



2024 NAPA PRIMARY CARE CONFERENCE

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Marriott Hotel, Napa, CA

Healthy Pleasures

Applying the Science of Happiness to Health

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Objectives



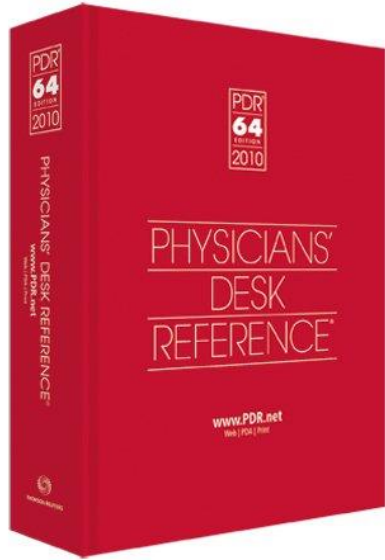
- ✓ Describe the evidence supporting the relationship between enjoyment/pleasure and health outcomes
- ✓ Name 3 elements that must be present for a pleasurable sensory experience to be enjoyed
- ✓ Instruct patients (and self) in 2 simple mind/body health techniques to enhance mood, happiness, and health outcomes

Promise

1. Evidence-informed
2. Entertaining
3. Practical

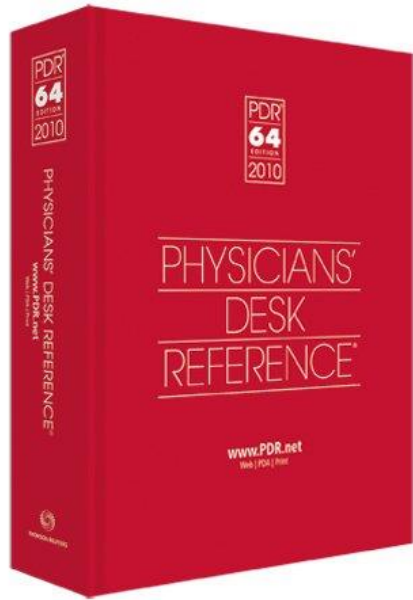


Rx: New Medical Treatment



- **Indications and Effectiveness**
 - Improves mood
 - Enhances life/work satisfaction
 - Reduces overall mortality, heart disease and cancer risk
 - Reduces stress hormones
 - Boosts immune function
 - Reduces pain, anxiety, depression
 - Decreases time in the hospital

Rx: New Medical Treatment



Adverse Reactions

- Very rare

Side Effects

- Improved mood and satisfaction

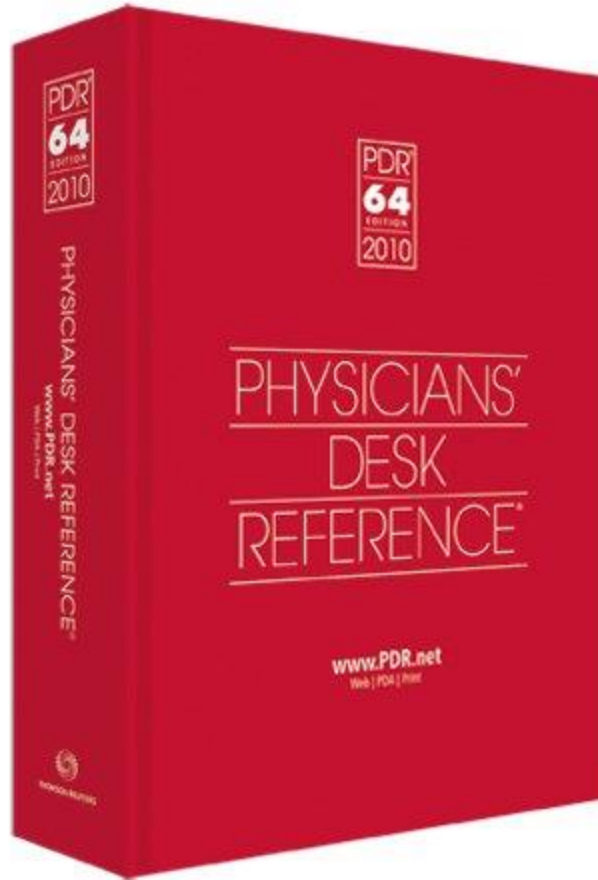
Dosage and Administration

- Readily available
- Inexpensive
- PRN (as needed) dosing
- Print, tapes, classes/groups, web, etc.
- Can be prescribed without a license

Rx: Healthy Pleasures

Generic: Healthy Pleasures

Brand Names:



■ Sensual Pleasures™

- Massage
- Music
- Aromatherapy
- Nature Therapy
- Sexual Pleasure

■ Happiness™

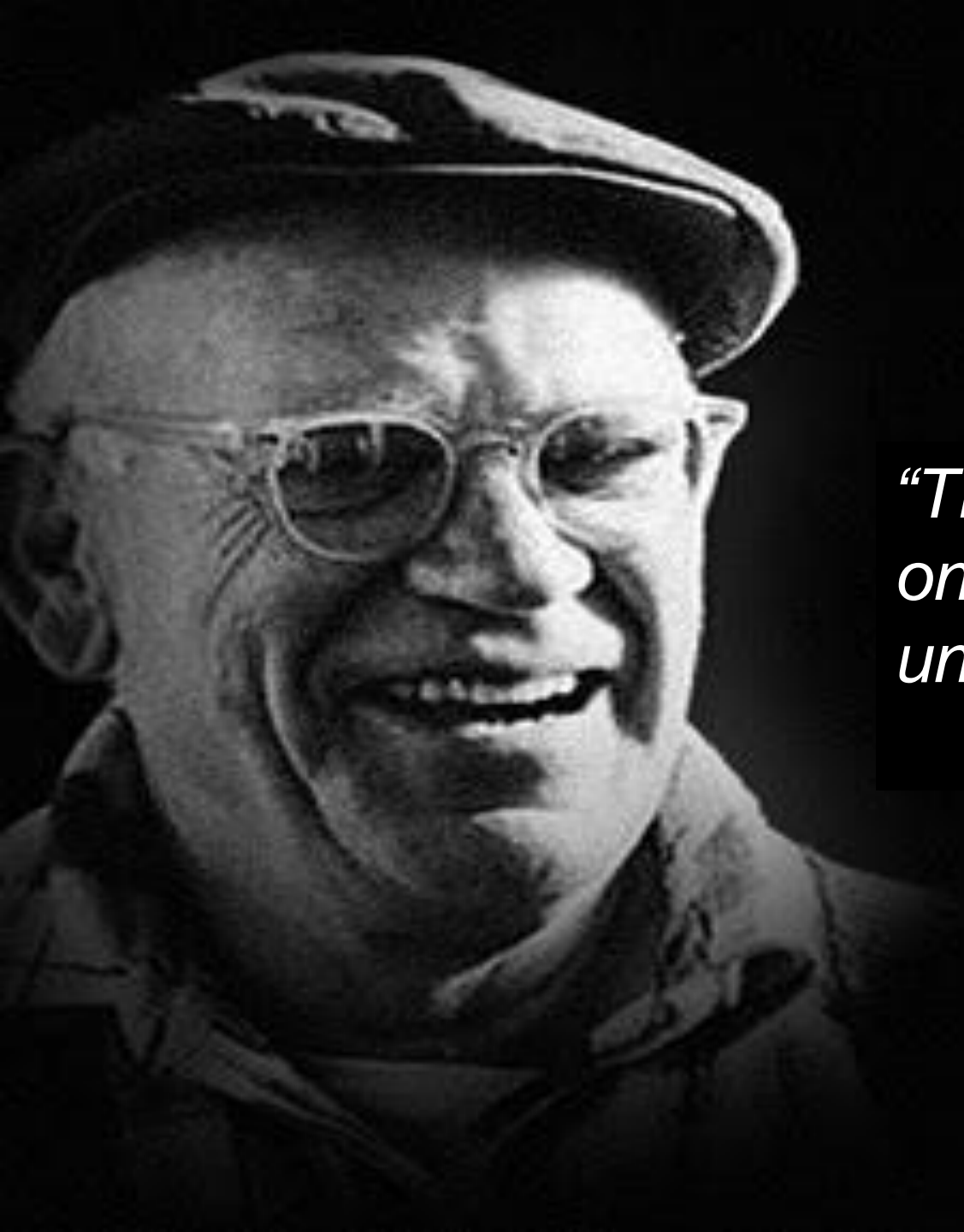
- Positive Expectations
- Savoring
- Present Centeredness
- Humor
- Embracing Stress

■ Altruism™

- Selfless Pleasures
- Volunteering
- Helping Others

1. Keep an open mind
2. Bad things happen to good people
3. "Negative" emotions can motivate
4. Can happiness be unhelpful?

Caveat
emptor



*"The search for happiness is
one of the chief sources of
unhappiness."*

Eric Hoffer

Are Happier People Healthier?

"During the past 4 weeks, have you been a happy person?"

"All things considered, how satisfied are you with your life?"

- People with higher happiness and life satisfaction 2 years later reported 50% better health and less long-term, limiting health conditions.

n=10,000

Siahpush *Am J Health Promo* 2008;23:18-26



Are Happier People Healthier?

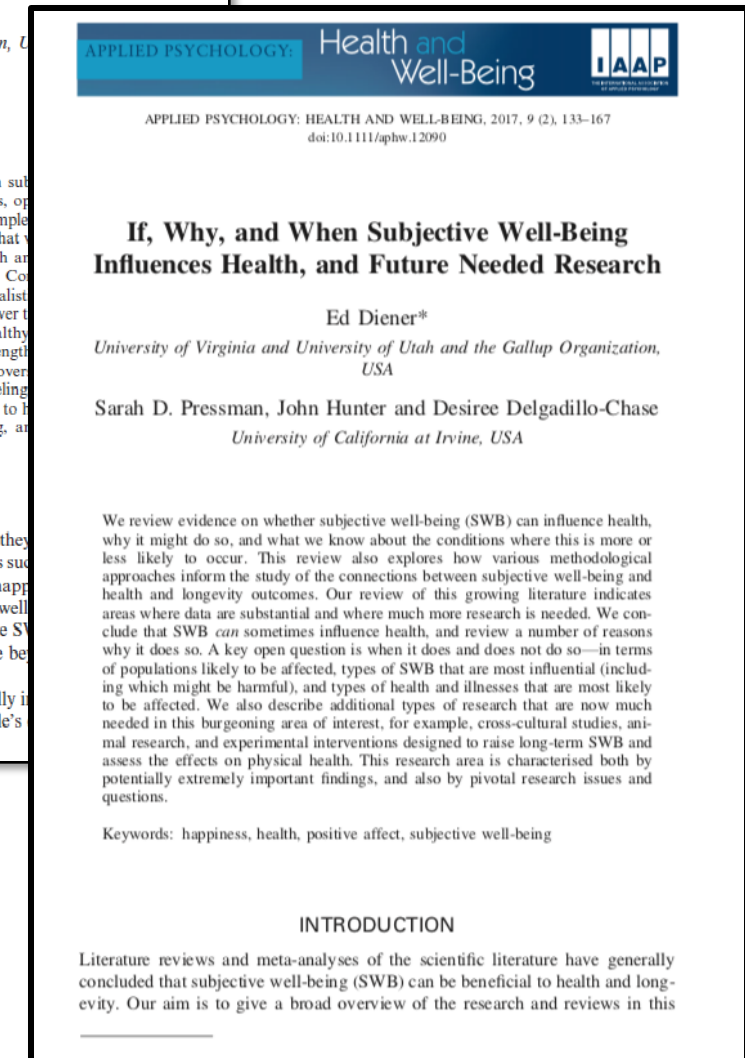
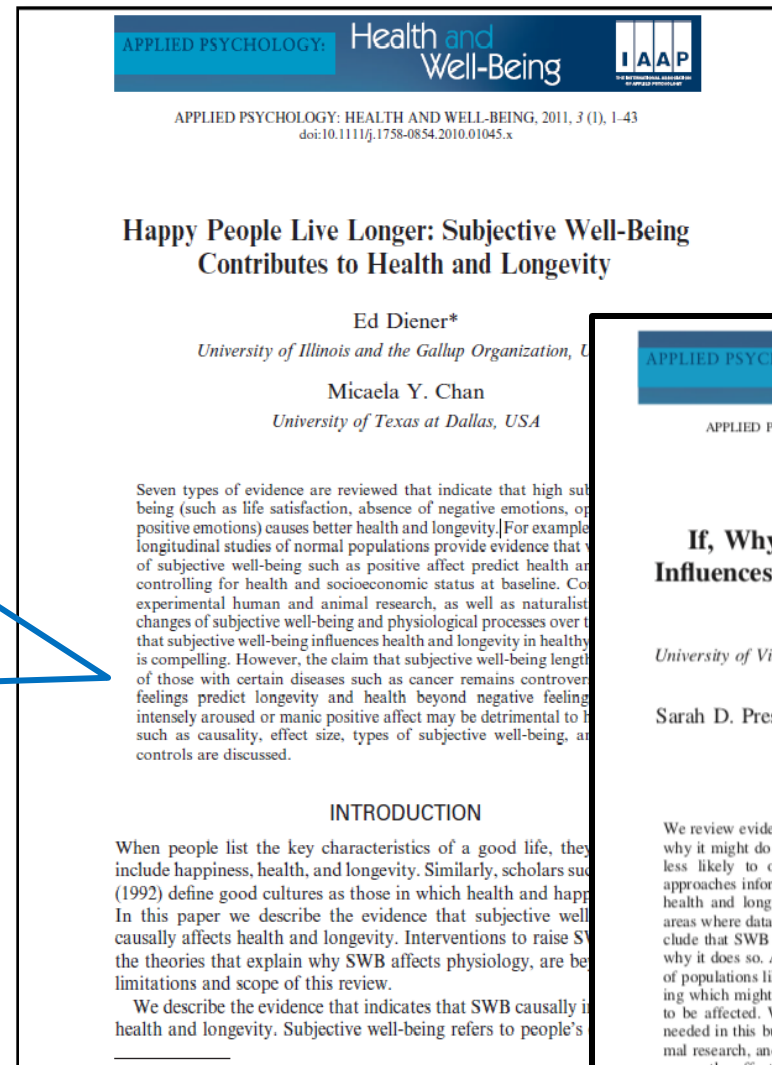
A long-term study of nuns discovered that those who wrote autobiographies at a young age reflecting happiness, love and hope had a 2.5 time lower risk of dying than their gloomier counterparts.



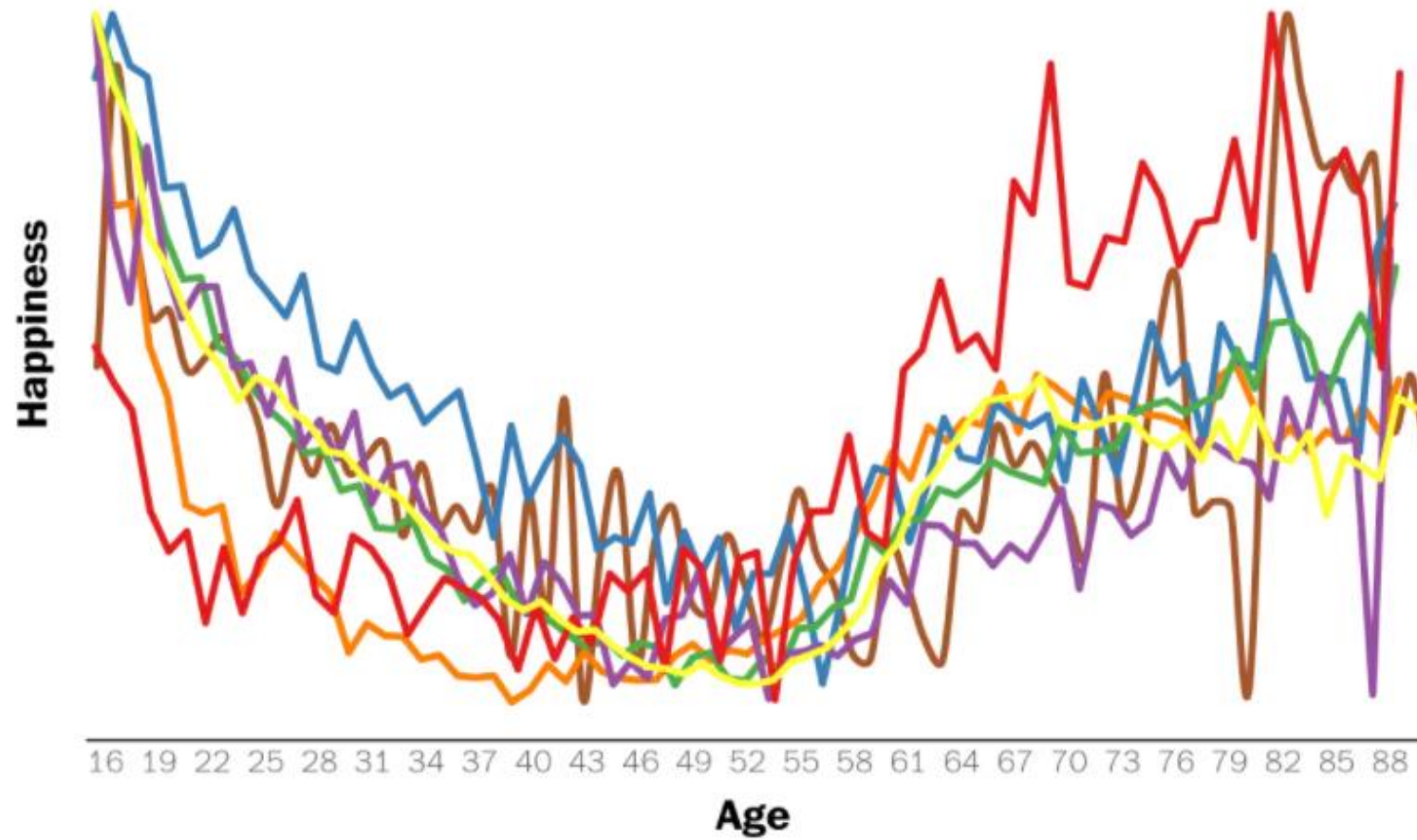
Health Benefits of Happiness

Seven types of evidence are reviewed that indicate that high subjective wellbeing (such as life satisfaction, absence of negative emotions, optimism, and positive emotions) causes better health and longevity.... the evidence is clear and compelling.

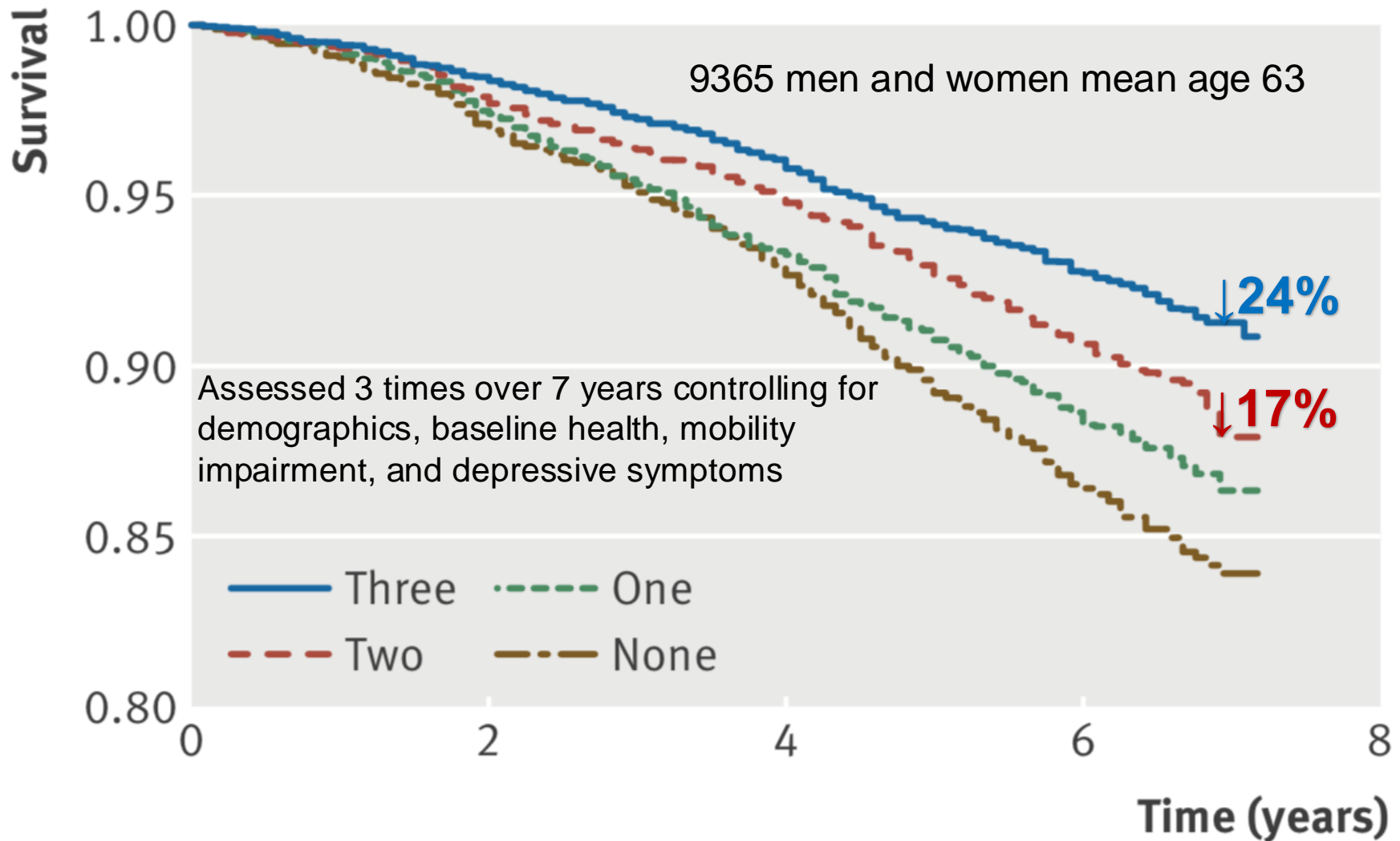
Diener, Applied Psych 2011, 2017



Aging and Happiness



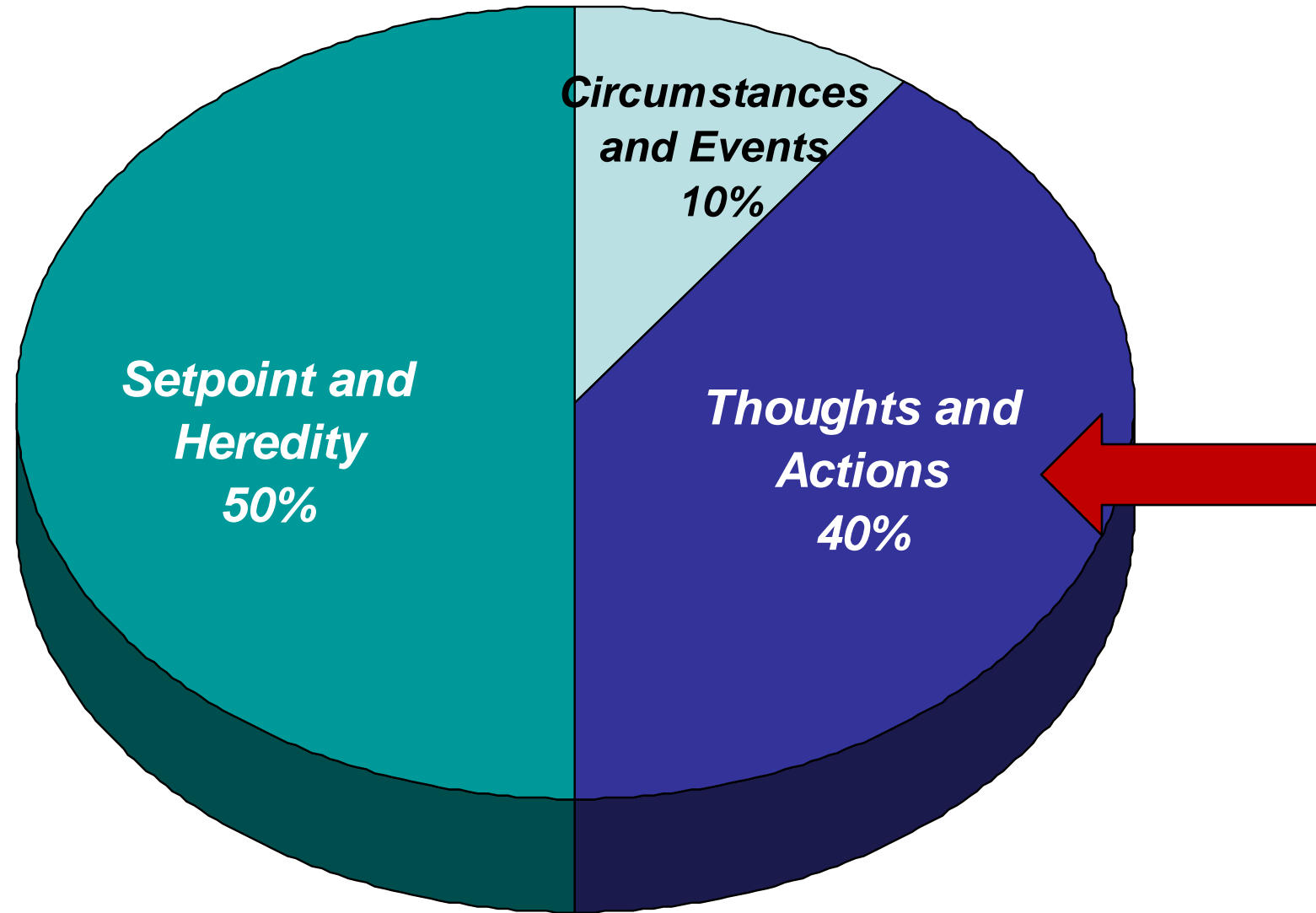
Enjoyment of Life and Longevity

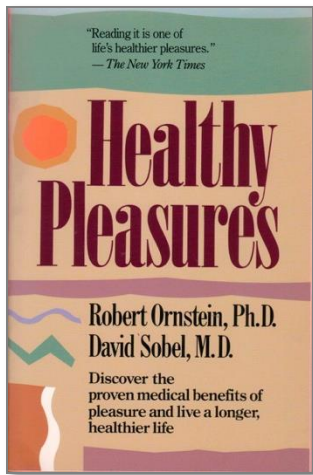


What would make you happier?

- ☒ a new job?
- ☒ a raise?
- ☒ losing weight?
- ☒ getting married?
- ☒ a new lover?
- ☒ a baby?
- ☒ an extra bedroom?
- ☒ winning the lottery?
- ☒ more flexibility at work?
- ☒ a new car?
- ☒ cure from a chronic illness?
- ☒ being given an award?
- ☒ looking younger?
- ☒ being more attractive?
- ☒ your child excelling at school?
- ☒ you could finish college?
- ☒ you could go back to college?

What Determines Happiness?





Healthy Pleasures



Rx: Healthy Pleasures

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(408) 972-6530

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____ DATE _____

PLEASE ☒ BOX WHEN PATIENT IS: ☐ INDUSTRIAL ☐ TPL

Rx One (1) Prescription Per Blank for Auto Refill Medication

Healthy Pleasures

- 1. Savor Your Senses*
- 2. Practice Happiness*
- 3. Indulge in Altruism*

David Sobel MD

REFILL 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 _____

☐ NURSE PRACTITIONER ☐ COVERING M.D.

☐ CHECK BOX FOR AUTO REFILL FORM (MINIMUM 2 REFILLS)

RESOURCE NO. _____

☐ LABEL: MAY CAUSE DROWSINESS

UNLESS CHECKED BELOW AUTHORIZATION IS GIVEN TO:

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SPECIFY MAJOR DRUG ALLERGIES TO BE ENTERED INTO PHARMACY SYSTEM

Ingredients of Pleasure

What do you need for sensual pleasure to happen?



**Good
Stimulus**

+



**Good
Sense**

+



**Good
Attention**

A Tale of Ten Thousand Showers



A man and a woman are sitting at a light blue wooden table in a bright, airy cafe. The woman, on the left, has long dark hair and is wearing a white tank top. She is leaning forward with her hands clasped near her face, looking intently at the man. The man, on the right, has short brown hair and is wearing a light-colored shirt with a small floral pattern. He is also leaning forward, looking back at the woman. The background is a large window with a view of greenery outside. In the foreground, there is a small potted plant and a glass of orange juice on the table.

**Savor Your Senses
Out of Touch**





Savor Your Senses Massage Therapy

- Infants (preterm and term)
- Pregnancy and childbirth
- Diabetic and asthmatic children
- Adolescent psychiatric patients
- Post-traumatic stress disorder
- Eating disorders
- Migraine headache
- Low back pain
- HIV+ adults
- Breast cancer

Massage

His and Hers?



Savor Your Senses

Nature vs. Urban

When looking at Nature

- More positive feelings
- Reduced negative emotion
- Lower physiological arousal
- Higher alpha brain waves
- Quicker recovery from stress





Savor Your Senses

Looking at Nature

Postsurgical patients in a room with a view of nature (vs. a brick wall) had:

- less distress
- required less pain medications
- discharged 1 day sooner
- “Nature-Deficit Disorder”
- “No Child Left Inside” (R. Louv)



OFFICIAL
SELECTION
TELLURIDE
MOUNTAINFILM
2015



NATURE RX PART 1

<http://www.nature-rx.org/nature-rx-part-1>



Rx: 120 minutes/week in Nature

SANTA CLARA COUNTY PARKS
PARKS RX DAY

Rx

Your Prescription: (one or more may be checked)

<input type="checkbox"/> Nature Walk	<input type="checkbox"/> Picnicking
<input type="checkbox"/> Hike	<input type="checkbox"/> Horseback Riding
<input type="checkbox"/> Cycling	<input type="checkbox"/> Camping
<input type="checkbox"/> Kayaking	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

☐ Daily ☐ 1 to 3 times Weekly

Prescriber's signature
A.B. Falygood, MD

- Greater than 120 minute per week 60% more likely to report good health and 25% more likely to report high well-being and life-satisfaction
- Controlled for chronic illness/disability and # days of physical activity

The Nature Pill








- Higher frequency of **green space visits** associated with self-reported use of psychotropic (anxiolytics, hypnotics and antidepressants), antihypertensive and asthma medication
- association not dependent on socioeconomic status.

SAVOR YOUR SENSES

Life is Sweet



Chocolate eaters may enjoy:

-  ↓ 27% lower relative risk of death and an extra year of life
-  ↓ blood pressure
-  ↓ 47% mortality rate in men
-  ↓ 35% hospitalization or death from heart disease in women
-  ↓ 20% lower rate of stroke

Siestas



- Men taking a siesta were 30-50% less likely to have a heart attack
- 24,000 people over 6 years
 - occasional nap: 12% reduction
 - frequent naps: 37% reduction

Trichopoulos D: *Lancet* 1987;2:269
Naska, A: *Arch Int Med* 2007;167:296

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1. Savor Your Senses
2. Practice Happiness
✓ Moods & Moments

REFILL 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 _____ *David Sobel MD*

☐ NURSE PRACTITIONER ☐ PHYSICIAN

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PRACTICE HAPPINESS: Mood Swings



PRACTICE **HAPPINESS**

Humor Matters

“Laughter is an instant vacation.” (Milton Berle)

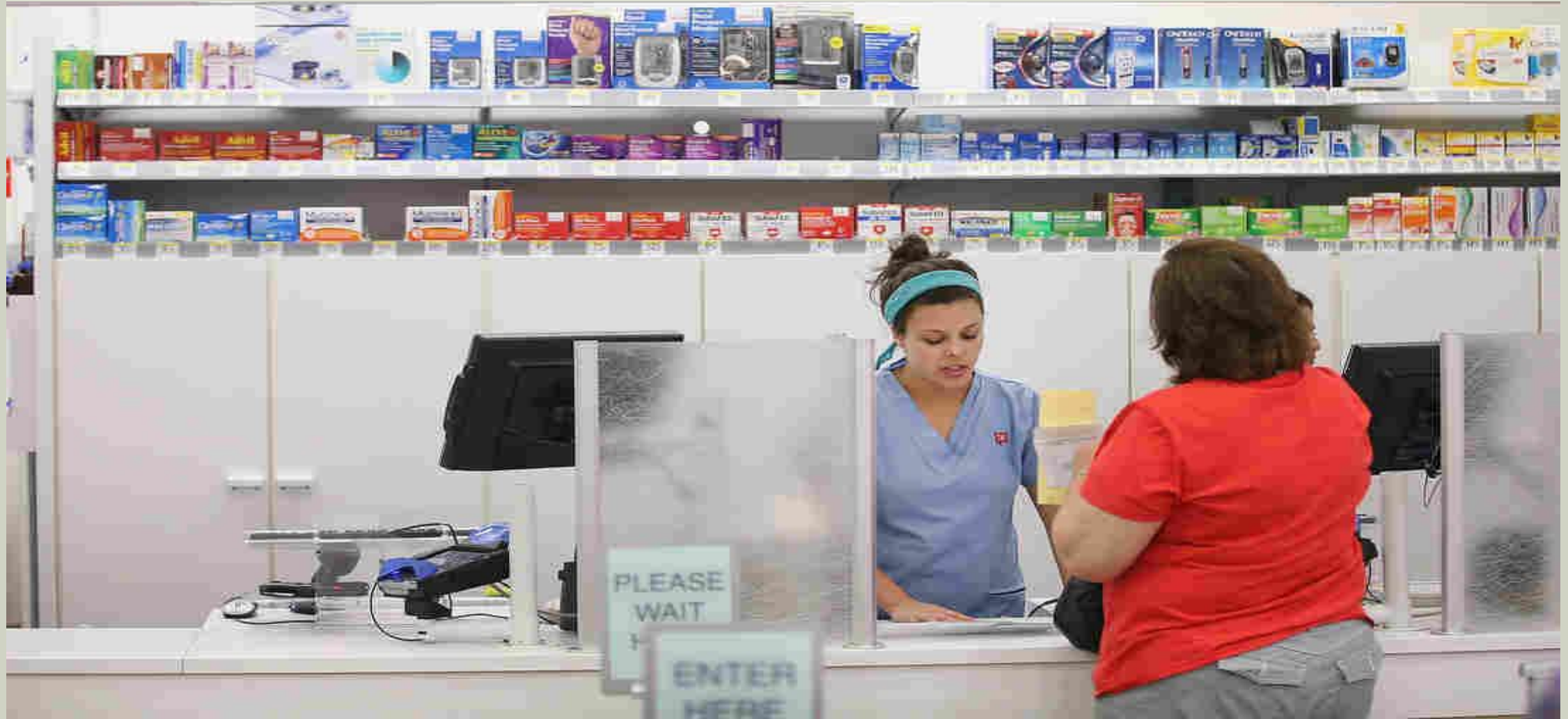
“Humor isn’t for everyone. It’s just for those who want to have fun, enjoy life, and feel alive.” (Anne Wilson Schaef)



drop off+ pick up prescriptions

“The arrival of a good clown exercises more beneficial influence upon the health of a town than twenty asses laden with drugs.”

Thomas Sydenham, 17th century physician



PRACTICE **HAPPINESS**

Humor Matters



Hearty Laughter

Heart attack patients

Rx: 30 min/day humor video

- fewer irregular rhythms
- lower blood pressure
- lower stress hormones
- less medication
- one-fifth rate recurrent heart attacks

PRACTICE HAPPINESS

A Wandering Mind
is an Unhappy Mind

What are you
feeling, doing, and
thinking right now?

A green road sign with white text that reads "Here & Now". The sign is tilted and mounted on a wooden post. The background is a blue sky with white clouds.

Here & Now

PRACTICE HAPPINESS

**When will you
be happy?**

I will be
happy if...

Happiness

PRACTICE HAPPINESS

Telephone Meditation

TELEPHONE RINGS

Distraction?

Interruption?

Call to be present?



First ring: Smile. Breathe.
“Listen, listen. This wonderful sound brings me back to my true self.”



Second ring: “Smile. Breathe.”



Third ring: “Be fully present as you answer.”

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INDULGE IN ALTRUISM: Selfless Pleasures

A woman with dark hair, wearing a bright yellow sweater, is leaning over a desk, smiling and helping a young boy with his homework. The boy, wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt, is sitting at the desk, holding a yellow pencil and looking up at the woman with a smile. On the desk, there are several open books, a calculator, and some papers. In the background, there is a lamp with two lit bulbs and a potted plant. The scene is warmly lit, suggesting a cozy indoor environment.

Connecting with
and caring for
someone or
something
outside yourself
enhances health
and survival

INDULGE IN ALTRUSIM

Giving Better than Receiving

Mortality risk reduced by nearly half in seniors giving social support and increased in those receiving support.



Indulge in Altruism

Caring for Patients



Indulge in Altruism

Caring for Pets

In the year following a heart attack, pet owners have one-fifth the rate of recurrent heart attack.



Friedmann E, *Public Health Reports*
1980;95:307

**Life Beyond
Medicine**



**Celebrate
Self-Complexity**

Additional Resources for Patients

Ben-Shahar, Tal: *Happier: Learn the Secrets to Daily Joy & Lasting Fulfillment*. 2007

Boronson, Martin: *One Moment Meditation*. 2009.

Cialdini, R: *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*, 2021

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Fogg, BJ: *Tiny Habits: The Small Changes that Change Everything*, 2020. And free online, 5-day program at: <http://TinyHabits.com>

Keltner, D: *Awe: The New Science of Everyday Wonder*, 2023

Additional Resources For Patients

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Waldinger, R: *The Good Life: Lessons from the World's Longest Scientific Study of Happiness*, 2023

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