# Chapter 7

# Happiness and Well-Being

## Chapter Overview

This chapter encourages you to think more intentionally about happiness and well-being. To do so, you need to direct your focus to the positive aspects of life. Pay attention to how you interpret daily events and challenges. Much of what makes people happy is related to interacting with other people. Concentrate on recognizing happy moments, and take the time to remember them. Take note of the good things that others do for you, and be sure to thank them. Then think of how you feel when you do something for others and get their gratitude in return. To maximize your psychological wealth, find your own level of positivity based on your personal values and needs. Decide your optimum level of happiness, knowing that negative emotions felt occasionally can be useful. They help you enjoy pursuing the goals and values that are important to you.

In your career, recognize that workers who are engaged in jobs that make them happy are more productive. Find jobs where the work culture is interactive and happy. Discover for yourself that happy people tend to have more and closer friends. Happy people seem to have better health on average with enhanced longevity and better overall well-being. Happy people are also more prosocial in helping others; the result is that they also tend to be more peaceful and exhibit cooperative attitudes. The first step is to discover what really makes you happy and what frazzles you, then make a choice; only you can do that.

## Vocabulary Terms

altruism

antipathy

apathy

carbon tax

compassionate capitalism

ecopsychologists

Einfühlung

emotional competency

emotional economy

empathy

flow

longevity

metrics

morbidity

motivation

neurochemical

psychological wealth

self-actualization

self-awareness

self-regulation

social awareness

social capital

social cognition

utopia

## Terms With Definitions

**altruism—**Helping and being of benefit to others even if there is no direct personal benefit.

**antipathy—**Feeling of hate, dislike, or fear toward others (specific or general); sometimes derived from previous experience, but often with no basis or rationale.

**apathy—**Exhibiting a complete state of indifference to an object, person, group, or situation.

**carbon tax—**A tax that is placed on the carbon content of specific fuels; generally applied to the burning of fossil fuels where carbon dioxide is produced.

**compassionate capitalism**—Developing empathy to change national priorities such that a larger portion of the national budget is put to good social works.

**ecopsychologists—**Psychologists who work to understand how nature is beneficial to the human psyche.

**Einfühlung—**Literally to *feel into* something, to become more connected empathically.

**emotional competency—**Learnable skills based on emotional intelligence that result in personal and social competence.

**emotional economy—**Describes how people unconsciously react to external stimuli, without the need to think or rationalize an action; it is a *react first, ask questions later* response. Useful from a threat perspective, but can be a nuisance for many modern situations when trying to build rapport.

**empathy—**Describes directly identifying with another’s feelings; being able to *walk in someone else’s shoes.* Not to be confused with *sympathy*, which is more a cognitive understanding of another’s feelings.

**flow—**A mental state in which a person is fully and single-mindedly engaged in an activity or event; all emotions and intellect are positively focused on the activity or event.

**longevity—**A term that describes long life expectancy.

**metrics—**Specific measures of defined criteria.

**morbidity—**The relative incidence of a specific medical problem or capacity to recover from disease.

**motivation—**The psychological drive to achieve an objective or goal. Can be extrinsic as in external rewards, or intrinsic as in personal values.

**neurochemical—**Any chemical that participates in neural activity.

**psychological wealth—**The psychological richness felt from an enhanced ability to be happy with life satisfaction that is independent of monetary wealth.

**self-actualization—**The desire to fulfill one’s full potential as a person. To work to achieve all that one is capable of becoming.

**self-awareness—**The ability to perceive, understand, and develop aspects of one’s personality, behavior, emotions, motivations, and thought processes; to know oneself.

**self-regulation—**Learning to develop constructive behaviors that help one be adaptive in the pursuit of personal goals and positive social interactions.

**social awareness—**Mindful awareness of differences and problems within various societies and communities and general consciousness of societal difficulties.

**social capital—**The various social networks that can be accessed to solve common problems and develop civic engagement.

**social cognition—**Understanding how people process social information and apply it to various social situations.

**utopia—**An idealized community or larger society that has an ideal [socio](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_system)-[politico](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics)-[legal system](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legal_system) where citizens work cooperatively for the common good.

## Extended Learning Activities

1. Describe how your personal relationships or lack thereof affect your overall well-being. How do you think social media play a role in the need for relationships and happiness? Do you think social media are a way to fulfill the need to socialize with others? Why or why not? Interview some friends and family members to see if any connection exists between their level of happiness, health (or self-reported health), and overall well-being and their connections to other people or the types of relationships they have with others.
2. Describe what makes you happy. How might a sustainable community, country, or world affect your happiness? How might your community look if money were not used to measure happiness and competition for resources did not exist? Think about the social structure and life of Native Americans. Would you be willing to embrace this type of community? Why or why not? Research places such as Bhutan. What is your overall perception of this country and what makes this country a happy place?
3. Watch an episode of ABC’s [*What Would You Do?*](http://abc.go.com/watch/what-would-you-do/SH5555951)Describe why you think the people reacted the way they did. Did most people express altruism? Describe the situations in which altruism was not present and why you think it was not present in that situation. Describe an event you have witnessed in your own community in which someone exhibited altruism.

## Research and Response Questions

1. Research a community that appears utopian. What factors did you use to classify this community as utopian? What is the difference between this community and the one in which you live? Are utopian communities rare? Why or why not?
2. Research the use of modern social media (e.g., Facebook) as a tool to express empathy. Do you think it is effective in promoting or enhancing empathy? Why or why not?

## Web Links

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](http://www.cdc.gov/)

[Changing minds and persuasion](http://www.changingminds.org/)

[Gross National Happiness index](http://www.grossnationalhappiness.com/)

[Happy Planet Index](http://www.happyplanetindex.org/)

[National Wellness Institute](http://www.nationalwellness.org/)

[The Natural Health Perspective](http://www.naturalhealthperspective.com/)

[The Sustainable Scale Project](http://www.sustainablescale.org/)

[*Twelve-year-old Severn Suzuki speaking at the U.N. Earth Summit (1992)*](http://criticaldocs.wordpress.com/2008/06/04/twelve-year-old-severn-suzuki-speaking-at-the-un-earth-summit-1992/)

[World Database of Happiness](http://worlddatabaseofhappiness.eur.nl/)