

Personality
What makes us who we are?

Psychology 305A: Lecture 8

Wrap Up Learning and Behaviorism
Modern Cognitive Approach
Begin Emotions & Personality

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**Clockwork Orange:
Society Can't Produce Morality**

- Satire about societal attempts to make people good/moral
 - Psychological conditioning can't make people good
 - People must choose to be good/moral
 - But, Kubrick made the movie before the reign of behavioral genetics– what would he say now?

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View of Skinner Today

- Not very good
 - If we're interested in HUMANS, it's ok (and even good!) to study mental states
- Yet, behaviorism remains an important part of personality, and psychology more generally
 - Behavioral evidence considered strongest
 - Emotion expression research
 - Subjective reports (e.g., self-report data) often suspect
 - Importance of O, T data

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Toward the Acceptance of Mental States: The Cognitive Perspective

- After Skinner, focus shifted from the behavioral output of reward (dog sitting) to what goes on *between* the environmental trigger (bell) and reward (steak)
- Social Learning
 1. Observe behaviors of others being rewarded
 2. Use your MIND to connect the two
 3. Decide to behave similarly

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Social Learning Perspective

- Observational learning (modeling)
 - Acquire a behavior by watching someone else do it and observing the consequences
- Bandura's "Bobo" doll studies
 - 1. Children observed an adult model attack "Bobo", play quietly, or saw no model
 - 2. Children frustrated (toys taken away)
 - 3. Children given opportunity to attack "Bobo"
 - Those who watched model attack were more likely to attack
 - Those who saw no model were more aggressive than those who saw a non-aggressive model

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Social Learning Perspective

- Extension of basic conditioning principles
 - Observational learning (modeling)
 - Observed (vs. experienced) consequences
 - Expectancies / Incentives (vs. deterrents)
 - Anticipated (vs. experienced) consequences
- Examples
 - Altruism in young children
 - Video games and violence
 - Shaming prison sentences

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Is altruism innate, or learned?

- Evidence for early emergence of pro-social behavior
- Cross-species evidence
 - Warneken & Tomasello, 2006, *Science*
- “Roots of altruism seen in babies: Toddlers eager to help out, even with no prospect of reward”
-MSNBC

But, is there another explanation?

- Maybe the toddlers and chimps expected reward
 - Might social learning have played a role?
- Is this evidence for innate altruism?
- Hamlin, Wynn, & Bloom (*Nature*, 2007)
 - At 3 months, babies prefer helpers to hinderers
 - Learn about social helping very early on?

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Roots of altruism?

- **Innate morality or...**
 - **Direct reinforcement**
 - Play
 - Past reinforcement for similar behaviors
 - **Observational learning (parent)**
 - **Vicarious reinforcement (older sibling)**
 - **No direct reward, but incentives and expectancies**
 - Anticipated consequences

Violent Media

- Exposure to violent TV and video games:
 - Increases aggressive behavior, thoughts, and feelings
 - Increases physiological arousal
 - Decreases pro-social behaviors (e.g., helping)

Violent Media

- Why does violent media increase aggression?
 - Classical Conditioning
 - Video games are fun to play, pleasurable feelings associated with violence
 - Operant conditioning
 - Video game player is directly rewarded for being violent (e.g., accumulate points)
 - Observational learning
 - “Role models” (e.g., movie stars) rewarded for violence

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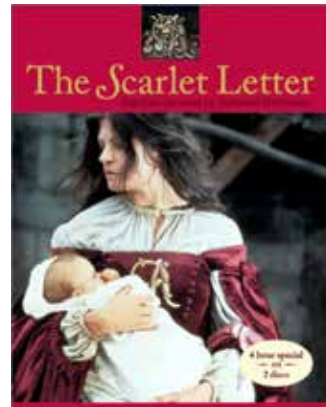
Media Violence

- Which films lead to violence?
 - Gratuitous, realistic violence (Van Damme, Steven Seagal, Jet Li)
 - Old Westerns don't
 - Minimally violent
 - Horror films don't
 - Violence seems fake, observers can discount it

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Shaming Prison Sentences

- Date back to the Old Testament
- Common in 17th century Puritanical society (e.g., the scarlet “A”)
- Revival of shame punishments started in the late 1980s



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Shaming Prison Sentences

- Men convicted of soliciting prostitutes are identified in newspapers, radio shows, and billboards
- A man living in Houston was sentenced to stand in front of a store each day for a week carrying a sign that reads: “I stole from this store. Don’t be a thief or this could happen to you.”
- An Ohio judge ordered a man convicted of harassing his ex-wife to let her spit in his face
- In Memphis, Tennessee Judge Joe Brown likes to escort burglary victims to the thieves’ homes and invite them to take whatever they want
- Do you think these sentences deter crime?

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Shaming Prison Sentences

- Shaming sentences may deter crime through:
 - Observational learning: observe someone else punished for antisocial act
 - Expectancies of punishment: imagine self on billboard
- “If humiliation is a punishment for a crime then people will avoid committing crimes. You get deterrence because others see what happens. Why don’t we give shame a chance.”
Judge Williams
- “If you shock ‘em, maybe they’ ll say, ‘Hey, it’s not worth the risk.’ This forces you to face up to what you did.” Judge Poe

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Shaming Prison Sentences

- But, shaming sentences actually may backfire and cause more crime
 - Shaming offenders will only make them feel bad about themselves, which may increase the likelihood that they will commit further crimes
 - -Prof. June Tangney
 - “The goal should be to rehabilitate offenders into society, not embarrass them. Added humiliation may accentuate the very root of their behavior.”
-American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)

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The problem with shame

- Motivates escape, hiding, avoidance
- Leads to blaming others, aggression
- More adaptive to feel **guilt** in response to failure
 - Guilt promotes reparation, apology, confession
 - In guilt the focus is on what you **did**, not who you **are**

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What about Public Shaming?

- Internet ‘walls of shame’
 - Pet mistreatment
 - Vancouver Stanley Cup riots
- It matters who the shamers are
 - Is shaming more effective when the shamers are part of your community, or your peers?
 - Common Goods dilemma study
 - Negligent tax-payers shamed by IRS

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Early Cognitive Perspective

- More complex version of social learning theory
- Led to two fundamental shifts in how we think about personality
 - Our personality reflects how we process information about ourselves, others, and the world
 - How we process information reflects our mental representations of ourselves, other people, and the world
- Mental representations work as filters or lens through which we experience reality
 - Personal constructs, schemas, scripts

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Personal Construct Theory George Kelly



- Overarching perceptions shape interpretation of reality → personality
- If your cognitive take on the world determines your personality, you can change who you are by changing the way you see the world
- Post-Modern before post-modernism

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George Kelly and Personality Change

- “We take the stand that there are always some alternative constructions available to choose among in dealing with the world. No one needs to paint himself into a corner; no one needs to be completely hemmed in by circumstances; no one needs to be the victim of his biography. We call this philosophical position constructive alternativism.”

George Kelly (1955). "A Theory of personality."

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Social Cognition and Personality

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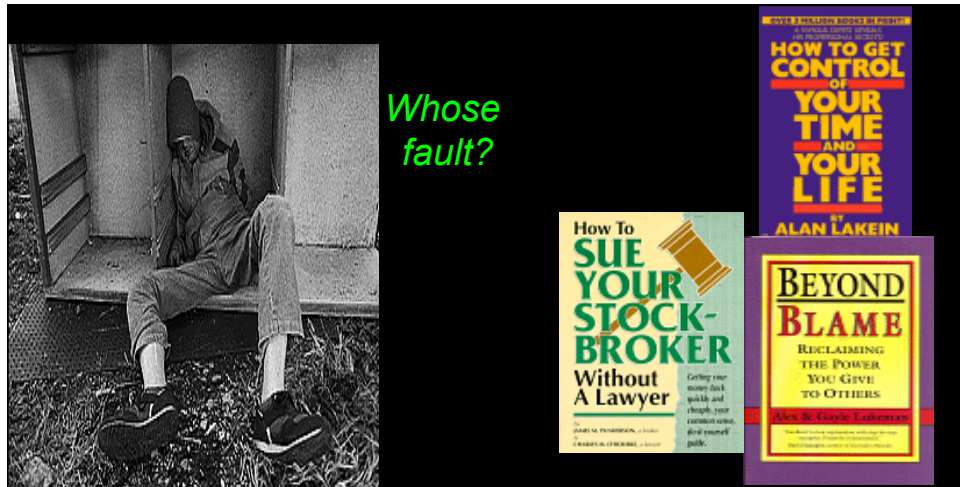
Modern Cognitive Perspective: People have different cognitions, which shape personality



Cognitions (beliefs, attitudes, values, self/other schemas) constitute the *information* that guides people's behavior

Locus of Control Julian Rotter

- **External Locus:** Belief that fate, luck, or outside forces are responsible what happens
- **Internal Locus:** Belief that one's own ability, effort, or actions determine what happens

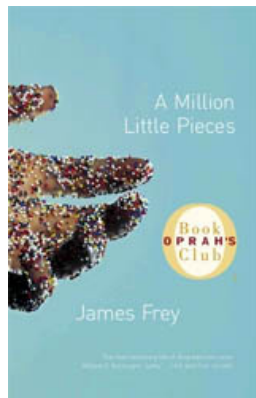


Whose fault?

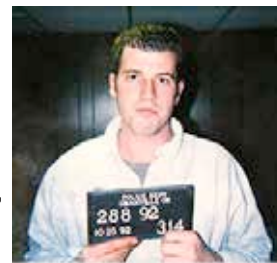
Control, blame, fate, freedom

..... Are we at the mercy of **external forces** or is what happens to us under our **own control**?

Advocating Internal Locus: The appeal of James Frey



“People in here, people everywhere, they all want to take their own problems, usually created by themselves, and try to pass them off on someone or something else. I’m a victim of nothing but myself, just as I believe that most people with this so-called disease aren’t victims of anything other than themselves. I call it being responsible. I call it the acceptance of my own problems and my own weaknesses with honor and dignity. I call it getting better.”



James Frey, Granville, Ohio P.D. (1992)

Rotter's Locus of Control Scale

1. A. Many of the unhappy things in people's lives are partly due to bad luck.
B. People's misfortunes result from the mistakes they make.
2. A. In the long run, people get the respect they deserve in this world.
B. Unfortunately, an individual's worth often passes unrecognized no matter how hard he tries.
3. A. Most people don't realize the extent to which their lives are controlled by accidental happenings.
B. There really is no such thing as luck.

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Research Findings on Locus of Control

- Internal Locus
 - Increased academic performance
 - More effective health-prevention behaviors
 - Social/political activism

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External Locus: Learned Helplessness

- Originated in research on dogs (Seligman)
 - Exposure to unavoidable shocks
 - Outcome not contingent on behavior (external locus)
 - Helpless dogs get depressed, give up
- “Learned helplessness” = belief that outcomes can’t be controlled
- Humans, too, show learned helplessness

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But, is there a downside to Internal Locus?

- Some things are truly outside our control
 - People who accept this may cope better with death, disease, etc.
 - Survivor guilt
- Why not externalize *negative* events?
 - “It wasn’t my fault the team didn’t win”

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Beyond Locus: Explanatory Style

- Explanatory Style: The ways in which people habitually explain the causes of negative events
- Locus:
 - Internality (“it’s me”) [SELF-BLAME]
 - Externality (“its something in the environment”)
- Stability:
 - Stable (“it’s going to last forever”) [FATALISM]
 - Unstable (“it’s going to go away”)
- Globality:
 - Global (“it’s going to undermine everything”) [CATASTROPHIZING]
 - Specific (“it’s effects are limited to this one domain”)₃₇

Explanatory Style and Relationships

Locus:

Internality: It’s my fault [SELF-BLAME]

Externality: It’s his/her fault. OR: It’s difficult to make a relationship work because of the economic depression.

Stability:

Stable: Relationships just never work out [FATALISM]

Unstable: We just didn’t work well together as a couple

Globality:

Global: I am a bad person. My whole life is ruined. [CATASTROPHIZING]

Specific: I can’t seem to make things work out in this relationship

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Pessimistic Explanatory Style

- Internal, stable, global
 - “I did it, I always do it, and I do it on everything”
- People who tend to explain bad events in terms of internal, stable, global causes → more depressed
- People who tend to explain bad events in terms of stable and global causes (internal or external) → more health problems
- Solution: internalize, but don't globalize
 - Internal, unstable, specific attributions
 - It's my fault, but it's because I didn't study hard this time

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Evidence for Importance of Explanatory Style

- Terman Longitudinal Study – participants born in 1910
- In 1936-1940, participants described their responses to bad events, such as:
 - “Have any disappointments exerted a prolonged influence on you?”
- Responses were coded by 8 judges for internality, stability, and globality

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Evidence for Explanatory Style

- Participants in Terman sample followed for decades
- Catastrophizing (attributing bad events to global causes) was associated with increased mortality
 - Especially accidental and violent deaths
- Why?

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Optimism

- **Opposite** of learned helplessness
- Assessed with the Life Orientation Test (LOT)

Indicate the extent to which you agree with each statement using the following scale...

Strongly disagree disagree neutral agree Strongly agree
 0-----1-----2-----3-----4

1. In uncertain times, I usually expect the best.
2. If something can go wrong for me, it will.
3. I always look on the bright side of things.
4. I'm always optimistic about my future.
5. I hardly ever expect things to go my way.
6. Things never work out the way I want them to.
7. I'm a believer in the idea that "every cloud has a silver lining."⁴²
8. I rarely count on good things happening to me.

Scoring LOT

-Reverse score items 2, 5, 6, and 8 [4=0, 3=1, 2=2, 1=3, 0=4]

-Sum up your score on all 8 items [possible range is 0-32]

-Mean score for college students = 21

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Is optimism always healthy?

- Taylor & Brown (1988): YES!
 - “illusions of control and unrealistic optimism are associated with mental health; realism may be a sign of depression”
- Colvin & Block (1994): NO!
 - “need to differentiate between *healthy optimism* (seeing the positive side of events) from *positive illusions* (viewing events in a positive light even when facts don't support that view)
- Is pessimism always unhealthy?
- ‘Defensive pessimism’ : People who expect to fail, but over-prepare to make sure it doesn't happen
 - Guess what: they succeed!

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Cognitive Therapy

- Recognize that thoughts (beliefs, expectations, explanations, thinking style) affect your feelings and behavior
- Try to change negative schemas
 - Convert to positive schemas or compartmentalize
- Try to change explanatory style
 - I didn't get the job because I didn't prepare well
 - He broke up with me because he didn't want to be in a relationship
- Interpret failure as an opportunity to learn
- “Talk” to self differently before, during, and after stressful situations

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Emotion Approach to Personality

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What is an emotion?

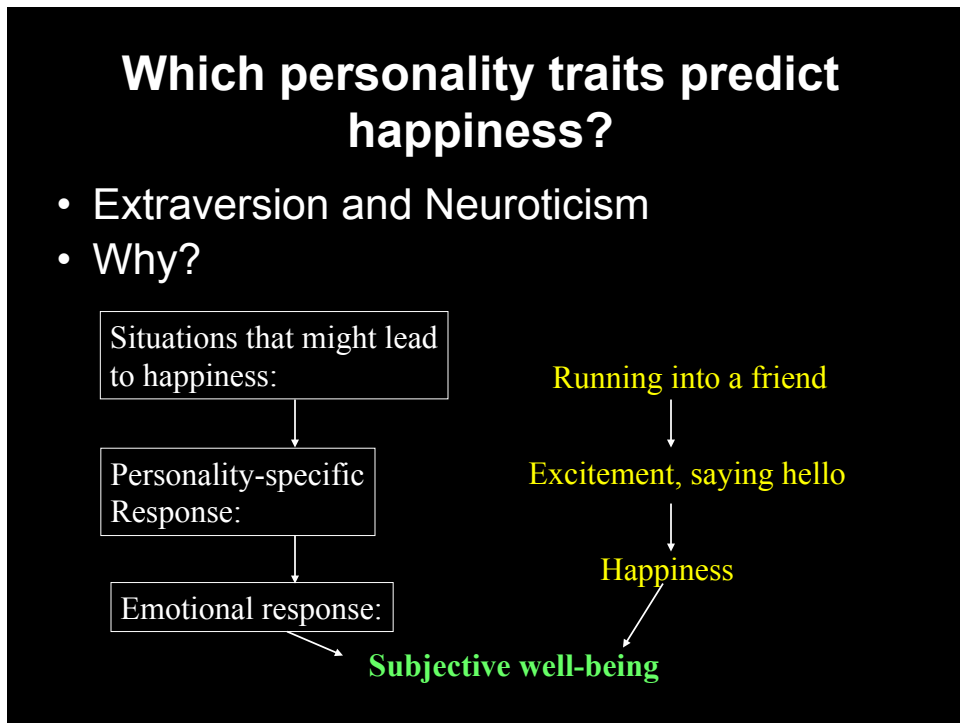
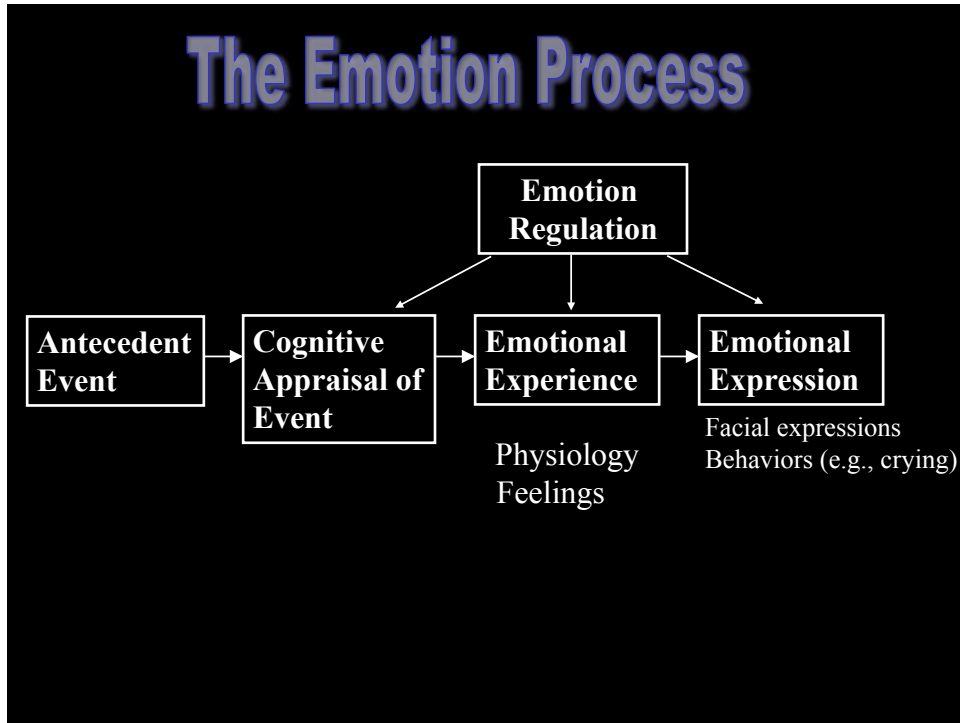
- Discrete, momentary experience in a specific situation
- Traits, or dispositional tendencies to chronically experience certain feelings
 - Mood, temperament, emotional disorder

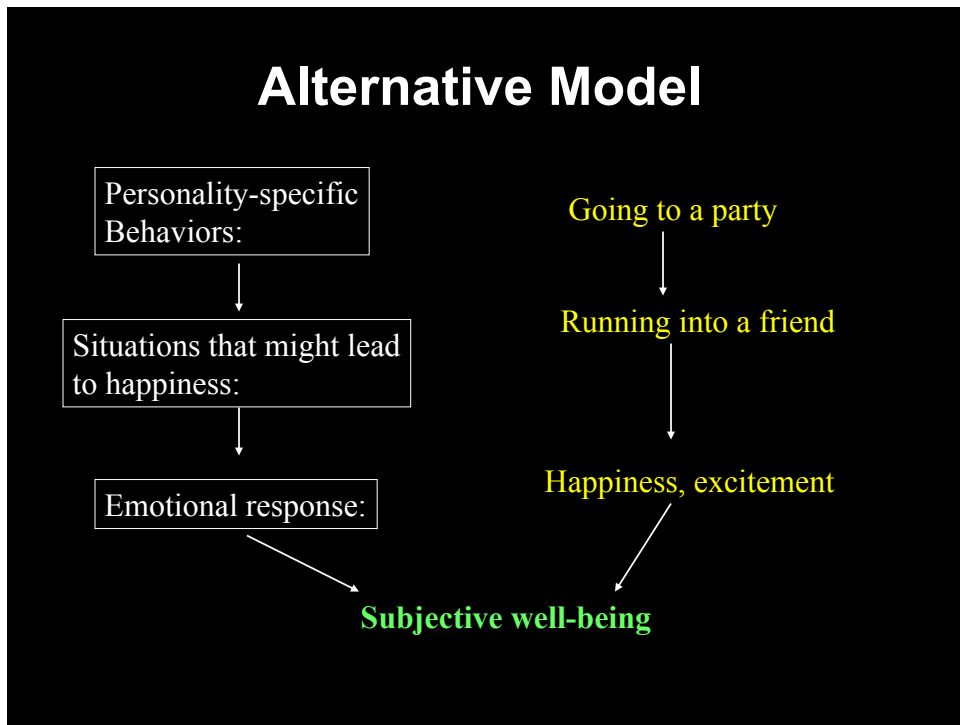
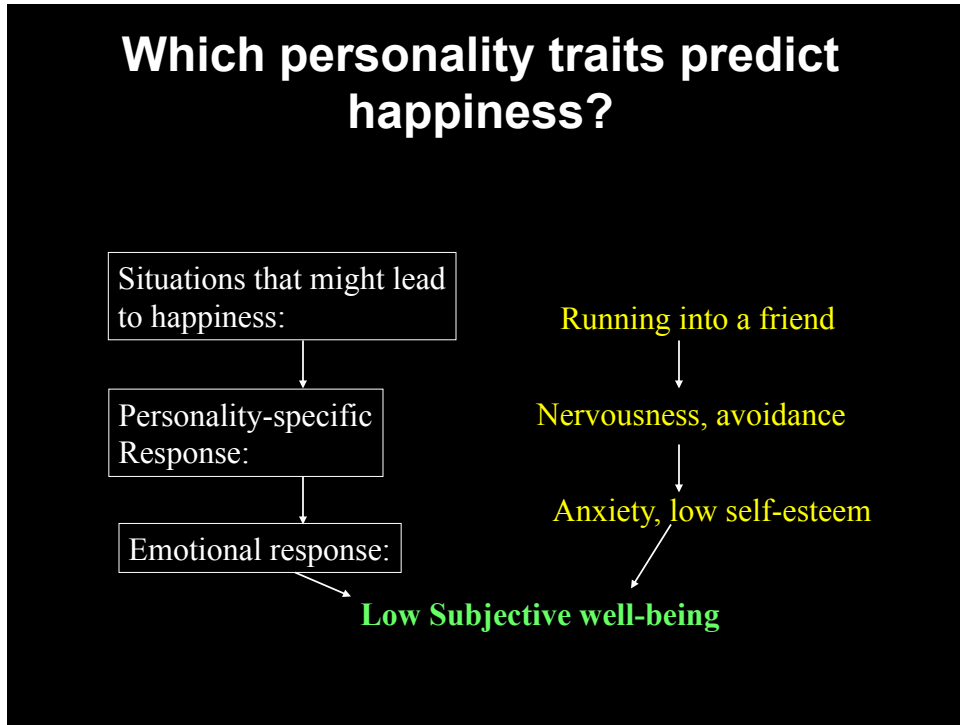
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What are the Parts of an Emotion?

- Feelings
- Thoughts
- Physiology
- Brain activation
- Nonverbal Expression

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Personality and Subjective Well-being

- Does personality affect a person's emotional responses to a situation, or, does personality determine which situations a person engages in?
 - Evidence for first path
 - Placed in the same situation, extraverts and neurotics have different emotional responses
 - Extraverts become happier from pleasant photos
 - Neurotics become more upset from unpleasant photos

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Emotions as Personality Traits

- Stable tendency to experience certain feelings, or have certain emotional reactions



Grumpy, hostile



Happy, hyperactive

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Happiness: The Trait



Definitions of Happiness

- **Aristotle**: the goal of life, attained through virtuosity (being “good”)
- **Rousseau**: hedonism (being “bad”)
- **James**: accomplishments
- What do you think?

Modern Research Definition of Happiness

- Cognitive-Affective Approach
 - Judgment of life's satisfaction
 - How satisfied are you with your life?
- AND
 - Tendency to experience positive vs. negative emotions
- Martin Seligman: Authentic happiness is based on living a life filled with purpose and meaning
- Daniel Kahneman: Positive (but not negative) emotions (hedonism)

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Happy Facts

- The average person is...
 - Happy 65% of the time
 - Neutral 15%
 - Unhappy 20%
- Is there a gender difference?
 - No.
- Is there an age difference?
 - No.
- What about country differences?

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Subjective Well-Being Across Countries

Nation	SWB	Nation	SWB
Iceland	1.11	Mexico	-.28
Sweden	1.03	Bangladesh	-.29
Australia	1.02	France	-.38
Denmark	1.00	Spain	-.41
Canada	.97	Portugal	-.41
Switzerland	.94	Italy	-.44
U.S.A.	.91	Hungary	-.48
Colombia	.82	Puerto Rico	-.51
Luxembourg	.82	Thailand	-.62
New Zealand	.82	S. Africa	-.63
N. Ireland	.78	Jordan	-.77
Norway	.77	Egypt	-.78
Finland	.74	Yugoslavia	-.81
Britain	.69	Japan	-.86
Netherlands	.68	Greece	-.89
Ireland	.57	Poland	-.90
Brazil	.57	Kenya	-.92
Tanzania	.51	Turkey	-1.02
Belgium	.51	India	-1.13
Singapore	.43	S. Korea	-1.15
Bahrain	.36	Nigeria	-1.31
W. Germany	.18	Panama	-1.31
Austria	.15	E. Germany	-1.52
Chile	.13	U.S.S.R.	-1.70
Philippines	.10	China	-1.92
Malaysia	.08	Cameroon	-2.04
Cuba	.00	Dom. Repub.	-3.92
Israel	-.18		

Table 2
The Happiness of Selected Nations

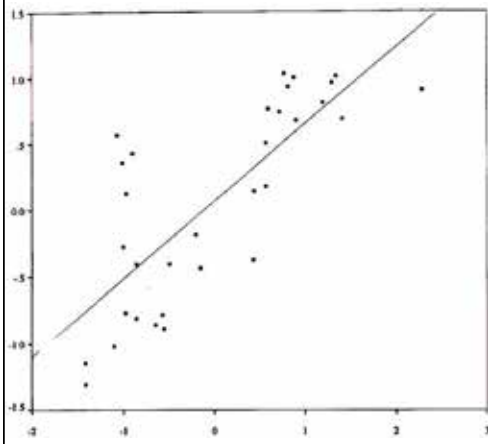
Nation	Affect balance (PA - NA), 1981-1984	Life satisfaction, 1999-2001
Canada	2.33	7.85
United States	2.23	7.66
China	1.46	6.53
West Germany	1.45	7.42
Mexico	1.38	8.14
India	0.72	5.14
Turkey	0.62	5.61
Russia	0.33	4.65

Note. Mean scores are taken from the World Value Survey, the Bradburn Affect Balance Scale, where affect balance can vary from 5 to -5, with 0 as the neutral point. The national differences in both positive affect (PA) and negative affect (NA) in the full sample are highly significant, $p < .001$. Life satisfaction scores, with a range of 1 to 10, were taken from the European Values Study Group and World Values Survey Association (2005) Data Wave 1999-2001.

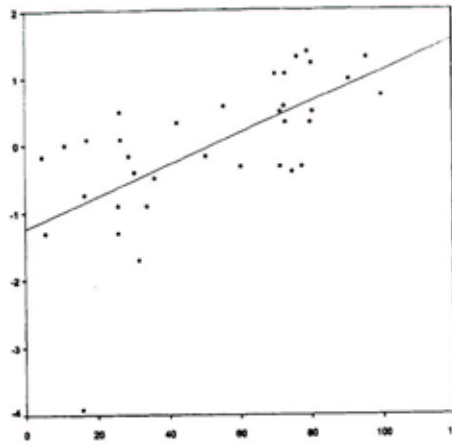
What makes some countries happier than others?

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Subjective Well-Being and...



Individualism (vs. collectivism)



Purchasing Power (wealth)

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Happiness across Countries

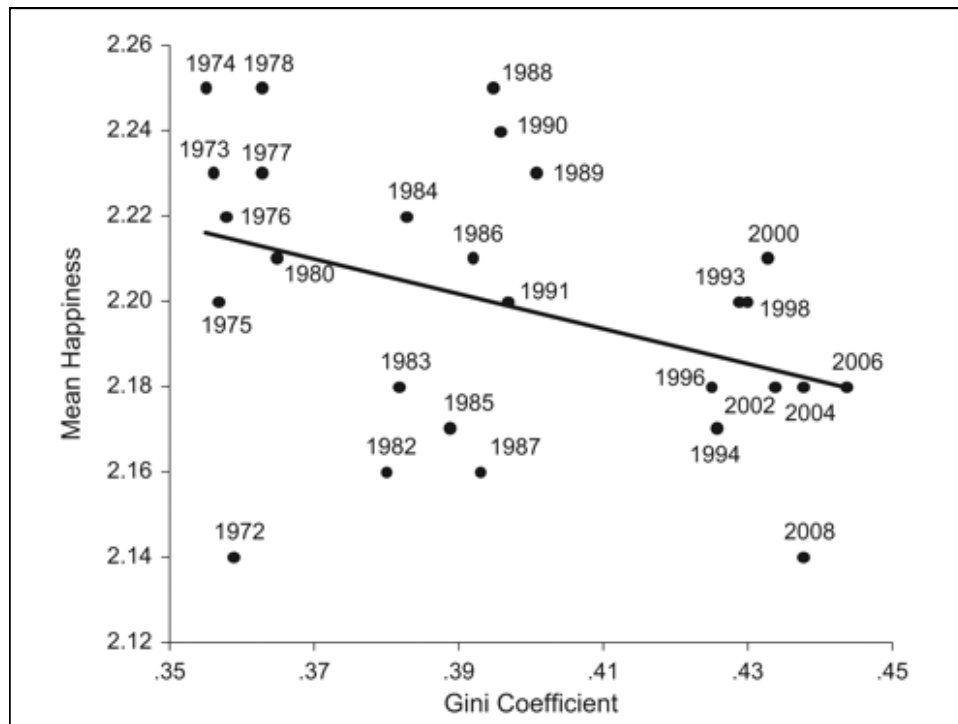
- Why are poorer countries less happy?
 - Health-care
 - Civil rights
- What about *within* countries? Are poorer people more unhappy?
 - Only if you compare people who can't afford basic necessities (e.g., food, shelter, healthcare)
 - Above that level, rich are not too much happier than poor!

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Happiness and Inequality

- More recent study by Oishi, Kebede, & Diener (2011) examined happiness and income inequality in the US from '72 to '08
 - 50,000 people
- Found a negative correlation between happiness and inequality
- Relation was due to perceived trust and unfairness among the poorest 60%

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Midterm Exam 2

- Similar to Exam 1 in structure
 - Approx. two-thirds MC, one-third short answer
- Will cover:
 - Trait Approach: Personality change and stability
 - Biological Approach: Genes & behavioral genetics, Physiology, Evolution
 - Cognitive Approach: Learning & behaviorism, modern cognitive approach
 - Emotions
- Textbook Chs. 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, & 13

Next Class

- Midterm Exam 2
- Monday, November 23:
 - Relationships and Social interactions
 - Sex & Gender
- Reading: Buss & Larsen Chs. 15 & 16

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