“All men seek happiness. This is without exception. Whatever different means they employ, they all tend to this end … This is the motive of every action of every man, even of those who hang themselves.”

Blaise Pascal
(1623-1662)
Is It Possible to Become Happier?

“To be stupid, selfish, and have good health are three requirements for happiness, though if stupidity is lacking, all is lost.” —Gustave Flaubert (1821-1880)

Is Happiness Justifiable?

• Being happy raises the likelihood of accruing rewards in all the important life domains, such as relationships, work, and health.

• Our happiness ripples through the social fabric and comes to benefit many other people.
What Is Happiness Not?

- An unending parade of pleasantness
- Things constantly going our way
- A destination or a finish line
  (the “I’ll be happy when/if” fallacy)

Happiness is a way of traveling, not a destination.

Happiness

- Positive Emotions
- Virtues
- A Healthy Sense of Self
Positive Emotions

- Pride
- Serenity
- Love
- Kindness
- Enthusiasm
- Inspiration
- Interest
- Hope
- Awe
- Inspiration
- Interest

Negative Emotions Serve Adaptive Functions
What Good Are Positive Emotions?

- Positive emotions open our hearts and minds.
  - They unlock other-focused thinking.
  - They broaden the scope of our attention, promote open-minded and creative information-processing.
- They facilitate building intellectual, psychological, social, and physical resources over time.

For Happiness, We Need an Abundance of Positive Emotions
A Healthy Sense of Happiness

- Positive Emotions
- Virtues
- A Healthy Sense of Self

Virtues

- Virtues are wholesome qualities of the heart and mind.
- Virtues are essential to a happy, thriving, worth-of-living life.
- Possessing and exercising virtue is the only reliable bet for a happy, flourishing life.
https://www.viacharacter.org/survey/
Can One Have Too Much of a Virtue?

- Virtue taken to the extreme can probably only be dangerous in the absence of other balancing virtues.
- What is problematic is not excess virtue, but deficient virtue.

“It’s curiosity.”

Happiness

Positive Emotions  Virtues  A Healthy Sense of Self
A Healthy Sense of Self

- Being content with who we are; accepting ourselves
- An accurate appraisal of our strengths and weaknesses
- Low levels of self-focus and self-centeredness
- Self-compassion
How Can We Cultivate Positive Emotions, Virtues, and a Healthy Sense of Self?

By choosing the people we spend time with wisely

By cultivating healthy habits of the body

By cultivating mindfulness

Thank You