

Happiness, good or bad news?

Dear All,

Positive psychology is becoming a global phenomenon. You will be amused at the conflicting views:

The following link is from **Maharaj Raina** <mkraina@gmail.com>

https://www.fastcompany.com/40528502/this-school-focuses-on-teaching-students-happiness-not-math?utm_source=postup&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Fast%20Company%20Daily&position=2&partner=newsletter&campaign_date=02132018

Attached is a recent paper by Dr. Ashley Frawley.

[Unhappy News by Frawley](#)

Enjoy!

Louise

Sent: Wednesday, February 14, 2018 9:17 PM

From **Lonny Meinecke** <lonnymeinecke@gmail.com>

Dear Louise,

Thank you so much for sending this. I had the good fortune to teach-assist for the Science of Happiness online program hosted by edX (ours was the "Sennseis" portion – misspelling was intentional btw). I have also followed the various centers (e.g. Berkeley) and the authors (e.g. how Bhutan perceives wealth as the happiness of its people, way cool).

That the pursuit of happiness is not a measurable phenomenon is probably why many would like to see it fade away like many fads have. But as Roosevelt said, measurement (i.e. comparison) is the thief of joy... so we are unlikely to measure what the entire idea of measurement steals so aptly from us (much like stereotype threat). I really like the new place they are building in Chennai you shared (a friend of mine relocated there about a year ago). I have also seen new construction for the elderly with mental impairments (e.g. Alzheimers) aimed at making it a very livable environment – instead of making them feel like they can't enjoy life unless they can navigate a complex world. It is so cool... my hope is to begin adding ways for non human animals to cross our roadways and similar obstacles. Several places have begun that. Let children invent new and affordable projects to help save natural species, and who knows?

Anyway, just had to say thank you!

Dr. Lonny Douglas Meinecke

"Comparison is the thief of joy" – Theodore Roosevelt

"Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever" - Mahatma Gandhi

"God guard me from those thoughts men think In the mind alone" - William Butler Yeats (A Prayer For Old Age)

**From Paulson
Veliyannoor** <frpaulson@gmail.com>

The Chennai-based school of happiness gives me the impression that such happiness education is affordable to those on the rich-end of the social spectrum... Would be a pity if teaching happiness is such a costly affair that it can only benefit those who can afford it financially!

With Thanks & Regards

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From: **Bond, Michael [MM]** <michael.bond@polyu.edu.hk>

Sure appreciate the Frawley paper, Louise! I am pleased that the discourse has shifted from happiness to well-being, and that the field is beginning to explore in which kind of cultural settings either positive and/or negative emotions contribute to well-being, and to what degree.

Well-being for you in the Year of the Dog [and hoping to meet up somewhere, sometime then, Thanks.
michael

From Louise Sundararajan,

Thanks, Michael. I will also be addressing the issue of well-being in my keynote at the AAICP (Asian Association of Indigenous and Cultural Psychology) Conference in Koto Kinabalu, Malaysia July 25-27, 2018. Here is the abstract:

Toward a Self-Reflexive Indigenous Psychology

Abstract

Self-reflexivity refers to the capacity of the researcher to render his or her research an object of critical reflection. In the present context, the object of our reflection is indigenous psychology (IP). This approach is different from the following approaches to IP:

- Closet indigenous psychologists hiding under the cloak of cultural or cross cultural psychology.
- Researchers as cultural ambassadors who represent his or her culture to the Western, dominant culture.

In both of these approaches, the field does not benefit, since the audience is not an intrinsic component of IP itself.

The self-reflexive approach to IP can move the field forward, since the object of one's critical reflections is the field itself as well as the researcher him- or her-self. In this paper, I highlight three approaches that can maximize the contributions of the self-reflexive researcher to the field of IP.

Making the Local and Global connection

Globalization is a process driven by the economic order with far reaching ramifications for human welfare world-wide. Two problems in particular are at the root of much unrest around the globe: One is the increasing disparity of resource distribution; the other is the increasing loss of diversity. The globalizing economic order establishes a food chain with widening gap between the big fish and the little fish in the economic domain. Economic disparity in turn puts selection pressure on all cultures to emulate the economically successful, resulting in loss of cultural diversity.

Putting Justice before Happiness

Since Asian countries are on the upward movement to become the economic super power, they have the potential to either perpetuate the current economic order of inequity and dominance or to pursue a new global order that redefines human wellbeing and happiness along the lines as articulated so eloquently by Marsella and Yamada (2007):

There can be no mental health where there is powerlessness, because powerlessness breeds despair; there can be no mental health where there is poverty, because poverty breeds hopelessness; there can be no mental health where there is inequality, because inequality breeds anger and resentment; there can be no mental health where there is racism, because racism breeds low self-esteem and self-denigration . . . (p. 812)

Nothing is more practical than Theory

Theory building in IP has to do with restoring the conceptual repertoires of a culture, which can be distorted or rendered obsolete by the dominant constructs of global economy. The key is to look

beyond the symptoms of depression and anxiety to investigate the cultural mismatch in many societies that are going through rapid modernization. Thus better than couching the economic misfits to find happiness within, the IP researcher can emulate the renowned economist Muhammad Yunus: “The poor taught me an entirely new economics. I learned about the problems they face from their own perspective” (2007, p. ix). In concrete terms, the contributions of a self-reflexive IP consist of meeting the following challenges:

- How can we expand the intellectual horizons of IP in researching the ontological, epistemological, ethical, and spiritual dimensions of the mental life?
- How can we thereby come up with alternative constructs that can map reality differently, so as to build a new global order in which all cultures can flourish, including that of the economic misfits?

Happy Year of the Dog! Hope to see you at AAICP, Malaysia or APA, San Francisco.

Louise



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