

# PRIMARY CARE HAWAI'I CONFERENCE

April 1-5, 2024

Kauai, Hawai'i



## Healthy Pleasures

Applying the Science of Happiness to Health

**David S. Sobel, MD, MPH**

Adjunct Lecturer, Stanford University School of Medicine and  
Kaiser Permanente School of Medicine

Former Director of Patient Education and Health Promotion

The Permanente Medical Group, Inc.

Kaiser Permanente Northern California

sobeldavid@gmail.com

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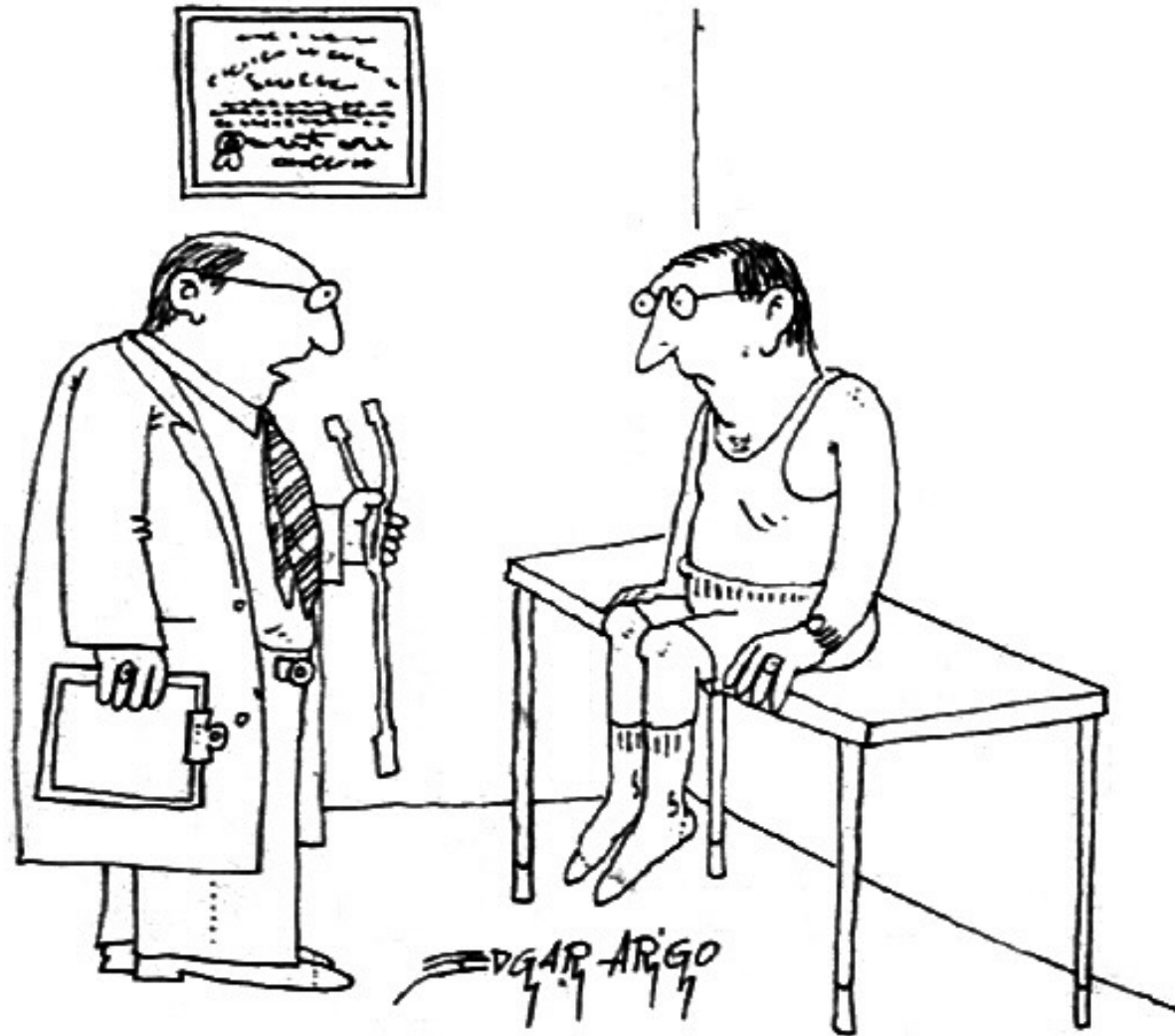
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# Objectives



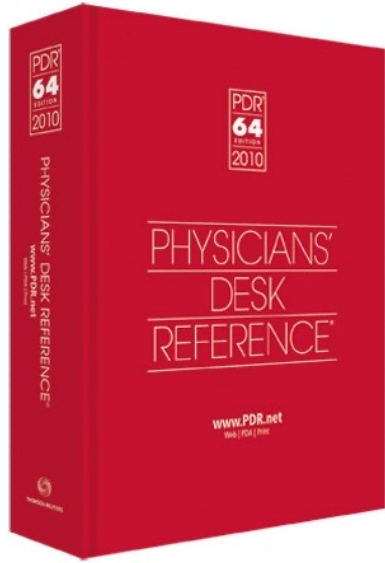
- 🎯 Describe the evidence supporting the relationship between enjoyment/pleasure and health outcomes
- 🎯 Name 3 elements that must be present for a pleasurable sensory experience to be enjoyed
- 🎯 Instruct patients (and self) in 2 simple mind/body health techniques to enhance mood, happiness, and health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

# Is everything that feels good, bad for you?



There no improvement, Henry. Are you sure  
you're given up *everything* you enjoy?

# 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

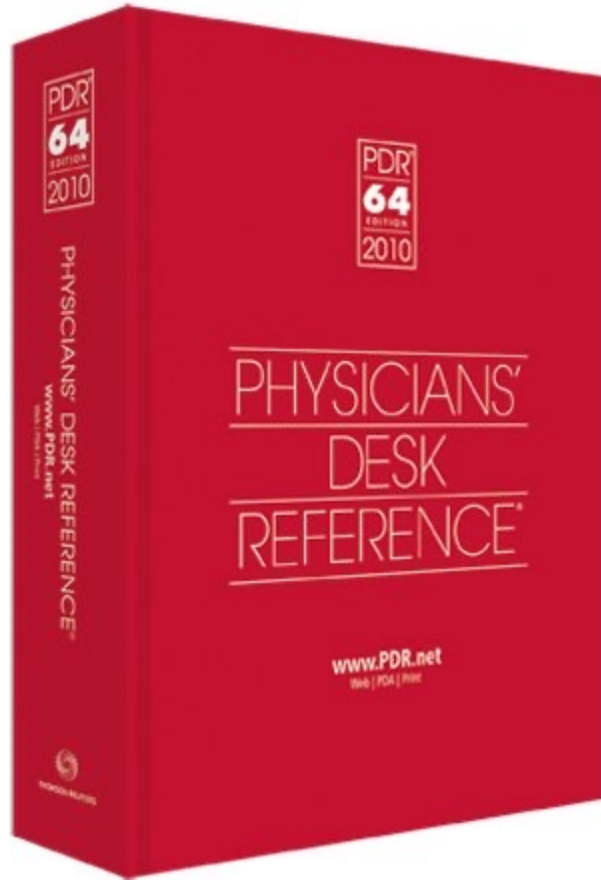
## Side Effects

- 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

# Caveat Emptor



## 1. Keep an Open Mind

- but not so open your brains fall out!
- evidence-based from the science of happiness

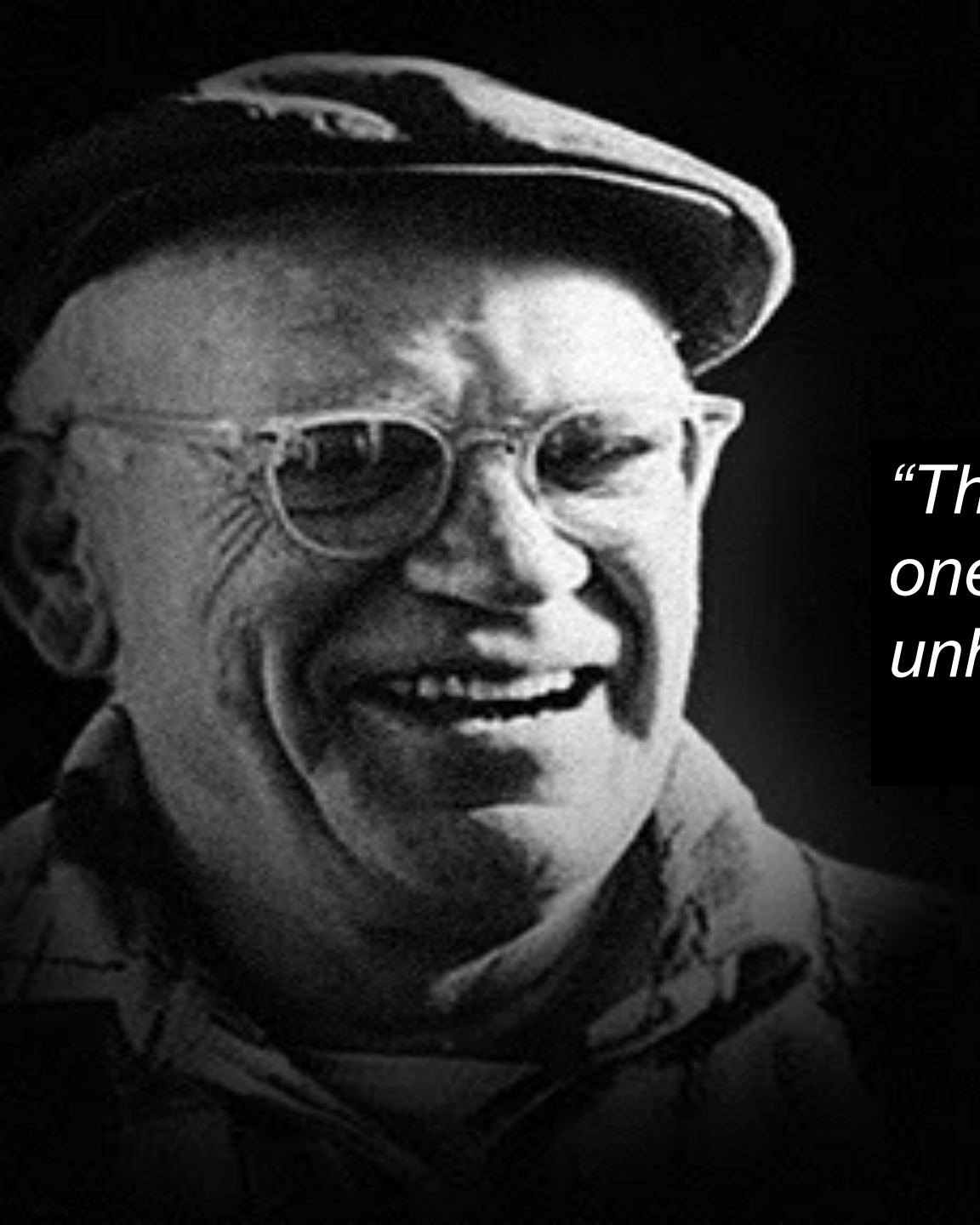
## 2. Bad Things Happen to Good People

- avoid victim-blaming

## 3. Can Happiness be Unhelpful?

- “negative” emotions can motivate

## 4. Happiness is not everything



*“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?

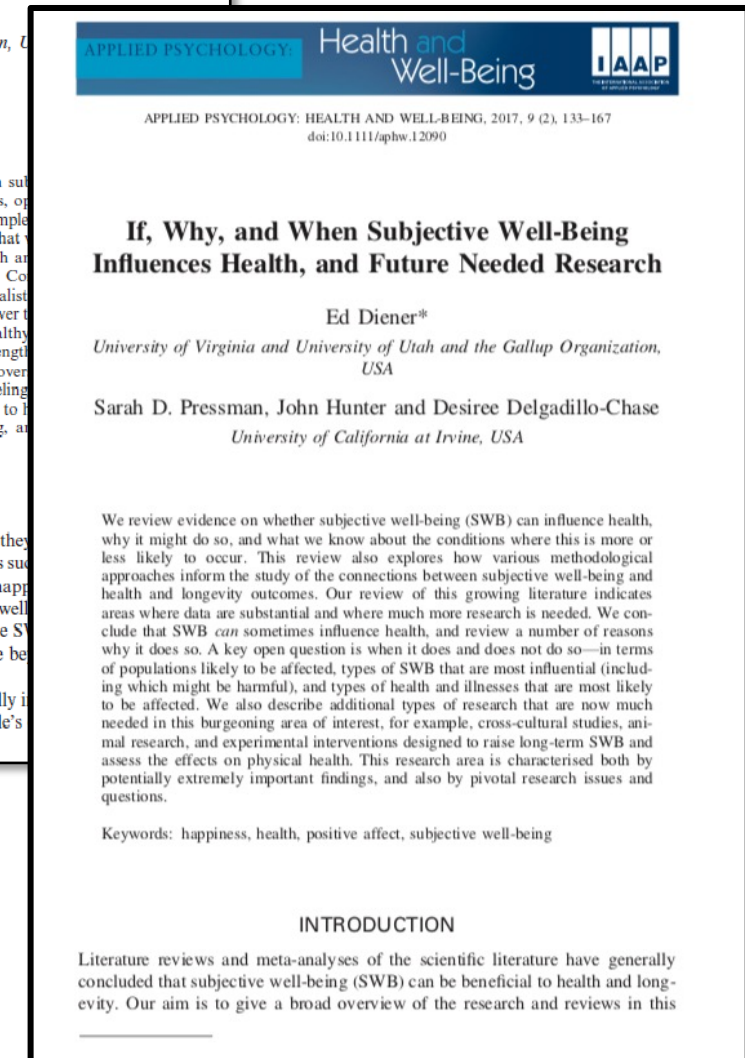
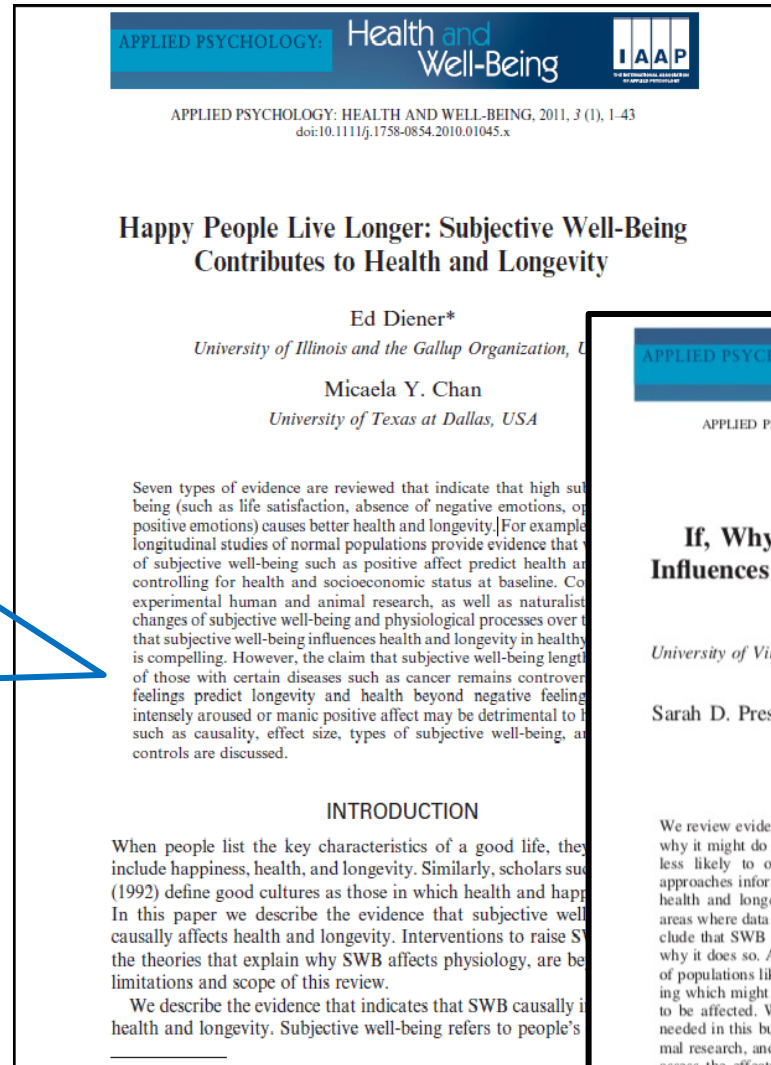
A long-term study of nuns discovered that those who wrote autobiographies at a young age reflecting happiness, love and hope had a 2.5 time lower risk of dying than their gloomier counterparts.



# 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.

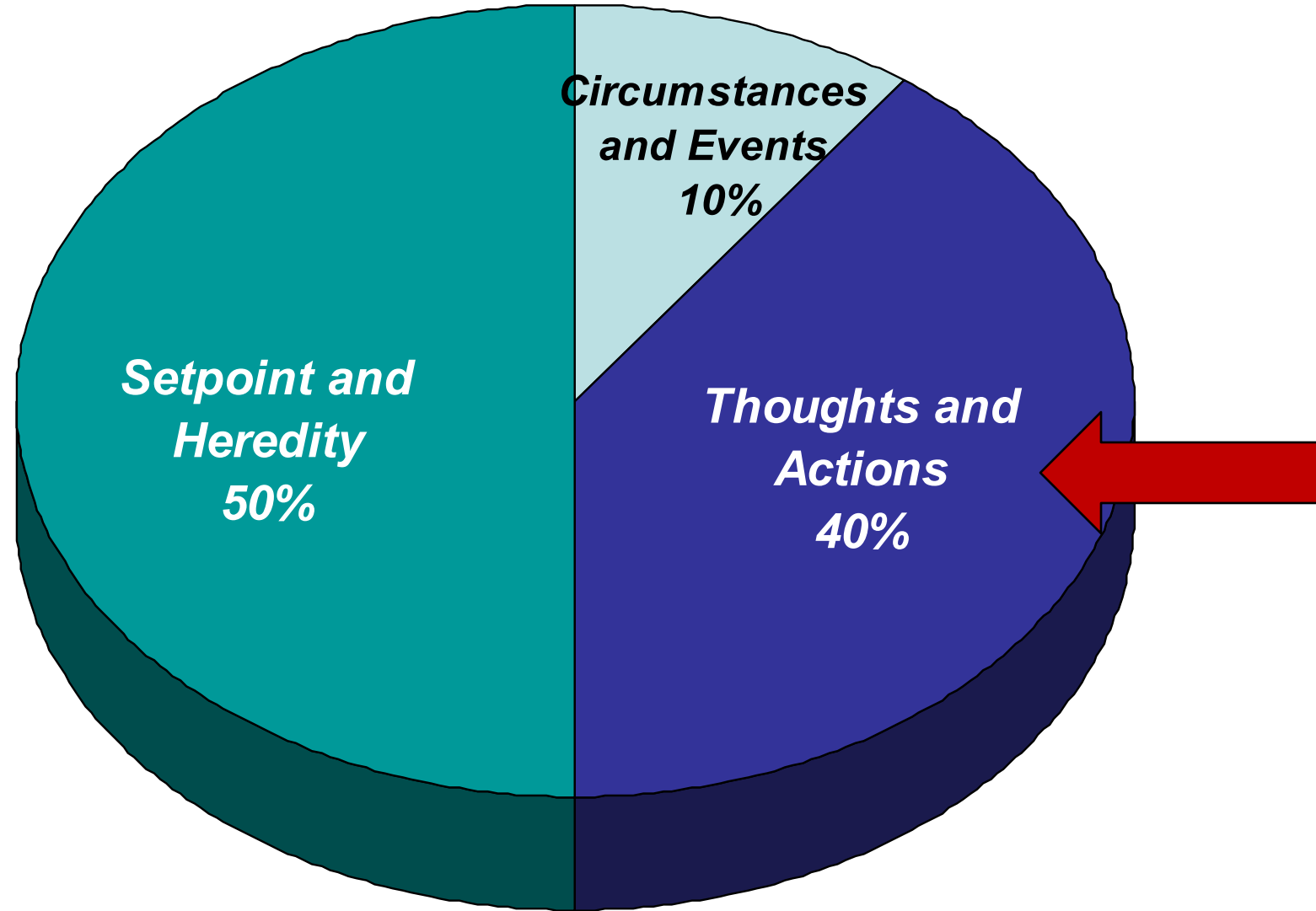
Diener, Applied Psych 2011, 2017

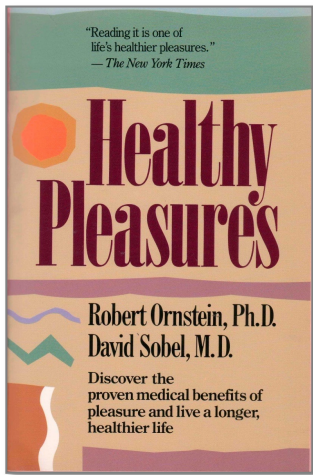


# What would make you happier?

- 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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THE PERMANENTE MEDICAL GROUP, INC.  
260 INTERNATIONAL CIRCLE  
SAN JOSE, CA 95119-1197  
(408) 972-6530

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PLEASE  BOX WHEN PATIENT IS:  INDUSTRIAL  TPL

One (1) Prescription Per Blank for Auto Refill Medication

Rx

*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.

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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

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# 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 table in a bright, airy cafe. The woman, on the left, has long dark hair and is wearing a white top with a floral pattern. 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. The overall atmosphere is intimate and focused.

**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. Falgood, 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

# 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

# "Doze" Response Curve



Trichopoulos D: *Lancet* 1987;2:269

Naska, A: *Arch Int Med* 2007;167:296

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Rx

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)*

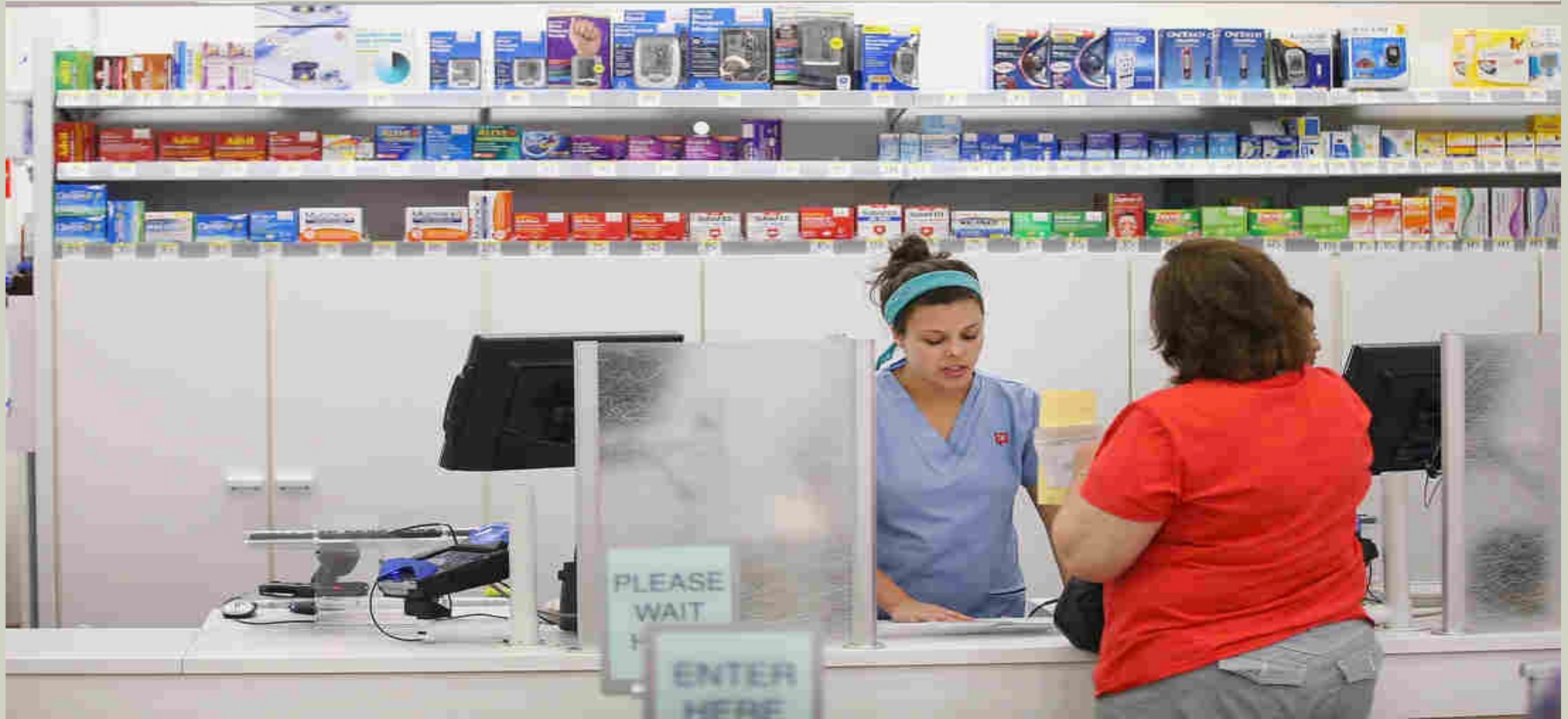
*“Humor isn’t for everyone. It’s just for those who want to have fun, enjoy life, and feel alive.” (Anne Wilson Schaef)*



# 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, 17<sup>th</sup> 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 mounted on a wooden post and is set against a blue sky with scattered white clouds. The sign has a white border and is slightly tilted.

**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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- 1. Savor Your Senses*
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# **INDULGE IN ALTRUISM:** Selfless Pleasures

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



# INDULGE IN ALTRUISM

## 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**





A woman with short reddish-brown hair, wearing a bright red collared shirt, is smiling broadly and looking towards the camera. She is standing outdoors in a grassy area with trees in the background. A golden retriever dog is sitting next to her, also smiling and looking towards the camera. The dog is wearing a black collar with a silver metal hook.

# Indulge in Altruism Caring for Pets

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

# One out of 3 married women say pets are better listeners than their husbands



*"My pets can read my emotions better than my husband. They know when I am happy, sad, sick, etc."*

# Rx Pleasure Prescription

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

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260 INTERNATIONAL CIRCLE  
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*Rx Spend money on others, play with your pet, savor a bowl of clam chowder, watch funny movies or nature programs, enjoy sex, take a siesta, find a dollar, write thank you notes, get a massage, savor your shower, breathe, care for a patient, etc.*

REFILL 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 6 \_\_\_\_\_ *David Sobel MD*  
 NURSE P. \_\_\_\_\_

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# Questions?



# Additional Resources For Patients

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Evans, Mike: *The Single Most Important Thing You Can Do to Manage Your Stress*.

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