology

- Telephone interviews from more than 450,000 US residents across all 50 US States
- Approximately 1,000 interviews were conducted on a daily basis between January 2nd to December 30th, 2009.

Results

- For measures of well-being, individuals in lower-income groups do worse on average than those above them
- Beyond \$75,000/yr, no improvement in measures of emotional well-being (at least diminishing returns)
- Steady rise of life evaluation as income rises

Happiness implications

- Lack of financial resources brings both emotional misery and low life evaluation
- Additional income may not necessarily buy more happiness but less money is associated with emotional pain

Readings:

Born to be Good

Ch 5: EMBARRASSMENT

- Brings people together during conflict / breeches of social contract → sign of respect for others + appreciation of view + our commitment to moral and social order
- Orienting function of the startle
 - it resets the individual's mind and physiology to attend to the source of the loud noise that has suddenly entered the individual's phenomenal field
 - People with intense startle responses experience more anxiety and dread + more neurotic and pessimistic
- De Waal observed that after conflict, primates were more likely to spend time in the presence of one another
 - Reconciliation during conflict and reestablishing cooperative relations → subordinate or defeated animal first approaches and engages in submissive manner which prompts physical reconciliation
- Studying people with violent tendencies
 - well -adjusted boys showed most embarrassing when failing in test , while externalizing boys showed little or no embarrassment + would erupt with occasional facial displays of anger
- James Blair - Studied acquired sociopathy (patient = J. S.) → J.S. had a damaged orbitofrontal cortex → short circuited his capacity for embarrassment and lost his ability to appease, reconcile, forgive, and participate in the social-moral order
- Common themes in chapter: embarrassment as a function of keeping social and moral order + damage to orbitofrontal cortex of brain can lead to impairment in ability to register embarrassment, leading to issues in perceiving signs of suffering etc.

Ch 7: laughter

- Laughter is what separates mammals from reptiles (in addition to play and communicating with voice)
- Laughter in apes is simple (inhalation/exhalation) but can be complex in humans (many kinds of laughter with different feelings)
- Laughter is contagious and produces "remarkable" human state; the body goes limp
- Laughter is a highly social response: 30 times more likely to occur in presence of others than alone
- We laugh during exhalation, and when doing so, it reduces fight/flight physiology → calming down the body. Laughter causes extended exhalation (which promotes vagus nerve activity and lowers stress and promotes general body relaxation)

- Only 20% of laughter is caused by humor→ “it is a cooperation switch” and indicates “mutually beneficial exchanges”
- Men are more likely to snort and grunt during laughing
- Antiphonal laughter (when laughs of friends go from separate vocalization to overlapping sounds mimicking each other) unites people in affection
- Laughter was before human language
- Laughter builds cooperative bonds essential to group living
 - Does so via contagion and rewarding mutually beneficial exchanges
 - Signals appreciation, understanding, pleasure
- Laughter = invitation into world of pretense
 - 3 types of pretend play among kids
- Laughter helps people adjust to life -altering traumas (see bereavement study pg 142)

Ch 8: Tease

- Tease is important in establishing social boundaries
- Not bullying
 - Bullying is rooted in establishing fear and humiliation
 - Young children will tease like bullying, because they don't understand social conventions yet
- Tease =“Intentional provocation” with nonverbal cues that this is not to be taken seriously. It is the Trying to stir up emotion, “get a rise” out of someone
- “We turn to the playful provocation of teasing to negotiate the ambiguities of social living - establishing hierarchies, testing commitments to social norms, uncovering potential romantic interest, negotiating conflicts over work and resources”
 - Frat boys tease people they like more. Boys higher up in the hierarchy tease more than lower level ones = establishes a hierarchy
- Teasing = playful aggression
 - Alternative definition: Intentional provocation to provoke emotion
 - Like a social “vaccine”

Ch 9: Touch

- Touch is important to spreading goodness
 - Leads to rewarding biochemical reactions
 - Releases endorphins
 - Activates orbitofrontal cortex and the release of oxytocin and endorphins
 - Triggers activation of the vagus nerve
 - Devoted to trust and social connection which feels like humming vibrations in your back
 - Deactivation of amygdala, reduced stress
 - Touch triggers touch and generosity

- People who were touched prior to being asked to sign a petition signed 81% of the time, compared to the 55% that were not touched
 - People who were touched before the prisoner's dilemma had a shift in the game
- Evolutionary shifts (of skin and hands) transformed skin into an interface between inner and outer worlds
 - Sensitive touch a byproduct of hair loss
 - Platform for intimacy and sexual relations
- Studies of orphanages: more touch led to longer life expectancy and cognitive development, even in the case of dirtier environments
- Tiffany Field found massages given to premature babies lead to a 47% increase in weight gain
 - Infants held during a medical procedure cried 82% less and grimaced 65% less and had a lower heart rate
- Francis and Meaney have found that rat mothers who lick and groom their offspring a lot alter the HPA axes of their offspring
 - The grown offspring of mothers who licked a lot show reduced levels of adrenocorticotrophic hormone and corticosterone, reduced startle response, greater tendency to explore environment, reduced receptor levels of stress-related neurons in the brain (decreased corticotropin releasing factor receptors in the locus coeruleus; decreased central benzodiazepine receptors in amygdala)
- The most prosocial emotions are conveyed through touch not voice
- "It is not a secret that the greeting rituals around the world involve touch."
- The stroking or touch sensitive neurons in the skin send signals to the orbitofrontal cortex (the reward region of the brain), activating the release of oxytocin and endorphins.
 - Touch is a "primary reward" like sugar. Chimps are more likely to share food with those who shared food with them before, or those who groomed them before.
- Rat pups who are licked more by their mothers grow up more resilient to stress.
- Our hands are highly dextrous, and our skin has much less hair than our hair relatives. As a result, touch is a highly expressive language. —> humans can communicate a range of emotions with one-second touches to the forearm.

Ch 10: LOVE

- There are 4 great loves in life
 - Parent and child
 - Passion for sexual partners
 - Enduring devotion for long-term pair-bonders
 - Softer love for nonkin
- Due to the vulnerability of human offspring evolution has designed an attachment system
 - Big-brained, ultra vulnerable offspring needed multiple caretakers, including fathers

- Concealed ovulation → incentive for male to remain a relationship and contribute to the raising of resource-dependent, vulnerable offspring
- Attachment styles lay the foundation for connection capacity
 - Secure attachment: comfortable with intimacy and want to be close to others during times of threat and uncertainty
 - Anxiously attached: feel uncertainty about their attachment to others
- Romantic love enables the human mind to countervail self-interest
 - Long-term committed romantic love is associated with activation in reward centers in the brain
 - Ventral anterior cingulate, medial insula, caudate, putamen
- Oxytocin is produced in the hypothalamus and coordinates basic behaviors related to food intake, reproduction, defense, and attack
 - Biological underpinning of trust
- Darwin identified 3 types of love
 - Maternal - touch, gentle smile, tender eyes
 - Love - beaming eyes, smiling cheeks, touch, gently smile, protruding lips, kissing, nose rubs
 - Romantic love - breathing hurried, faces flushed

How of Happiness

Ch 1: The How of Happiness: "Is it possible to become happier"

- What determines happiness 40% Rule: (40% intentional activity, 10% circumstances, 50% set points)
 - Only 10% of our happiness is due to our social and financial situations
 - 40% can be determined by how we choose to live our everyday lives
- The effect of marriage on happiness is small
- The key to happiness does not lie in changing our genetic makeup (which is impossible), does not lie in changing our circumstances, but it does lie in our daily intentional activities
- Happy people are more charitable and cooperative, sociable and energetic, and better liked by others
- Happier people are more likely to get married and stay married and to have richer networks of friends and social support
- Happy people have stronger immune systems, they are physically healthier, they live longer
- Being happy requires a large amount of work to be put in but ultimately leads to many benefits in regards to physical and mental health, building social connections and energy levels
- Your circumstance, intentional activity, and set point determine your happiness
 - Circumstance - Whether you are rich or poor, healthy or unhealthy, beautiful or plain
 - Intentional activity - What we do with our daily life and what we think

- Set point - Born with it

Ch 6: The How of Happiness: "Managing Stress, Hardship, and Trauma"

2-4 most important things to remember:

1. Forgiveness- after a traumatic event, being able to forgive and let go of the negative emotions directed towards that inflicted pain → higher levels of happiness and well-being
2. Posttraumatic growth- after experiencing trauma, one is able to gain more skills and create deeper understanding of life/ relationships through coping and dealing with their trauma

Coping: alleviate hurt, stress or suffering caused by a negative situation

Types of coping

- **Problem-focused:** try to take situations into one's own hands; trying to solve problems (getting things done)
- **Emotion-focused:** behavioral (distracting oneself, physical exercise, seeking emotional support from people close to you), cognitive (positively interpreting the situation, acceptance, or turning to religion) (giving emotional support)
- These two strategies are essential when coping with chronic problems

Post-traumatic growth leads to:

- Renewed belief in the ability to endure and prevail
- Improved relationships
- Feeling more comfortable with intimacy and a greater sense of compassion for others who suffer
- Developing a deeper, more sophisticated, and more satisfying philosophy of life
- Turning to social support is one of the most effective coping strategies

Strategies for coping

- Finding meaning through expressive writing
- Construing benefit in trauma through writing or conversing
- Coping via thought disputation (challenging your own pessimistic thoughts)

Ch 7: Living in the Present

- Living in the past/present/future can all have their merits - past - can buffer stress, present - less depression/stress, future- more optimistic and intense emotions
- Mutual reminiscence, happy thoughts and sharing memories/successes with others is associated with greater well being,
 - a. Older adults who spent time reminiscing were shown to have higher morale
- Savoring the past: more self-confident, extraverted, and gratified and less hopeless and neurotic
- Focusing on the present moment: are less likely to experience depression, stress, guilt, and shame.
- Mutual reminiscence, happy thoughts and sharing memories/successes with others is associated with greater well being

Flow

- a state of intense absorption and involvement with the present moment

- Being fully immersed in activities
- Activities that are challenging, but doable when you put all your resources into it

Why is flow good for you

- Pleasurable and fulfilling and increases happiness
- Leads to more involvement in life, enjoyment in activities, sense of control, and a feeling of strong sense of self

How to increase flow experiences

- Control attention: be fully engaged
- Adopt new values
- Learn what flow
- Transform routine tasks
- Flow in conversation
- Smart leisure
- Smart work
- Strive for superflow
- Caveat: don't get too engaged to where you always ignore everything else

Savoring vs. flow:

- Savoring: requires stepping outside of experience and reviewing it
- Flow involves a complete immersion in the experience
- Savoring: being in the present (e.g. stop and smell the roses)
- Relishing ordinary experiences: appreciate and take pleasure in mundane experiences
- Savor and reminisce with family and friends: marvel at the present moment with another person
- Transport yourself: transporting yourself at will to a different time or place (imagining yourself on a beautiful beach)
- Replay happy days: replay and revel happy memories. people who performed exercise for eight minutes per day on three consecutive days felt more intense positive emotions four weeks later.
- Celebrate good news
- Be open to beauty and excellence
- Be mindful
- Take pleasure in the senses
- Create a savoring album
- Savor with your camera
- Seek bittersweet experiences

Ch 8: The How of Happiness: "Committing to your Goals" (6 benefits)

1. Goals provide us a sense of purpose and a feeling control over our lives (people who strive toward goals are far happier)

2. Goals bolsters our self-esteem, stimulating us to feel confident and efficacious
3. Pursuing goals adds structure and meaning to our daily lives
4. Break down higher level goals into lower level, concrete subgoals
5. Pursuit of goals that are intrinsic, authentic, approach oriented, harmonious, activity-based, and flexible will deliver more happiness than the pursuit of goals that are extrinsic, inauthentic, avoidance-oriented, conflicting, circumstance-based, or rigid
6. Being committed to goals helps us learn to master our use of time: identify higher-order goals, subsidize them into smaller steps or subgoals, and to develop a schedule to accomplish them
7. Helps us cope better with problems
8. Involves engaging with other people which induces happiness

What kind of goals should you pursue?

- Intrinsic goals: goals that personally involving and rewarding to you (more likely to bring happiness)
 - As opposed to extrinsic goals: reflect more of what other people approve or desire for you
- Authentic goals: a goal that fits your personality
 - As opposed to inauthentic
- Approach goals: approaching a desirable outcome (redecorating bedroom); induces happiness
 - as opposed to an avoiding an undesirable outcome (making sure your house doesn't fall apart)
- Harmonious goals: goals that complement one another
 - As opposed to conflicting goals
- Flexible and approachable goals: having goals that can still be achieved even when life/environment changes
 - As opposed to circumstance-based
- Activity goals: allows a person to continuously experience new challenges, take on new opportunities; avoids hedonic adaptation
 - As opposed to rigid/inappropriate
- Pleasure is not enough to sustain most people's interest and commitment for extended periods of time; value and meaning are vital

The Compassionate Instinct

pp., 26-35: Peace Among Primates (Robert Sapolsky)

- Some primate species are indeed simply violent or peaceful, with behavior driven by their social structures and ecological settings
- But more importantly, some primate species can make peace despite violent traits that seem built into their natures
- Kummer: Apes that were displaced into different group originally demonstrated species-specific behavior, but quickly adjusted to their new environments (took approximately 1 hour to reorient behavior patterns)
- Frans de Waal: Rhesus monkeys (typically pretty aggressive were able to learn more prosocial behaviors (more reconciliatory behaviors) when mixed in a group with the less aggressive and hierarchical stump tail macaques

- Nice behavior persisted when they were introduced back into native environment but the changes were not contagious
- Forest Troop:
 - The combative and non-social baboons were the ones who participated in the raids of the garbage. They got TB and the majority died. Results were that the Forest Troop was left with males who were less aggressive and more social than average, and troop had now doubled its previous female to male ratio
 - New males were socialized by females of the troop and were less aggressive + more social/cooperative
 - Implies this is learned behavior, as males from other troops which came to the Forest Troop learned to cooperate
- Relates to humans in the sense that peaceful coexistence is possible and in our nature, as past aggressions and war quickly seem to fizzle away in terms of how they affect current country (Germany and Japan were big players in WW2, aggressive military and bloodshed... but now both are very pacific)
- Implications for humans: game theory indicates that a small cohesive group is a great setting for cooperation to emerge, but downside is that small homogeneous groups with shared values can be a nightmare of conformity
- There is a structure deep inside the brain called the amygdala that plays a key role in fear and aggression, and experiments have shown that when subjects are presented with a face of someone from a different race, the amygdala gets metabolically active—aroused, alert, ready for action.
 - A person who has a lot of experience with people of different races, and the amygdala does not activate.
 - subtly bias the subject beforehand to think of people as individuals rather than as members of a group, and the amygdala does not budge.
 - Humans may be hardwired to get edgy around the Other, but our views on who falls into that category are decidedly malleable.
- Used to be thought that primates are instinctively violent, now evidence of communitarianism, egalitarianism, cooperative child rearing
- Alloparenting in primates (of non-kin)
- Signals of food, danger, etc.
- Will help other primates in need, even if it doesn't directly benefit them

pp., 45-50: Political Primates (Christopher Boehm)

- Are humans predisposed to live freely, side by side as equals? Or are we more likely to form hierarchies where one person or group tries to dominate or subjugate another? Are we a hierarchical species or an egalitarian one?
- We are both, we are drawn to power over others but hate when it is yielded over us
- Hunter-gatherer societies were small and more egalitarian, but this was only possible in a small group where heavy use of shaming, ostracism, and other checks could effectively keep everyone flat
- Small homogenous groups with shared values can be a nightmare of conformity.

- In larger societies, the results vary more. All states represent one attempt to wrangle our complex instincts into a collective benefit.
- Wrangham:
 - Humans, gorillas, bonobos, chimps share a recent ancestor and more than 98% of their genes: “common ancestor”
 - But, bonobos, chimps, gorillas were distinctly hierarchical, with aggressive alphas. Human hunter-gatherers were egalitarian
- Boehm (author of this chapter)
 - Surveyed 50 non literate cultures, found that they were indeed very egalitarian. If a male became a selfish bully, the group would treat him brutally.
 - Showed author that humans were still prone to try to dominate one another
 - Asks: why a species so inclined to domination has been motivated to insist that power be shared so equally?
 - Just as all four species have strong propensities to domination and submission, so do they also naturally resent being dominated

pp., 51-71: The Forgiveness Instinct (Michael E. McCullough); The New Science of Forgiveness (Everett L. Worthington Jr.)

- Forgiveness instinct
 - The capacity for forgiveness, like the desire for revenge, is also an intrinsic feature of human nature, crafted by natural selection
 - How can we make the world less vengeful, and more forgiving then?
 - By making our social environments less abundant in the factors that elicit the desire for revenge and more abundant in the factors that elicit forgiveness. Don’t try and change human nature, rather change the world around us.
 - Three truths of forgiveness and revenge
 - Truth #1: the desire for revenge is a built-in feature of human nature
 - Truth #2: the capacity for forgiveness is a built in feature of human nature
 - Truth #3: to make the world a more forgiving, less vengeful place, don’t try to change human nature– change the world!
- The new science of forgiveness
 - Forgiveness helps move us toward a net positive feeling. Does not mean forgetting or pardoning an offense
 - Unforgiveness is when an offended person maintains feelings of resentment, hostility, anger towards the person who offended them
 - Forgiveness can benefit people’s health
 - Blood pressure, heart rate, anxiety
 - Physical benefits of forgiveness increase with age
 - Older and middle-aged people forgave more often than young adults and felt more forgiven by God
 - Relationship between forgiveness and well-being in marriages was stronger than in other relationships

pp . 72-76: Brain Trust (Michael Kosfeld)

- Trust game - familiarity breeds trust, introduction of punishments for untrustworthy behavior
- Oxytocin is what steers the human brain to trust another human
 - Produced by hypothalamus and stored in posterior pituitary gland
 - Reduces social anxiety and helps people meet and bond with each other
- Experiment where participant took oxytocin or placebo and then played the trust game
 - Oxytocin increased participants willingness to trust others, but did not make them more optimistic about another person's trustworthiness
 - Second experiment where participants played trust game with a computer
 - Conclusion that oxytocin is specific to trusting other people, does not affect human attitudes toward risk and uncertainty when other humans aren't involved
 - Raised fear of abuse of oxytocin, but oxytocin could also be a therapeutic intervention

pp., 133-149: Compassion Across Cubicles (Jill Suttie); Are you a Jerk at Work (Robert I. Sutton)

- Compassion across cubicles:
 - Positive Organizational scholarship (POS)
 - Looks for examples of "positive deviance"-- cases in which organizations successfully cultivate inspiration and productivity in workers-- and then tries to figure out what makes these groups tick, so that others might emulate them
 - Work to build excitement and compassion
 - Critique of POS is that people say efforts to make work life more rewarding and pleasurable distract from what they consider bigger goals for workers (higher pay, shorter work weeks)
- Are you a Jerk at Work
 - Those in positions of power talk more, take what they want, ignore what others say or want more, etc
 - Being put in a position of power often blinds people to the fact that they are acting like jerks
 - Eating cookies example, or CEO lunch example
 - Fight the power:
 - Escape if you can
 - If you can't escape, start with polite confrontation
 - Limit your contact with them as much as possible
 - If all else fails, practice indifference
 - "Assholes are Us"
 - Everyone at risk for being a jerk
 - Strategies if you are in power to avoid from turning into a jerk
 - Eliminate as many unnecessary power differences from yourself and others
 - Have friends that will call you out for it (and make it safe for them to do so)
 - Ensure that workplace isn't overly competitive

- “Framing” and language plays big role

pp., 150-156: The Compassionate Instinct: “A feeling for Fiction” (Keith Oatley)

- Mimesis: the relation of the story to the way the world works (Aristotle)
 - Mimesis (english translation): imitation, copying, representation
- The empathic response we feel for someone we know and like, is the same as the emotional aspect we feel ourselves (emotional aspect of pain)
- Art is capable of sensitizing us to the emotions of other people, transcending the limits of our own experiences and perspective
- Dhvani: in Indian poetics fictional characters and fictional situations have to be created in the minds of readers and audience members by suggestion

pp., 157-161: A Different View (Alfie Kohn)

- Perspective taking: to step outside one’s own viewpoint and consider how the world looks to another person
- We have to ask not what it is like to be in their shoes, but what it is like to have their feet
- Important to cultivate and encourage in children
 - “He didn’t seem to be in a good mood today, what do you think happened to him today that made him grouchy?”

pp. 203-212: America’s Trust Fall (Jeremy Adam Smith and Pamela Paxton)

- Americans trust other people less, trust institutions less, and trust in government less (than in the past)
- Why trust matters
 - It is the expectation that other people’s future actions will safeguard our interests
 - It is the “magic ingredient” that makes social life possible
 - Where trust is high, crime and corruption are low
 - Helps economy, and is essential to democracy
- What drives mistrust?
 - One theory is that it is a generational shift (succeeding generations being progressively less trusting)
 - Americans today are less in contact (more isolated) than previous generations
 - Growing economic inequality contributes to crisis of trust
 - Also may be true that America’s growing diversity hurts social trust (diverse neighborhoods and nations are less trusting than homogenous ones)
- Falling and rising
 - Trust in institutions hasn’t fallen in a straight line, it rises and falls in response to specific events
 - Unfortunately, Americans’ trust in one another does not generally react to historical events the way trust in institutions does. Trust in each other has declined steadily and consistently.
- We want to believe

- We can't tell people to trust each other, but we can take steps to make our institutions more trustworthy
- Provide quality education to all Americans, as those with more education express more trust
- Individuals can rebuild trust by joining community groups, connecting with neighbors, etc

pp., 213-222: The Power Paradox (Dacher Keltner)

- Once people assume positions of power, they're likely to act more selfishly, impulsively, and aggressively, and have a harder time seeing the world from others' perspectives
- The paradox: the skills most important to obtaining power and leading effectively are the very skills that deteriorate once we have power
- Myths about power
 - Myth #1: power equals cash, votes, and muscle
 - Power is everywhere, in everyday moments... we are always negotiating power
 - Myth #2: machiavellians win in the game of power
 - Myth #3: power is strategically acquired, not given

pp., 246-259: Making Peace Through Apology (Aaron Lazare); Truth + Reconciliation (Desmond Tutu)

- Making peace through apology
 - Four parts to an effective apology (not all apologies require all four parts)
 - Acknowledgement of the offense; explanation; expressions of remorse, shame, and humility; and reparation
 - Most common part missing is acknowledgement
- Truth + Reconciliation
 - Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa
 - Required full disclosure for them to grant amnesty
 - 7000 applications submitted, only 849 granted amnesty

pp., 260-267: Why is there Peace? (Steven Pinker)

- From Middle Ages to modern times, there's a steady reduction in socially sanctioned forms of violence
- Belief exists that we live in an age of violence because of better reporting and cognitive illusion (easier to recall the bloody images from news and think they are more common)
- People's moral circles have expanded... the more one knows and thinks about other living things, the harder it is to privilege one's own interests over theirs
- People's willingness to act on fantasies declined
- We're doing something right... just not sure exactly what that is just yet

