

## Chapter 2

# Why Study Children's and Adult's Well-Being, Including Their Happiness?

Positive psychology includes the measurement and enhancement of positive well-being including happiness. Throughout human history, achieving happiness has been recognized by philosophers and intellectuals as a highly prized goal. A quote from Spinoza demonstrates this: "Everyone wants continuous and genuine happiness" (Spinoza 1677/1985). A high value assigned to happiness is currently reflected in many populations. For example, 9,000 college students were sampled from 47 nations and given a list of twenty values including wealth, love, and health (Kim-Prieto et al. 2005). The students identified happiness as the most important value with only 3% reporting that they did not value it at all.

The consensus that happiness is of high value and represents a worthwhile goal is reflected in the perspective held by most adults that we want our children to be happy. In a study of over 10,000 people from 48 countries on six continents, adults were asked about their desires for their children's emotions (Diener and Lucas 2004). This study reported that overall, most people desire high levels of happiness for their children and this desire is similar across genders (i.e., for sons and daughters). Additionally, the findings did not vary appreciably as a function of the wealth of the adult respondent. The desire for happiness in children was particularly high for adult women who themselves experience high levels of happiness and/or live in nations with high levels of happiness, and also for adults from individualistic compared to collectivistic nations. Furthermore, adults' desire for children's happiness proved higher than their desire for fearlessness or anger suppression.

While the construct of happiness occupies a privileged position among intellectuals, and is highly desired by people from across the globe, happiness has received limited attention from empirical researchers, including psychologists. While research in the realm of positive psychology has increased dramatically in the past decade, it is widely acknowledged that positive psychology has been largely understudied. This neglect is demonstrated by an examination of PsycINFO, which is a commonly used database for locating research articles in psychology. A current search of PsycINFO returns 136,668 journal articles if the key word "depression" is used, but only returns 7,494 articles if the key word

“happiness” is used. More articles (30,536) are found if the more global term “well-being” is used, but it is still just a fraction of the number of articles related to depression. In short, aspects of positive psychology have received relatively little attention compared to the study of negative affect. However, this long-standing neglect is showing signs of being addressed. From 1990 to 2000, the ratio of articles on depression compared to happiness was almost 27:1, but over the last 5 years this ratio has improved to 17:1.

The limited attention researchers have given to positive psychology is particularly evident when it comes to research on the positive well-being of children. Despite the seemingly universal consensus that happiness in children is highly valued, research on the predictors of happiness in children and interventions to promote happiness in children is still relatively meager. Most empirical work on happiness has examined adults, and to a lesser extent examined adolescents and the elderly (Mahon and Yarcheski 2002). Furthermore, investigations of positive well-being that do incorporate children often study the children in terms of their impact on the parents' happiness and life satisfaction, or the impact of childhood experiences and memories on the happiness of the individual once the individual has reached adulthood (e.g., Amato 1994). For example, Adams (1995) found that adult women with a history of childhood sexual abuse experience positive affect less often, and self-report lower levels of well-being than women who do not share this history.

This relative neglect of research on the well-being and happiness of children is somewhat surprising. Given that children's happiness is so highly desired by adults from nations that are wealthier, happier, and more individualistic (e.g., the United State of America; Diener and Lucas 2004), one would hope that research on children's happiness would be plentiful. After all, these are the nations that conduct a substantial amount of the world's research. The relative scarcity of research on positive well-being, and the emphasis on negative well-being, is not limited to research on children. If we return to the database PsycInfo again, we can make an additional point if this time we do not specify a particular temporal window. There is a ratio of almost 18:1 using the keywords “depression” and “happiness”, respectively. When the keyword “children” is also used, the ratio is a slightly more encouraging 15:1, although the total number of articles is of course substantially less. However, the trend for research on children's happiness is not so encouraging. Limiting the search to just the past 5 years (i.e., 2006–2011), the ratio is 15:1 using the key terms “depression” and “happiness” for all articles, but when the search is restricted with the filter “children”, the ratio increases to almost 18:1. Furthermore, there are only 411 hits in this 5-year window for articles using the keywords “happiness” and “children”. Nonetheless, there are several recent studies that have included children with the purpose of ascertaining the predictors of children's happiness, and investigations which seek to enhance children's well-being (e.g., Ben-Arieh 2006; Dwivedi and Harper 2004; Holder and Coleman 2008).

A stronger focus on research investigating happiness and life satisfaction in children is warranted because these variables have been empirically linked to a wide variety of advantages and benefits, at least in adults and adolescents. For

example, adolescents aged 16–18 years who self-reported the highest levels of life satisfaction, also reported higher levels of success in academics (e.g., academic achievement and attitudes toward education), social (e.g., relationships with parents and peers), and intrapersonal (e.g., experiencing meaning in life and a healthier lifestyle) domains (Proctor et al. 2010). Research has demonstrated that positive subjective well-being, including happiness, is associated with a wide array of highly desirable outcomes in adults. These include improved health, enhanced creativity, increased facial recognition and attention, more productivity and success in one's career, better social relationships, higher levels of hope, and more resilience and post-traumatic growth. The benefits of these outcomes are further elaborated below.

*Health:* Positive states including happiness are associated with better actual and perceived health. In a review of the literature, Veenhoven (2008) suggests that happiness plays a role in the prevention of illness in healthy populations, and is also a strong predictor of physical health in normal populations. However, the results do not clearly show that subjective well-being plays an important curative role in those who are already ill (Pressman and Cohen 2005).

The relationships between well-being and health have been demonstrated in younger populations. For example, happiness was strongly positively correlated with the perceived health status, wellness, and clinical health of 12–14-year olds (Mahon et al. 2005). Though some theories suggest that this relationship is bidirectional (i.e., happiness is both a cause and result of good health; Argyle 1997), additional research is required to determine the causal direction of this relationship in younger populations (Van De Wetering et al. 2010). More studies that employ longitudinal designs would help shed light on this issue. Nonetheless, in a review of the research related to children's well-being and health, Dwyer et al. (2009) have pointed out the importance of encouraging children to participate in physical activity daily.

Optimism can be considered a facet of well-being and it is highly correlated with happiness. Like happiness, optimism is associated with improved health. The link between health and optimism has been assessed with physiological assays, showing that optimists possess a greater number of helper T cells, and increased natural killer cell cytotoxicity which is related to better immunity (Barak 2006).

People with higher levels of subjective well-being are less likely to become ill and when they do become ill, they report less severe symptoms than people with lower levels of well-being. This relationship between susceptibility to illness and positive emotional style has been demonstrated in the excellent work of Cohen and his colleagues. For instance, in one experiment individuals were exposed to two different rhinoviruses (RV23 and RV39) to assess whether their emotional style was a factor in determining their susceptibility to developing the common cold (Cohen et al. 2003). Prior to exposure to the virus, the individuals' emotional style was assessed. Those who were identified as having a high positive emotional style (described in terms of positive adjectives such as happy, calm, or energetic) had a reduced chance of contracting a cold than those who were assessed as having a negative emotional style (described in terms of negative adjectives such as sad, tense, or hostile). In a

companion study, individuals' susceptibility to a cold or the flu was assessed relative to their emotional style (Cohen et al. 2006). In this research, individuals were exposed to either Rhinovirus 39 (RV39) or Influenza A. Similar to the previous study, those who had a positive emotional style fared better. Following exposure to the rhinovirus or the influenza, those who initially were assessed with a more positive emotional style were less likely to contract an illness and reported less severe symptoms, if they did get sick. Interestingly, the health advantages associated with the positive emotional style were not strongly associated with engaging in more health-related strategies, or with an increase in the ability to cope with stress. The better health outcomes for those with a positive emotional style were largely a result of these individuals demonstrating a higher level of competence in their immune systems.

Understanding the influence of positive subjective well-being separately from negative well-being is critical because each factor may contribute independently to our health. Reviews of the literature have concluded that positive well-being may contribute to health and longevity above and beyond the contribution of negative well-being (Diener and Chan 2011). Cohen et al. (2003) reported that positive emotional style contributed to a reduction in one's susceptibility to illness and the severity of symptoms related to the common cold. However, they also discovered that negative emotional style contributed very little to participants' susceptibility to viral infection or symptom severity (although negative emotional style was associated with people identifying a greater number of unfounded symptoms, or symptoms that were not validated with objective markers of illness) (Cohen et al. 2003). In other words, positive well-being's capacity to improve health may be greater than negative well-being's capacity to undermine health. This understanding emphasizes and supports a fundamental perspective of positive psychology: it is crucial to understand and promote positive well-being and not restrict health practitioners' work to only addressing illness and dysfunction.

Given the improvements in immune functioning related to positive well-being, perhaps it is not surprising that individuals with higher positive well-being live longer as well. In an important recent review of the literature, Diener and Chan (2011) examined a wide range of research evidence including longitudinal studies, animal studies, experimental studies, and naturalistic studies. They concluded that high positive subjective well-being contributes 4–10 years of additional life compared to low subjective well-being. This is particularly striking given that these additional years tend to be experienced by happier people, and thus they are higher quality years characterized by greater happiness and better health. In one particularly interesting example of the relationship between positive well-being and longevity, researchers studied the journals of a sample of 180 Catholic nuns ranging in age between 18 and 32 years ( $M = 22$ ) (Danner Snowden and Friesen 2001). They were able to evaluate the nuns' journals and rate the content in terms of the emotions they expressed (positive, negative, or neutral). These emotional ratings were then analyzed to determine whether the longevity of the nuns could be predicted based on the ratings. The researchers found that lifespan was longer for those nuns who described more positive emotions in their journals, compared to

those nuns who described relatively few positive emotions. This difference in longevity was noteworthy; nuns whose journal ratings placed them in the top 25% of the nuns (i.e., they displayed the highest positive emotional content), lived almost 7 years longer than those nuns whose journal ratings placed them in the bottom 25% (i.e., those with the least positive emotional content). Longevity, particularly when it is accompanied by improved health and happiness, is a coveted goal most humans strive for. Given that positive emotional styles and well-being contribute to improved health and longevity, we may be able to encourage healthier children (and therefore also a healthier population over time) by enhancing their levels of happiness to promote longevity.

*Enhanced Creativity:* People who are happier tend to show higher levels of creativity, including the components of creativity. These components include the capacity to produce novel ideas, insights, and solutions that have practical applications to problems and challenges (Baas et al. 2008). Researchers understand the construct of creativity as being multifaceted; it is thought to be composed of several dimensions including cognitive flexibility (i.e., the range and number of categories one accesses while generating ideas as to the function of an object), fluency (i.e., the number of unique and new uses people can generate for an object presented to them), and originality (i.e., the degree to which the solutions generated are novel). It is possible that one can be creative in general, but be missing or have low levels of some of the dimensions of creativity (Baas et al. 2008). In such cases, creativity may be assessed by presenting a specific object (e.g., a brick) and challenging the individual to the task of generating as many novel and practical uses for the object as they can imagine. The individual may show high levels of overall creativity despite failing to generate uses beyond having the brick serve as an object contributing to building things (i.e., fail to recognize that a brick could be used as a weapon, or to displace water in the reservoir of a toilet to decrease water usage) thus showing low levels of cognitive flexibility (Baas et al. 2008).

In a meta-analysis of 102 studies reported over 25 years of research on emotions and creativity, Baas et al. (2008) concluded that positive moods lead to more creativity than neutral moods. The greatest impact of moods on creativity is when the moods are positive, activating, and linked to promoting positive states (e.g., happiness). Negative, deactivating moods, such as sadness, were not linked to creativity, and negative, activating moods associated with avoidance or escape (e.g., fear, anxiety) were related to decreased creativity. These relationships were reported across a variety of research designs (i.e., experimental and correlational) and samples were drawn from a range of populations (i.e., students and the general adult population). They were also observed when different dimensions of creativity were assessed (e.g., fluency, flexibility, originality, and eureka/insight).

Creativity, particularly as it relates to generating novel and practical solutions, is a desirable trait. Given that creativity is enhanced by positive states, including happiness, we may be able to enhance children's levels of creativity through happiness. Unfortunately, the experimental research exploring the causal relations between creativity and happiness in children is very limited. Future research is needed in order to ascertain whether happiness and creativity are associated in

children and determine the causal directions of the relation between happiness and creativity.

*Facial Recognition and Attention:* The way people attend to certain objects or visual stimuli is highly influenced by the emotions and attitudes they are experiencing at that time. Research has consistently demonstrated that people are generally better at recognizing faces of people from their own race, than they are at recognizing faces of people from different races (Meissner and Brigham 2001; Slone et al. 2000). This bias, referred to as the Own-Race Bias, is robust and resistant to enduring change even with intensive hours of training (Lavrakas et al. 1976). The Own-Race Bias is found across a wide range of racial populations (Ng and Lindsay 1994; Teitelbaum and Geiselman 1997) but may be strongest for Caucasians when they perceive faces of racial minority populations (Meissner and Brigham 2001).

Johnson and Fredrickson (2005) investigated the impact of enhancing emotions prior to viewing faces (encoding), or after viewing the faces but prior to recognition. Participants viewed films selected to enhance joy or fear, or viewed films that were emotionally neutral. The researchers found that increasing joy either before or after viewing the faces significantly reduced the Own-Race Bias. They interpreted their results as supporting the Broaden and Build Theory (Fredrickson and Branigan 2005), claiming that positive affect serves to broaden the scope of attention, and thus facilitates global attentional processes. Additional studies support this theory by demonstrating that more positive emotional traits (e.g., happiness and optimism) enhance more global holistic processing. Negative emotional traits (e.g., anxiety) are associated with narrower local processing of elements which can be at the expense of more global or holistic processing (Basso et al. 1996). Thus negative emotions can lead to a situation that parallels the old adage that one cannot see the forest because of the trees.

Applying the Broaden and Build Theory to children suggests that children with greater positive subjective well-being should have cognitive advantages in the form of widened attentional scope. Empirical validation of strategies to reliably increase children's positive emotions could be used to help children become more open-minded and cognitively flexible.

*Workplace and School Success:* Success at work in the form of receiving a raise, an excellent job evaluation, a performance bonus, a promotion, or a job offer following an interview, certainly can improve happiness and life satisfaction, at least temporarily. However, recent research in positive psychology indicates that the relationship between our well-being and our success in the work place is bidirectional. Not only does success in the work place improve our well-being, but high levels of positive well-being can improve our career success. In other words, career success is often preceded by enhanced well-being.

Studies support the idea that positive well-being is an important contributor to career success (Georgellis et al. 2008; Martin 2005; Staw et al. 1994; Wright and Bonett 2007). One study concluded that workers who experience higher levels of happiness garner higher salaries and achieve better job performance than workers who have lower levels of happiness (Boehm and Lyubomirsky 2008). Given the

previously discussed relationship between subjective well-being and health, it is not surprising that governments and corporations are interested in positive well-being in the workplace, as the mental health of their workers influences productivity. It is estimated that absenteeism and loss of productivity as a result of depression cost Canada \$6.2 billion in 1998 and costs the United States between \$44 and \$51.5 billion annually (Lerner et al. 2004; Stephens and Joubert 2001). Having employees with higher well-being pays dividends. Employees who have higher levels of well-being generally experience less illness, miss fewer days of work, and display greater productivity and creativity in the workplace (Avey et al. 2006; Cohen et al. 1993; Hirt et al. 2008). As discussed above, the relationship between positive well-being and creativity may be particularly important in fields where creativity is essential. One can contrast this finding with data describing employees who are depressed. Though the average Canadian missed only 9.7 days of work in 2006, depressed Canadians missed over three times this number of days (Statistics Canada 2006; Statistics Canada 2007). The fact that these data were collected by a widespread governmental survey highlights the recognized importance of the consequences of affective status.

Although children may not be part of the work force, the relationship between positive well-being and the workplace for adults may be similar to the relationship between positive well-being and school for children. Conceivably, children who experience higher levels of positive well-being will miss fewer days of school and show increased productivity and creativity while at school. In fact, studies do show that hope, which is associated with life satisfaction and positive well-being (Gilman et al. 2006), is linked to increased academic success (Marques et al. 2009a). A 5-week intervention designed to increase hope in children 10–12 years of age increased life satisfaction, self-worth, and hope, but the trend toward an increase in academic achievement was not significant (Marques et al. 2011). It should be noted that academic achievement is particularly stable across time (Marques et al. 2009b), and thus may be somewhat resistant to change. To increase academic achievement, a lengthier intervention may be required.

Studies do show that personal attributes that are of interest to positive psychologists such as optimism and self-efficacy are associated with better academic performance. Research has reported that older students with higher expectations for success demonstrate greater achievement in mathematics (Meece 1996; Pintrich 2000; Pokay 1996). The link between self-efficacy and arithmetic skills has been demonstrated in younger children as well (Thronsdon 2011). Increased self-efficacy may be responsible for increased academic success because children with higher self-efficacy try harder for longer periods (Schunk 1998) and select better strategies (i.e., more cognitive and metacognitive strategies) (Wolters and Pintrich 2001). Therefore, children's academic performance may benefit from positive psychology interventions that increase self-efficacy. This may be particularly important for children as they age; research indicates that compared to Grade 2, Grade 3 children demonstrate lower levels of optimism regarding their self-efficacy as it relates to basic skills in mathematics (Thronsdon 2011).



Well-established theories related to positive psychology also suggest that positive well-being may contribute to the success of children in school. For example, Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Deci and Ryan 2000; Ryan and Deci 2000) claims that people in general and children in particular possess a natural motivation to learn and develop. According to this theory, learning is intrinsically motivated (i.e., learning is inherently interesting and enjoyable), and if the educational milieu in the home and classroom support this inherent inclination then children remain engaged and motivated in the learning process. SDT and supporting empirical research provide some guidelines for education that are in line with the perspectives of positive psychology. For example, meaningful choices can increase intrinsic motivation (Patall et al. 2008) whereas external rewards can undermine intrinsic motivation (Ryan and Deci 2009). The research suggests that both teachers and parents can promote children's well-being by supporting children's autonomy and intrinsic joy of learning, resulting in the children retaining more information, achieving higher grades, gaining greater perceived competence, and maintaining higher self-motivation (Ryan and Deci 2009).

*Social Relationships:* Social relationships are strongly associated with positive subjective well-being. In fact, some researchers contend that relationships are critical to our well-being (Diener and Seligman 2002; Lyubomirsky et al. 2005). Studies consistently report that individuals who score high in measures of subjective well-being also tend to enjoy more fulfilling social relationships (Lyubomirsky et al. 2005).

Given the pivotal role our social relationships play in contributing to our happiness, research investigating the links between children's happiness and their social interactions holds promise for improving children's well-being and understanding the impact of their relationships. Early work has shown that social relationships are related to children's happiness (Holder and Coleman 2009). For example, children who visit with friends more frequently are happier. Those who feel left out of social situations or agree that they cause trouble for their families are less happy.

*Resilience and Post-traumatic Growth:* The academic study of people thriving and experiencing low levels of negative affect did not suddenly begin with the introduction of the term "positive psychology". As early as 1955 a longitudinal study assessed the positive development of a large sample of children over several decades (Werner and Smith 1982, 1992). These children, during the first two years of their lives, faced naturally occurring adversities including growing up with poverty, family conflict, and parents with mental illness. Despite these serious challenges, one-third of these children who faced adversity developed into mentally and physically healthy and productive adults.

The phenomenon in which individuals develop successfully, and even thrive despite adversity, is known as resilience. A synthesis of 30 literature reviews on resilience concluded that children might be protected from the negative consequences of adversity depending on their prior experience and characteristics within three domains: individual (e.g., temperament), family (e.g., positive relationships with family members) and community (e.g., quality of the neighborhood they live



in; Eriksson et al. 2010). Research also suggests that culture, gender, intelligence, the number of protective factors, and age at which one experiences setbacks all influence resilience.

More recently, research has linked resilience with positive well-being. Studies report that people who experience high positive well-being prior to facing adverse challenges have increased resilience to cope with and overcome difficult situations (Tugade and Frederickson 2007; Tugade and Frederickson 2004). For instance, the impact of negative and difficult challenges is mitigated by positive emotions (Tugade and Frederickson 2004). This mitigation may have important health benefits. People who self-report that they effectively cope with demanding negative challenges, more quickly return to their physiological baseline levels following a stressful event (Tugade and Frederickson 2004). Perhaps the negative physiological and psychological consequences of stressors can be buffered by improved subjective positive well-being via an increase in coping abilities (Tugade and Frederickson 2004).

Research investigating the factors that promote well-being may lead to interventions that increase our resiliency in the face of demanding negative challenges (Cohn et al. 2009; Tugade and Frederickson 2007). This could prove particularly important for those children who are faced with demanding and unfortunate situations ranging from experiencing the divorce of their parents to abuse.

Much of the research on the psychological impact of traumatic events has focused on the negative consequences of experiencing severely adverse events (e.g., post-traumatic stress disorder). However, research has shown that a significant number of people report that a traumatic event they experienced turned out later to be one of the best events that could have happened to them (Park 1998). This positive outcome, referred to as post-traumatic growth, is a fruitful line of current research. Post-traumatic growth is related to resilience in that they both involve positive responses to adversity. Post-traumatic growth is distinguished from resilience in that post-traumatic growth refers not just to maintaining current functioning following difficulties and trauma, but actually functioning at a higher healthier level following adversity.

The research on post-traumatic growth suggests that trauma may lead to improved psychological functioning despite, or even as a result of, the stress stemming from trauma (Calhoun and Tedeschi 2006; Joseph and Linley 2008). Growth following adversity has been studied and reported in war survivors (Lev-Wiesel and Amir 2006), parents having lost a child (Polatinsky and Esprey 2000), and women diagnosed with HIV (Updegraff et al. 2002). However, most of the research on post-traumatic growth is centered on adults, with less focus on adolescents and even less focus on children (Clay et al. 2009). Fortunately this lack of research on post-traumatic growth in children is starting to change with the development of psychometric instruments to assess children's post-traumatic growth (Cryder et al. 2006; see Kilmer 2006). However, it is of some concern that these instruments are generally modifications of existing instruments designed for adults. The domains of growth for children may not be exactly the same as those for adults and thus children may require different instruments to assess their growth.

*Interim Summary and Conclusion:* Positive well-being, including happiness, is associated with higher levels of creativity, better cognitive processing, broadening the scope of attention, improvements in immune functioning, increased longevity, and better physical and mental health outcomes. Greater productivity, success in the workplace, better social relationships, and stronger resilience are also stimulated by positive well-being (Avey et al. 2006; Cohn et al. 2009; Frey and Stutzer 2007; Hershberger 2005; Lyubomirsky et al. 2005; Mahon et al. 2005; Tugade and Frederickson 2004). People who experience higher levels of positive well-being also experience improved quality of sleep, have lower rates of suicide, and overall enjoy greater success in life (Koivumaa-Honkanen et al. 2001; Lyubomirsky et al. 2005). Some positive psychologists have taken the position that the capacities to be happy and satisfied with one's life are critical life skills in achieving successful adaptation and good mental health (Lyubomirsky et al. 2005).

The benefits associated with well-being, which have been empirically demonstrated primarily in the adult literature, potentially hold immense value for children. A broad-based meta-analysis of studies using a wide range of research approaches (e.g., correlational, longitudinal, and experimental) has led researchers to conclude that aspects of positive well-being are associated with many benefits (Lyubomirsky et al. 2005). Adults who enjoy high levels of positive well-being also enjoy several advantages in a wide range of important, valued domains of life (e.g., health, productivity, and social relationships) that are not shared by adults with low levels of well-being. This raises the possibility that children with high levels of well-being are likely to experience many of these advantages relative to children with low levels of well-being. In summary, research on well-being in children is important because it holds the promise of providing children with many of the benefits experienced by adults in a broad range of life domains. Additionally, the implications for lifelong functioning stemming from childhood well-being make research on childhood well-being a field with vast potential for improving human well-being. Although the research on adults' well-being may give us important insights into children's well-being, research on adults' well-being does not necessarily generalize to children's life satisfaction and happiness, as discussed in the next section.

Furthermore, knowledge derived from studies of negative well-being that focus on understanding the construct, measurement, predictors and strategies related to negative well-being may be of limited value in advancing our understanding of positive well-being. Current studies of well-being clearly open up the possibility that the components of positive well-being (e.g., happiness and life satisfaction) and the components of negative well-being (e.g., loneliness and depression) are not simply negatively correlated dimensions that lie on a single continuum, but represent more independent constructs. Therefore, positive well-being in general, and children's well-being in particular, need to be examined independently of depression and negative well-being.

Investigations of positive well-being in children, particularly happiness in children, are relatively sparse. However, research on children's well-being, including studies of children's happiness, is certainly feasible. Children aged 5–12 years possess the cognitive and affective maturity to allow for the study of

their emotions in general and happiness in particular. During childhood, critical milestones of cognitive and emotional development are reached, including children's ability to recruit information from many sources to help understand and explain a wide range of their own emotions, and emotions of others (Berk 1994). For example, similar to adults, children can recognize that in a single environment one can experience many different emotions and can identify the causal factors that precipitated the emotions that they have experienced (Denham 1998; Whitesell and Harter 1989). Furthermore, even in a complex social milieu, children can recognize and label emotions (Schultz et al. 2004). As a result of this cognitive and emotional maturity, children can effectively participate in research and contribute insight into investigations of their emotions and their positive subjective well-being.

Research designed to uncover the predictors of subjective well-being in children, and to assess the efficacy of strategies designed to enhance children's well-being, is clearly warranted. For this research to be successful it is necessary to have valid and reliable measures of well-being. To illuminate the issues and challenges concerning the assessment of the different dimensions of well-being, the next section discusses the assessment of one of these dimensions: happiness.

## References

- Adams, C. L. (1995). The relationship of childhood sexual abuse to subjective well-being and depression for adult women. *Dissertation Abstract International: Section B, The Sciences and Engineering*, 56, 3430.
- Amato, P. R. (1994). Father-child relations, mother-child relations, and offspring psychological well-being in early adulthood. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 56, 1031–1043.
- Argyle, M. (1997). Is happiness a cause of health? *Psychology and Health*, 12, 769–781.
- Avey, J. B., Patera, J. L., & West, B. J. (2006). The implications of positive psychological capital on employee absenteeism. *Journal of Leadership and Organization Studies*, 13(2), 42–60.
- Baas, M., De Dreu, C. K. W., & Nijstad, B. A. (2008). A meta-analysis of 25 years of mood-creativity research: Hedonic tone, activation, or regulatory focus? *Psychological Bulletin*, 134(6), 779–806.
- Barak, Y. (2006). The immune system and happiness. *Autoimmunity Review*, 5, 523–527.
- Basso, M. R., Schefft, B. K., Ris, M. D., & Dember, W. N. (1996). Mood and global-local visual processing. *Journal of the International Neuropsychological Society*, 2, 249–255.
- Ben-Arieh, A. (2006). Is the study of the *State of our children* changing? Re-visiting after 5 years. *Children and Youth Services*, 28, 799–811.
- Berk, L. (1994). *Child development* (3rd ed.). Needham Heights: Allyn and Bacon.
- Boehm, J. K., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2008). Does happiness promote career success? *Journal of Career Assessment*, 16(1), 101–116.
- Calhoun, L. G., & Tedeschi, R. G. (2006). *The handbook of posttraumatic growth: Research and practice*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Clay, R., Knibbs, J., & Joseph, S. (2009). Measurement of posttraumatic growth in young people: A review. *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 14, 411–422.
- Cohen, S., Tyrrell, D. A., & Smith, A. P. (1993). Negative life events, perceived stress, negative affect, and susceptibility to the common cold. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 64(1), 131–140.

- Cohen, S., Doyle, W. J., Turner, R. B., Alper, C. M., & Skoner, D. P. (2003). Emotional style and susceptibility to the common cold. *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 65, 652–657.
- Cohen, S., Alper, C. M., Doyle, W. J., Treanor, J. J., & Turner, R. B. (2006). Positive emotional style predicts resistance to illness after experimental exposure to rhinovirus or influenza A virus. *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 68, 809–815.
- Cohn, M. A., Fredrickson, B. L., Brown, S. L., Mikels, J. A., & Conway, A. M. (2009). Happiness unpacked: Positive emotions increase satisfaction by building resilience. *Emotion*, 9, 361–368.
- Cryder, C. H., Kilmer, R. P., Tedeschi, R. G., & Calhoun, L. G. (2006). An exploratory study of posttraumatic growth in children following a natural disaster. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 76, 65–69.
- Danner, D. D., Snowdon, D. A., & Friesen, W. V. (2001). Positive emotions in early life and longevity: Findings from the nun study. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 80, 804–813.
- Denham, S. A. (1998). *Emotional development in young children*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Diener, E., & Chan, M. Y. (2011). Happy people live longer: Subjective well-being contributes to health and longevity. *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being*, 3, 1–43.
- Diener, M. L., & Lucas, R. E. (2004). Adults' desires for children's emotions across 48 countries: Association with individual and national characteristics. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 35, 525–547.
- Diener, E., & Seligman, M. E. (2002). Very happy people. *Psychological Science*, 13, 81–84.
- Dwivedi, K., & Harper, P. (2004). *Promoting the emotional well-being of children and adolescents and preventing their mental ill health: A handbook*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Dwyer, G., Bauer, L., Higgs, J., & Hardy, L. (2009). Promoting children's health and well-being: Broadening the therapy perspective. *Physical and Occupational Therapy in Pediatrics*, 29(1), 27–43.
- Eriksson, I., Cater, A., Andershed, A., & Andershed, H. (2010). What we know and need to know about factors that protect youth from problems: A review of previous reviews. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 5, 477–482.
- Fredrickson, B. L., & Branigan, C. (2005). Positive emotions broaden the scope of attention and thought-action repertoires. *Cognition and Emotions*, 19, 313–332.
- Frey, B. S., & Stutzer, A. (2007). What can economists learn from happiness research? *Journal of Economic Literature*, 40, 402–435.
- Georgellis, Y., Gregoriou, A., Healy, J., & Tgitgiauis, N. (2008). Unemployment and life satisfaction: A non-linear adaptation process. *International Journal of Manpower*, 29, 668–680.
- Gilman, R., Dooley, J., & Florell, D. (2006). Relative levels of hope and their relationship with academic and psychological indicators among adolescents. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 25, 166–178.
- Hershberger, P. J. (2005). Prescribing happiness: Positive psychology and family medicine. *Family Medicine*, 37(9), 630–634.
- Hirt, E. R., Devers, E. E., & McCrea, S. M. (2008). I want to be creative: Exploring the role of hedonic contingency theory in the positive mood-cognitive flexibility link. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 94(2), 214–230.
- Holder, M. D., & Coleman, B. (2008). The contribution of temperament, popularity, and physical appearance to children's happiness. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 9, 279–302.
- Holder, M. D., & Coleman, B. (2009). The contribution of social relationships to children's happiness. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 10, 329–349.
- Johnson, K. J., & Fredrickson, B. L. (2005). "We all look the same to me"; positive emotions eliminate the own-race bias in face recognition. *Psychological Science*, 16, 875–881.
- Joseph, S., & Linley, P. A. (Eds.). (2008). *Trauma recovery and growth: Positive psychological perspectives on posttraumatic stress*. Hoboken: Wiley.
- Kilmer, R. P. (2006). Expert companions: Posttraumatic growth in clinical practices. In L. G. Calhoun & R. G. Tedeschi (Eds.), *The handbook of posttraumatic growth: Research and practice* (pp. 264–288). London: Lawrence Erlbaum.

- Kim-Prieto, C., Diener, E., Tamir, M., Scollon, C., & Diener, M. (2005). Integrating the diverse definitions of happiness: A time-sequential framework of subjective well-being. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 6, 261–300.
- Koivumaa-Honkanen, H., Honkanen, R., Viinamäki, H., Heikkilä, K., Kaprio, J., & Koskenvuo, M. (2001). Life satisfaction and suicide: A 20 year follow-up study. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 158, 433–439.
- Lavrakas, P. J., Buri, J. R., & Mayzner, M. S. (1976). A perspective of the recognition of other race faces. *Perception and Psychophysics*, 20, 475–481.
- Lerner, D., Adler, D. A., Chang, H., Lapitsky, L., Hood, M. Y., Perissinotto, C., et al. (2004). Unemployment, job retention, and productivity loss among employees with depression. *Psychiatric Services*, 55, 1371–1378.
- Lev-Wiesel, R., & Amir, M. (2006). Resilience and posttraumatic growth in children. In L. G. Calhoun & R. G. Tedeschi (Eds.), *The handbook of posttraumatic growth: Research and practice* (pp. 248–263). London: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Lyubomirsky, S., King, L., & Diener, E. (2005). The benefits of frequent positive affect: Does happiness lead to success? *Psychological Bulletin*, 131, 803–855.
- Mahon, N. E., & Yarcheski, A. (2002). Alternative theories of happiness in early adolescents. *Clinical Nursing Research*, 11, 306–323.
- Mahon, N. E., Yarcheski, A., & Yarcheski, T. J. (2005). Happiness is related to gender and health in early adolescents. *Clinical Nursing Research*, 14, 175–190.
- Marques, S.C., Lopez, S.J., & Pais-Ribeiro, J.L. (2009a). *Cross-sectional and longitudinal predictors of early adolescents' academic achievement*. Paper presented at the 11<sup>th</sup> European Congress of Psychology, Oslo, Norway.
- Marques, S. C., Pais-Ribeiro, J. L., & Lopez, S. J. (2009b). *Cross-sectional and longitudinal predictors of early adolescents' academic achievement*. Paper presented at the 11th European Congress of Psychology, Oslo, Norway.
- Marques, S. C., Lopez, S. J., & Pais-Ribeiro, J. L. (2011). “Building hope for the future”: Strengths in middle-school students. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 12, 139–152.
- Martin, A. J. (2005). The role of positive psychology in enhancing satisfaction, motivation, and productivity in the workplace. *Journal of Organizational Behavior Management*, 24, 113–133.
- Meece, J. L. (1996). Gender differences in mathematics achievement: The role of motivation. In M. Carr (Ed.), *Motivation in mathematics* (pp. 113–130). Cresskill: Hampton Press.
- Meissner, C., & Brigham, J. (2001). Thirty years of investigating the own-race bias in memory for faces. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 7, 3–35.
- Ng, W., & Lindsay, R. (1994). Cross-face recognition: Failure of the contact hypothesis. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 25, 217–232.
- Park, C. L. (1998). Implications of posttraumatic growth for individuals. In R. G. Tedeschi, C. L. Park, & L. G. Calhoun (Eds.), *Posttraumatic growth: Positive changes in the aftermath of crisis* (pp. 153–178). Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Patall, E. A., Cooper, H., & Robinson, J. C. (2008). The effects of choice on intrinsic motivation and related outcomes: A meta-analysis of research findings. *Psychological Bulletin*, 134, 270–300.
- Pintrich, P. R. (2000). The role of goal orientation in self-regulated learning. In M. Boekaerts, P. R. Pintrich, & M. Zeidner (Eds.), *Handbook of self-regulation* (pp. 451–502). San Diego: Academic.
- Pokay, P. A. (1996). Strategy use, motivation, and math achievement in high school students. In M. Carr (Ed.), *Motivation in mathematics* (pp. 157–172). Cresskill: Hampton Press.
- Polatinsky, S., & Esprey, Y. (2000). An assessment of gender differences in the perception of benefit resulting from the loss of a child. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 13, 709–718.
- Pressman, S. D., & Cohen, S. (2005). Does positive affect influence health? *Psychological Bulletin*, 131(6), 925–971.
- Proctor, C., Linley, P. A., & Maltby, J. (2010). Very happy youths: Benefits of very high life satisfaction among adolescents. *Social Indicators Research*, 98, 519–532.

- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55, 68–78.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2009). Promoting self-determined school engagement: Motivation, learning, and well-being. In K. R. Wentzel & A. Wigfield (Eds.), *Handbook of motivation at school* (pp. 171–196). New York: Routledge.
- Schultz, D., Izard, C. E., & Bear, G. G. (2004). Emotionality, emotion information processing, and aggression. *Development and Psychopathology*, 16, 371–387.
- Schunk, D. H. (1998). Teaching elementary students to self-regulate practice of mathematical skills with modeling. In D. H. Schunk & B. J. Zimmerman (Eds.), *Self-regulated learning from teaching to self-reflective practice* (pp. 137–159). New York: The Guilford Press.
- Slone, A., Brigham, J., & Meissner, C. (2000). Social and cognitive factors affecting the own-race bias in whites. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 22, 71–84.
- Spinoza, B. (1985). Ethics. In B. Spinoza (Ed.), *The collected writings of Spinoza* (Vol. 1, pp. 408–620). Princeton: Princeton University Press. Original work published in 1677.
- Statistics Canada. (2006). *Work absence rates (Report No. 71-211-XIE)*. Retrieved from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/71-211-x/71-211-x2007000-eng.pdf>.
- Statistics Canada. (2007). *Perspectives on labour and income- November 2007: Depression at work (Report No. 75-001-XWE)*. Retrieved from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75-001-x/2007111/article/10406-eng.htm>.
- Staw, B. M., Sutton, R. I., & Pelled, L. H. (1994). Employee positive emotion and favourable outcomes at the workplace. *Organization Science*, 5(1), 51–71.
- Stephens, T., & Joubert, N. (2001). *The Economic Burden of Mental Health Problems in Canada*. Retrieved from Public Health Agency of Canada: [http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/cdic-mcc/22-1/d\\_e.html](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/cdic-mcc/22-1/d_e.html).
- Teitelbaum, S., & Geiselman, R. E. (1997). Observer mood and cross-racial recognition of faces. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 28, 93–106.
- Thronsdon, I. (2011). Self-regulated learning of basic arithmetic skills: A longitudinal study. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 81, 558–578.
- Tugade, M. M., & Frederickson, B. L. (2004). Resilient individuals use positive emotion to bounce back from negative emotional experiences. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 86, 320–333.
- Tugade, M. M., & Frederickson, B. L. (2007). Regulation of positive emotions: Emotion regulation strategies that promote resilience. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 8, 311–333.
- Updegraff, J. A., Taylor, S. E., Kemeny, M. E., & Wyatt, G. E. (2002). Positive and negative effects of HIV infection in women with low socioeconomic resources. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 28, 382–394.
- Van De Wetering, E. J., Van Excel, N. J. A., & Brouwer, W. B. F. (2010). Piecing the jigsaw puzzle of adolescent happiness. *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 31, 923–935.
- Veenhoven, R. (2008). Healthy happiness: Effects of happiness on physical health and the consequences for preventative health care. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 9, 449–469.
- Werner, E. E., & Smith, R. S. (1982). *Vulnerable but invincible: A study of resilient children*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Werner, E. E., & Smith, R. S. (1992). *Overcoming the odds: High-risk children from birth to adulthood*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Whitesell, N. R., & Harter, S. (1989). Children's reports of conflict between simultaneous opposite-valence emotions. *Child Development*, 60, 673–682.
- Wolters, C. A., & Pintrich, P. R. (2001). Contextual differences in student motivation and self-regulated learning in mathematics, english and social studies classrooms. In H. J. Hartman (Ed.), *Metacognition in learning instruction: Theory, research and practice* (pp. 103–124). Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Wright, T. A., & Bonett, D. G. (2007). Job satisfaction and psychological well-being as nonadditive predictors of workplace turnover. *Journal of Management*, 33(2), 141–160.

Happiness in Children  
Measurement, Correlates and Enhancement of Positive  
Subjective Well-Being

Holder, M.D.

2012, XI, 87 p., Softcover

ISBN: 978-94-007-4413-4