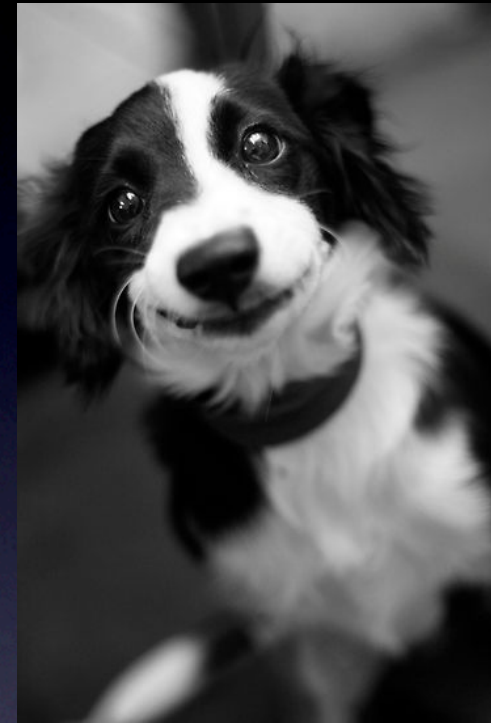


The Science of Happiness



Happiness so far...

- Positive moods and cognitive processing:
 - More Heuristic (uses cues and shortcuts –including stereotypes – to come to quick judgments)
 - More Global (seeing the forest more than trees)
 - More Creative – AHA moments coming from synthesis of information in new ways

One More...

- Positive Moods → More Open to trying new things / Less bound by cultural norms
 - Asian and American Students placed in either a happy or a sad mood, then asked to define themselves (Who Am I?)
 - American students defined themselves in more inter-dependent ways in a + mood than a – mood
 - Asian students defined themselves more independently in a + mood than a - mood

Today's Lecture...

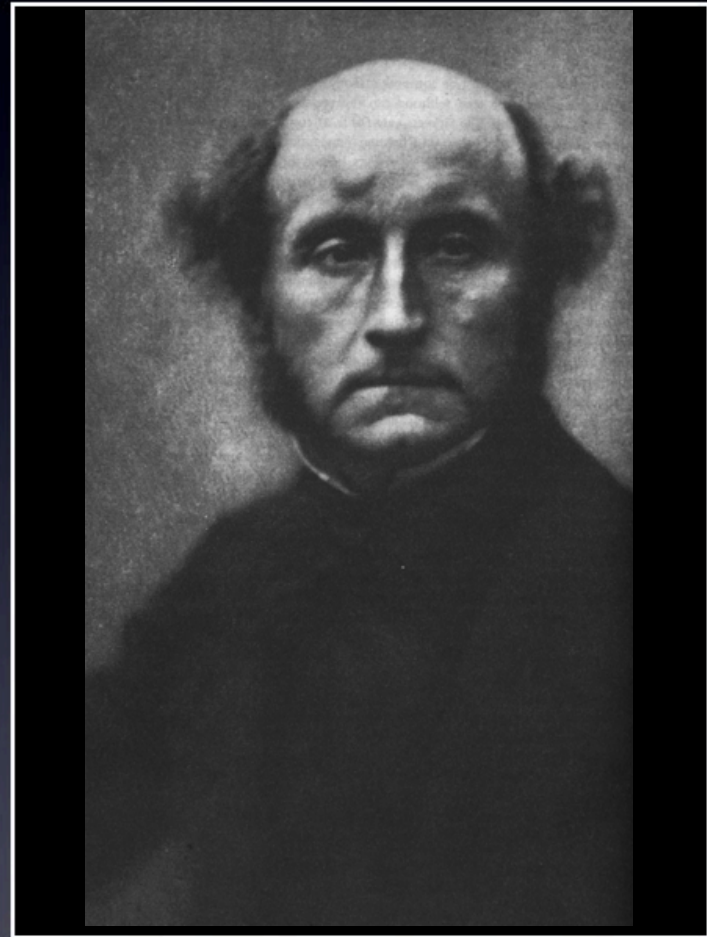
- Is happiness an emotion?
- How can we measure it?
- How happy are we in general?
- Who is happy?
- Does money buy happiness?
- When are we happy?
- What are the characteristics of happy people?
- Can we make ourselves happier?

The Pursuit of Happiness

- Philosophers have been thinking about this for a LONG time
- Is this not the goal of every human being?
- *Psychological Hedonism*
 - EVERYTHING we do is for the sake of making us happy
- If this is our fundamental motive, shouldn't it be of primary importance to society?

Maximizing Happiness: Economic Theory

- Bentham and Mill placed an emphasis on the maximization of happiness
- Utility theory to this day places “satisfaction” of preferences as:
 - *Descriptively:* An important psychological motivator
 - *Normatively:* A mark of rationality



Maximizing Happiness: Ethical Theory

- Utilitarianism as an ethical theory became an important view of what is GOOD.
- “Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain, and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do” (Bentham 1789)
- Note--here Bentham defines happiness as “pleasure” or the absence of pain.

The importance of the pursuit of happiness...

The happiness of individuals can be seen as a good measure of the success of society

- Pursuit is an “Inalienable” right in the Declaration of Independence
- Modern social policy is often framed in terms of improving the “happiness” of individuals

Pursuit of Happiness

- Western cultures emphasize pursuit of happiness for its own sake
- Other cultures may see happiness as a byproduct of doing what is right – fulfilling social roles, maintaining order and harmony, etc. (Eudamonia)

Problems with “Happiness”

- Is it simple pleasure?
- Is it more than that?
- How do we measure it?
- How do we even define it?
- Is it even an emotion?

Is Happiness an Emotion?

- Happiness fits the category of “emotion” only loosely.
- It can be described broadly as:
 - A physiological reaction that feels good (PLEASURE)
 - A short-term reaction to a positive stimulus (JOY)
 - A longer-lived positive mood (HAPPINESS)
 - A long-term satisfaction with life in general (EUDAIMONIA)

Happiness as “Pleasure”

- Rats will press a lever to receive stimulation to the “pleasure” center of their brain at the expense of food or water. Eventually die of exhaustion.
- Dopaminergic system heavily implicated
- All sorts of “rewarding” behaviors stimulate this system
 - Sex
 - Drugs
 - Food
 - Gambling

Eudamonia

- Life Satisfaction that arises from:
 - Autonomy
 - Personal growth
 - Self-acceptance
 - Purpose in life
 - Environmental mastery
 - Positive relations with others

The Science of Happiness

- Study of happiness is relatively new to psychology
- How do you measure it?
 - Smiles? (Can be faked, not always displayed without others around)
 - Ask People?
 - Experience Sampling

Subjective Well-Being

(much of this discussion taken from the work of David Myers--I recommend his book for follow-up reading)

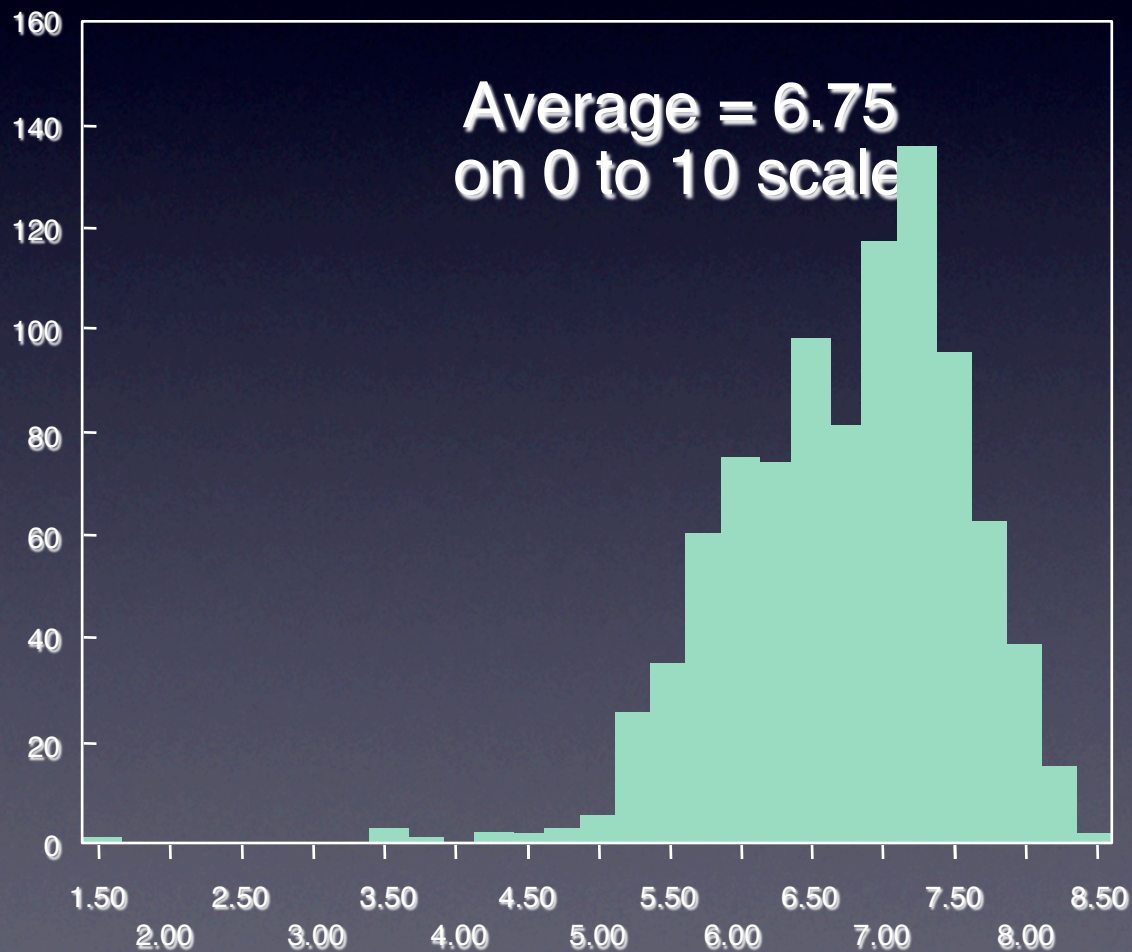
1. Feeling happy: “Taking all things together, how would you say things are these days — would you say you are very happy, pretty happy, or not too happy?”

Subjective Well-Being

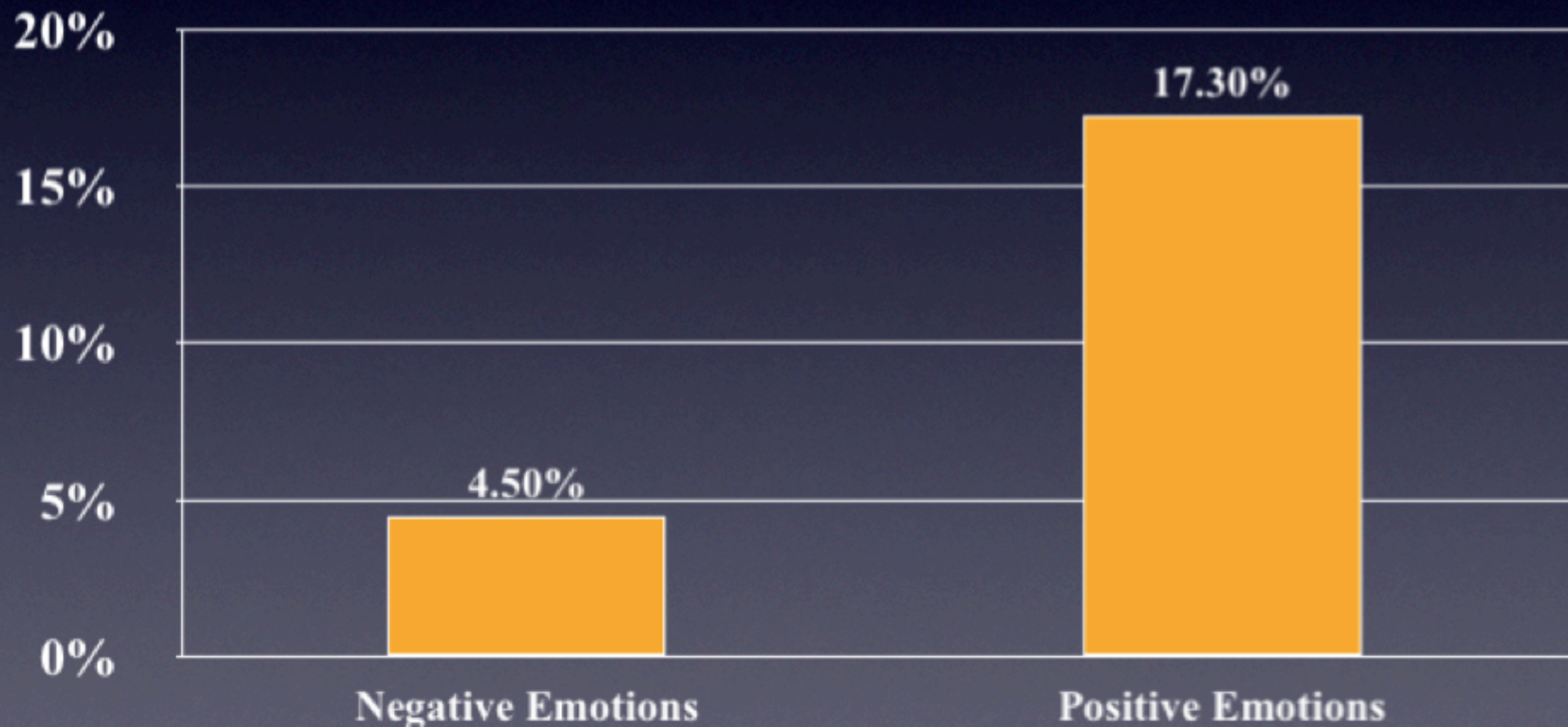
2. Thinking life is satisfying: “How satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days?”

How Happy Are We?

- 916 Surveys in 45 Nations

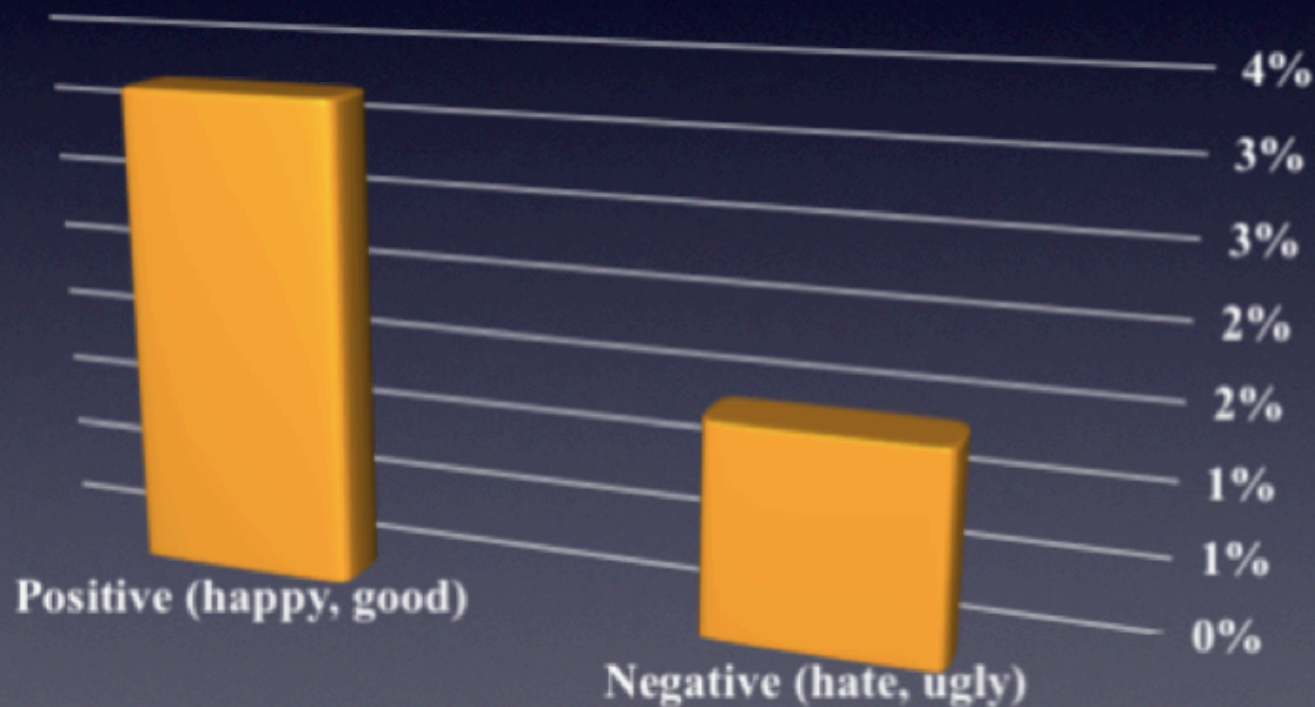


10,126 momentary moods reported by 226 SMU students (Watson, 2000)



Students' language use in natural conversation (> 10,000 slices)

Matthias Mehl and James Pennebaker at University of Texas



Wednesday, February 14, 2001

USA TODAY Snapshots®

Most Americans generally in good mood

Despite the pressures of a fast-paced society, a new study shows:



83% of Americans reported themselves to be in a good mood



9% described their mood as "neither good nor bad"



7% said they were in a bad mood at the time they were asked

Source: Gallup Poll

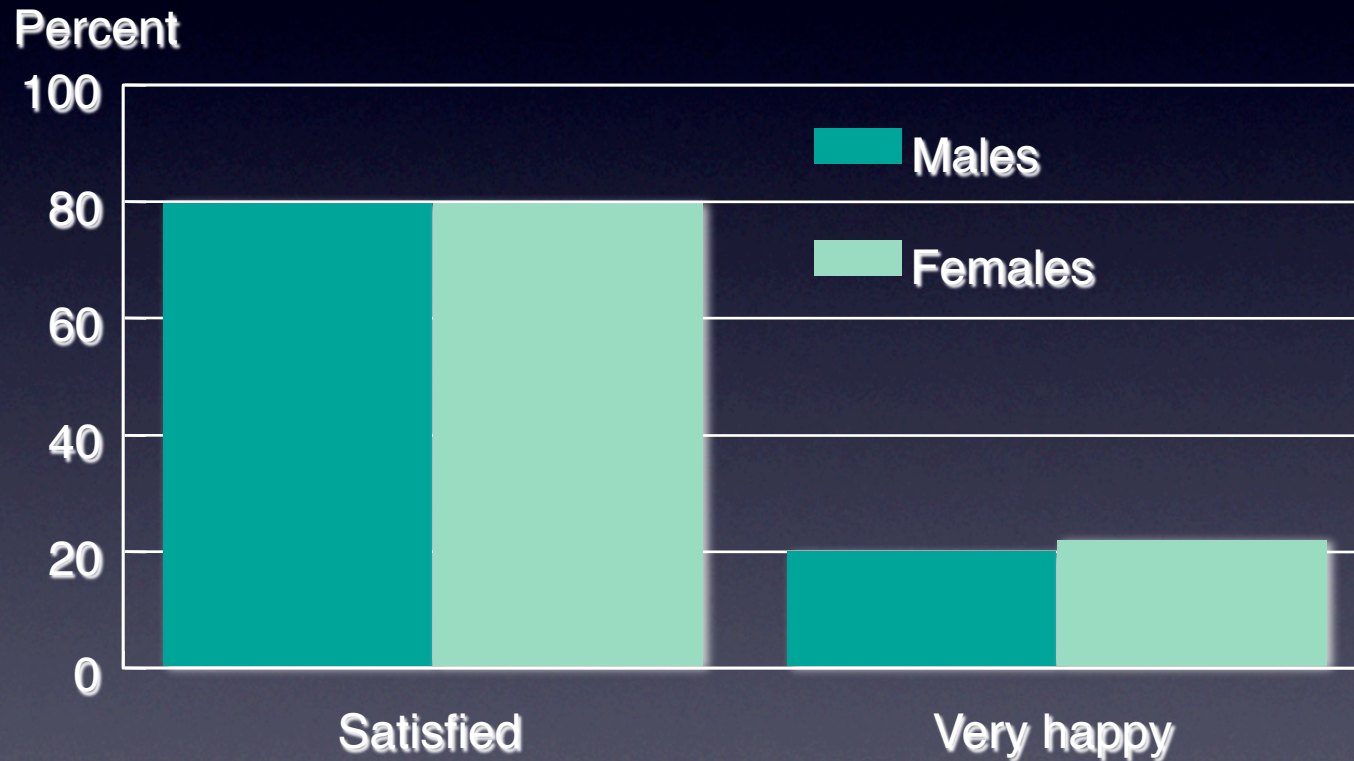
By Lori Joseph and Quin Tlan, USA TODAY

Can we trust self-report?

- Are happy people in denial?
- Self-report measures are:
 - reliable
 - correlated with experience samplings
 - correlated with positive indicators
 - correlated with others' reports
 - the only measures of subjective well-being

Okay, so who's happy?

Gender and Happiness?

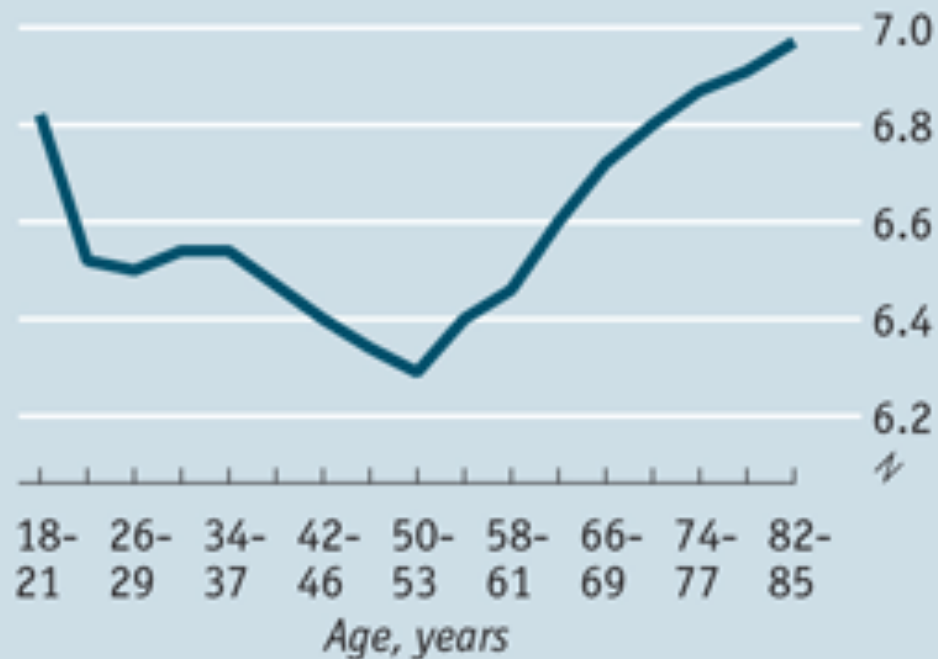


Pooled data from 169,776
interviews.

Happiness and Age

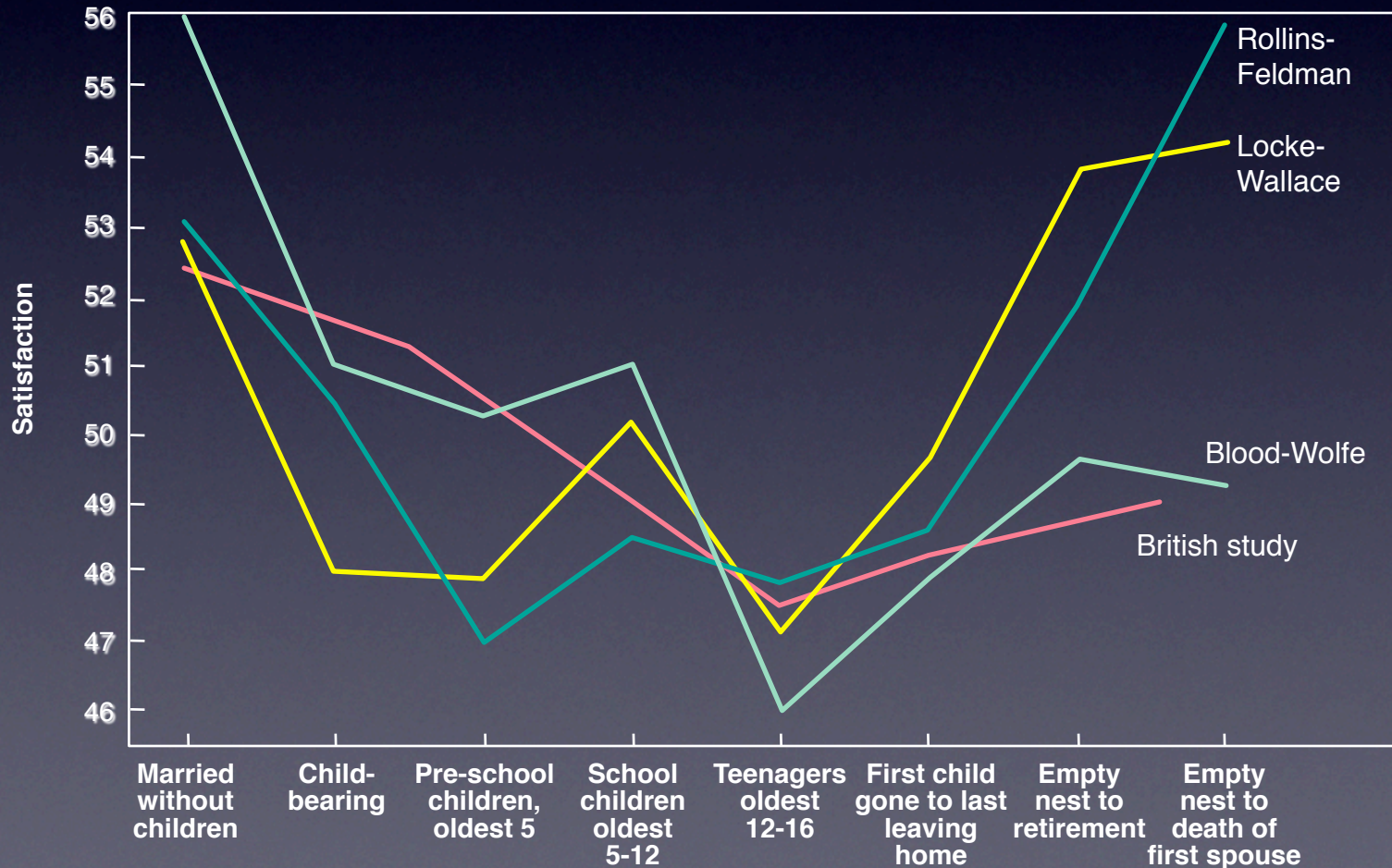
The U-bend

Self-reported well-being, on a scale of 1-10

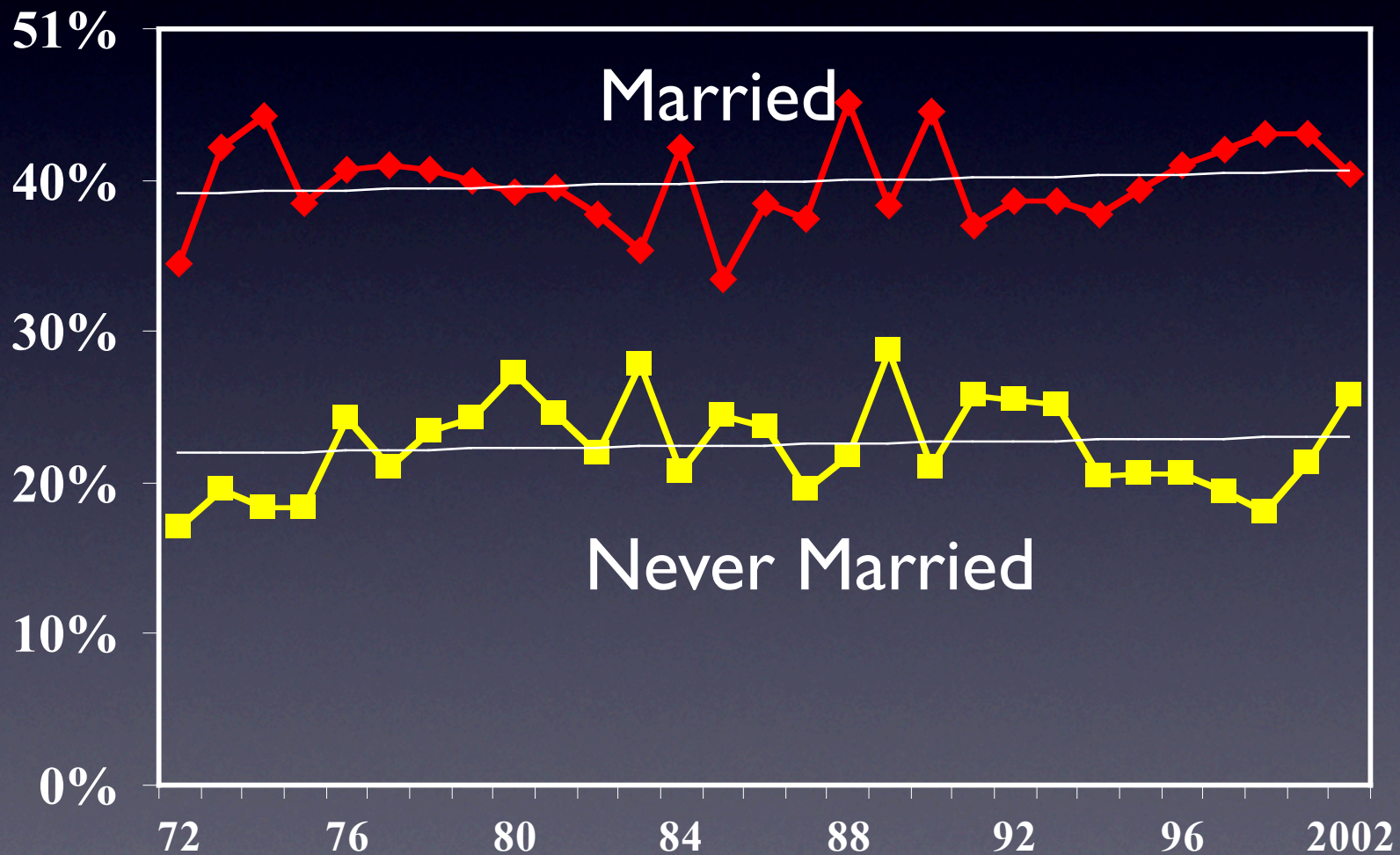


Source: PNAS paper: "A snapshot of the age distribution of psychological well-being in the United States" by Arthur Stone

Marital Satisfaction and the Family Life Cycle



Percent “Very Happy” among Married and Never Married Americans



Your Key to Happiness the **MONEY** way!

HOW?
in **3** SIMPLE STEPS!

1 Get lots of MONEY!



YEAH,
BUT
NOW
WHAT?

2 Exchange that MONEY for goods and services.



OK...

3 Sit back and enjoy the GOOD LIFE !!



HEY, THANKS,
MONEY!

BOLLING

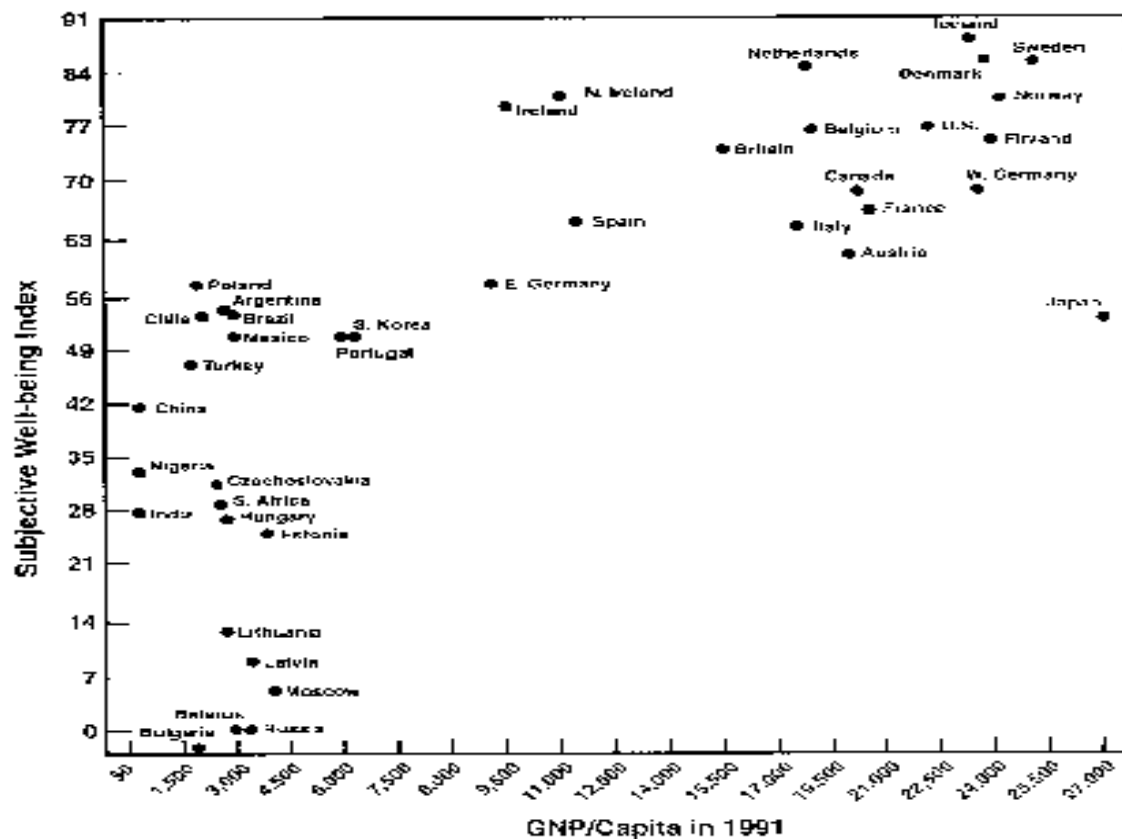
Enjoy the Bountiful Goodness of **MONEY**

Money and Happiness

- Are people in richer countries happier than those in poorer countries?
- Within a country, are the richest people the happiest?
- Does the happiness of a country rise as it becomes richer / more prosperous?

Does Money Buy Happiness?

1. Are people in richer countries happier than those in poorer countries?



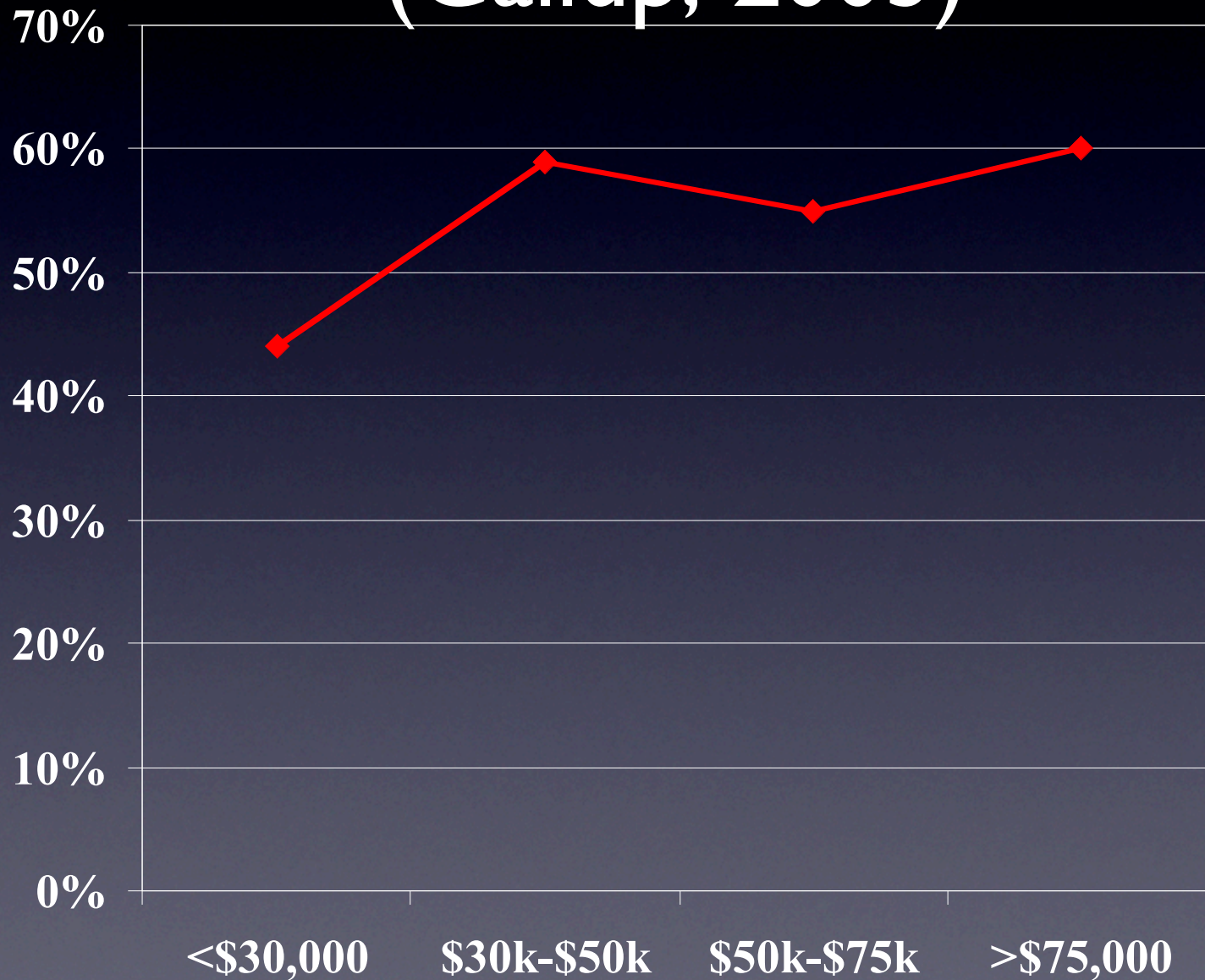
National wealth and well-being.

Source: World Bank data and the 1990-1991 World Values Survey, as reported by Ronald Inglehart in *Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic, and Political Change in Societies* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997, p. 62). Subjective well-being index combines happiness and life satisfaction [average of percent describing themselves as a) “very happy” or “happy” minus percent “not very happy” or “unhappy”, and as b) 7 or above minus 4 or below on a 10-point life satisfaction scale].

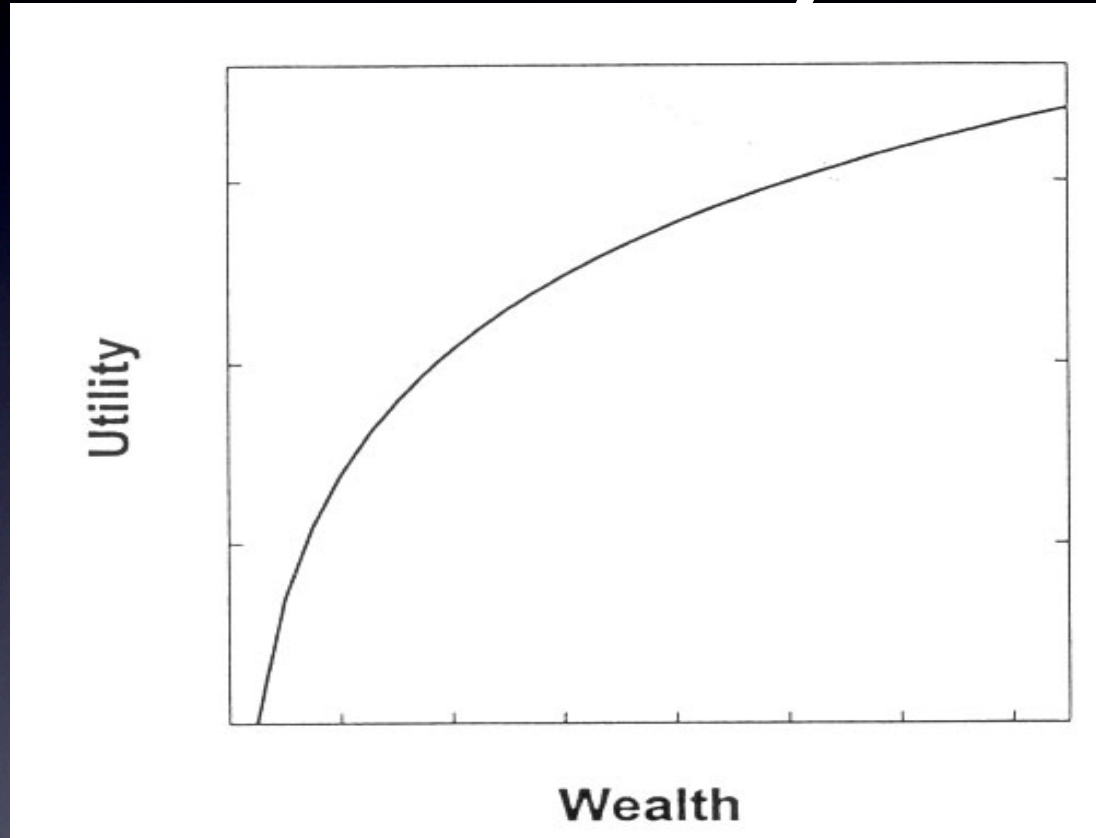
Does Money Buy Happiness?

2. Within a country, are the richest the happiest?

Americans “very happy” (Gallup, 2003)



Diminishing Marginal Utility

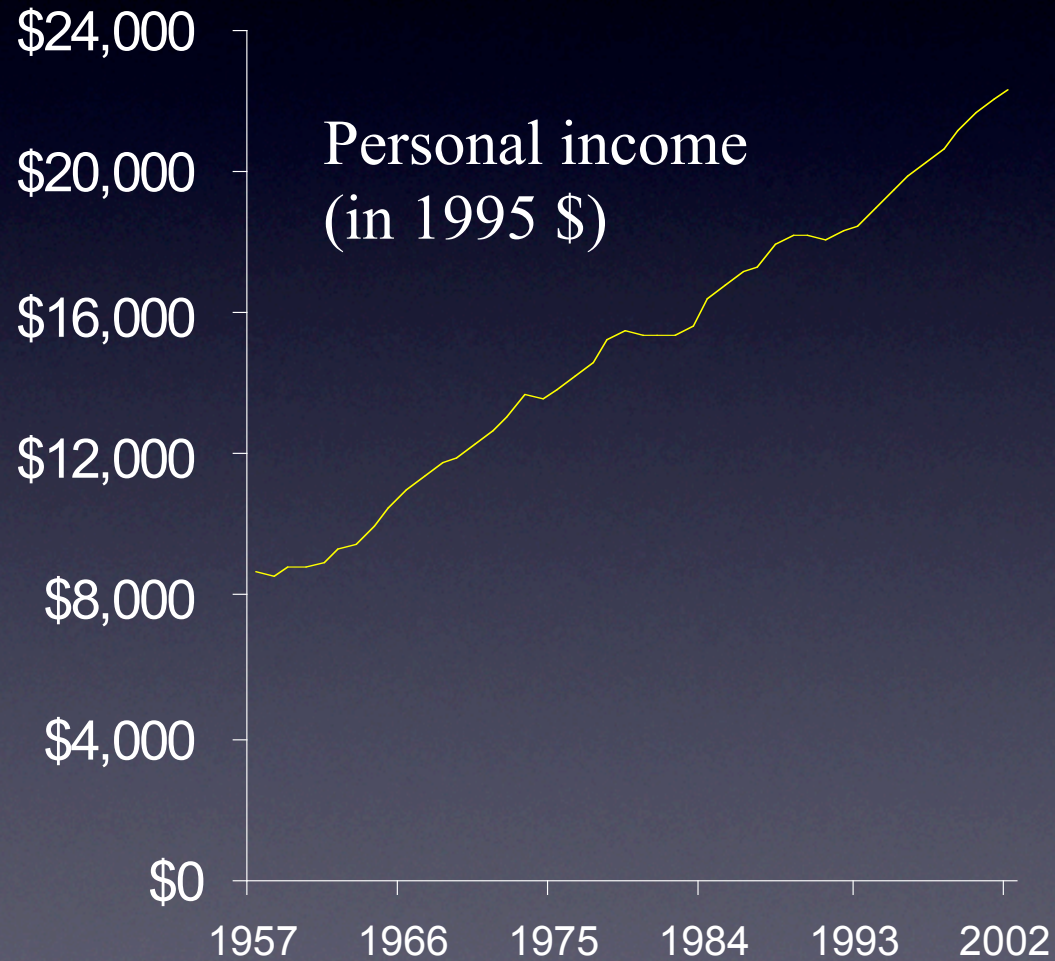


Simply stated, the difference between 1,000 and 10,000 is more than the difference between 1 million and 1 million + 9 thousand

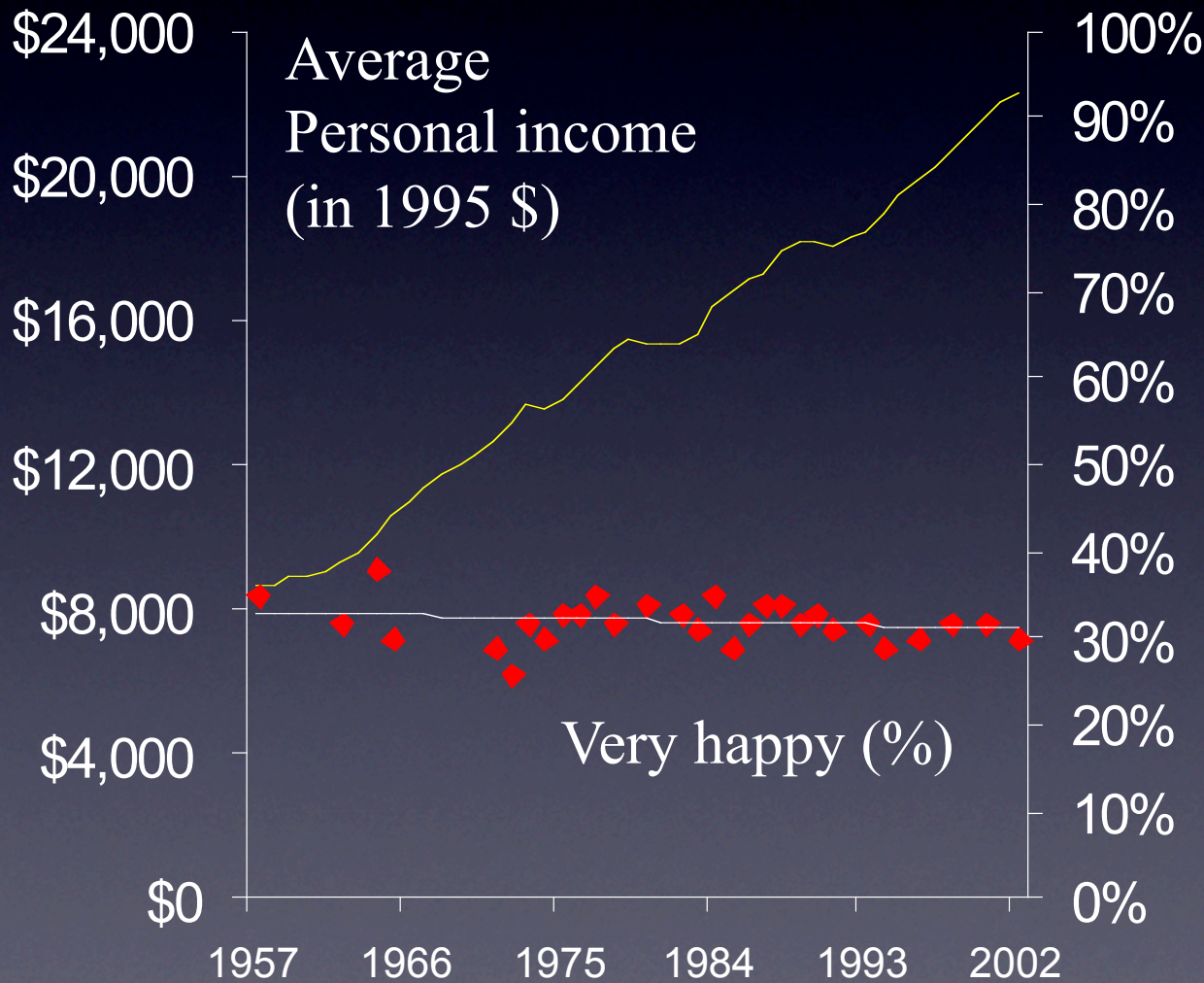
Does Money Buy Happiness?

3. Does the happiness of a nation rise as its wealth rises?

Income Rising...



So is Happiness Rising?



BUT: Recent data suggests that in Europe happiness does seem to have risen with income over time

AND: Much of the gain in personal income driven by the 1%

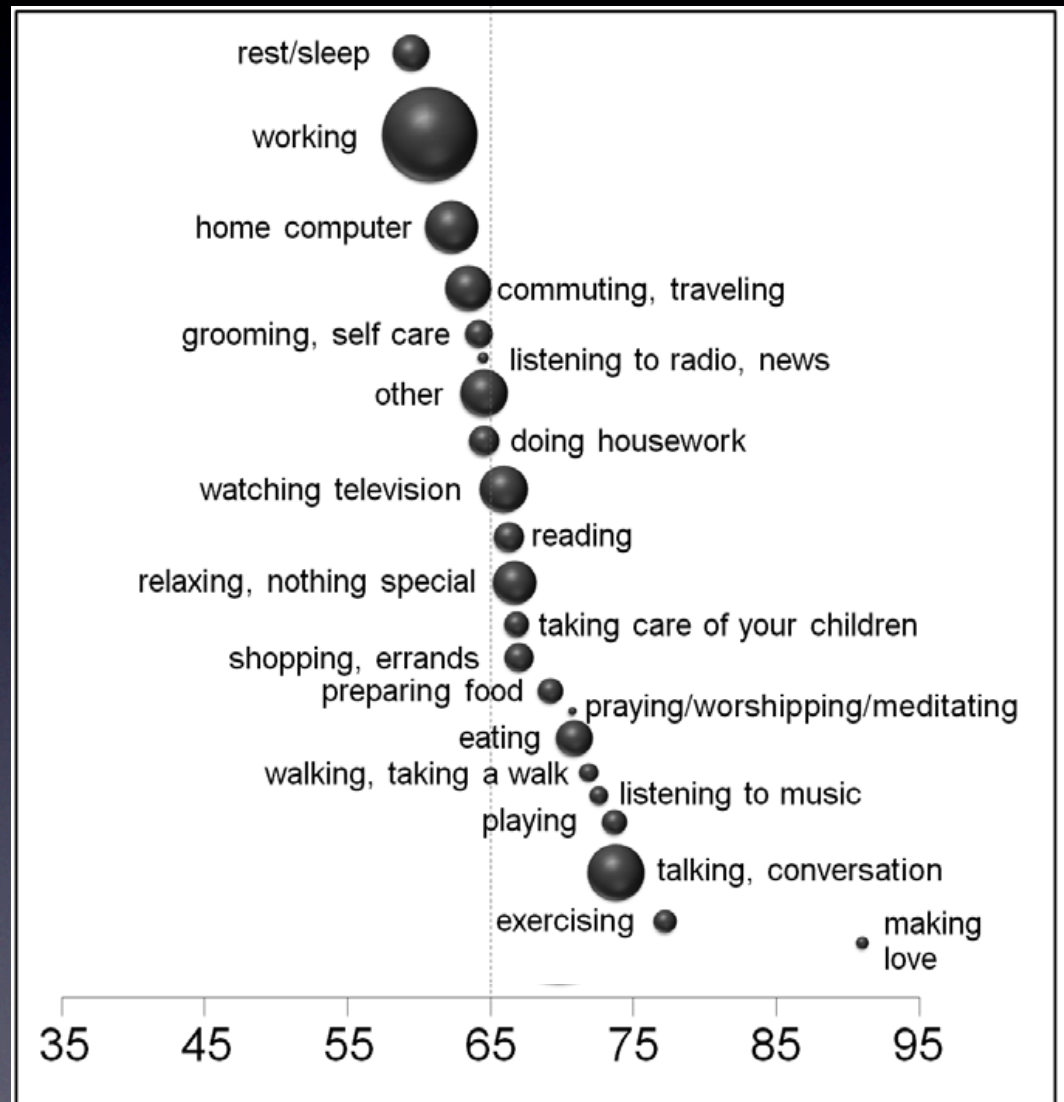
Teens from affluent families suffer elevated rates of...

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Substance use
- Eating disorders
 - (related to achievement pressures?)

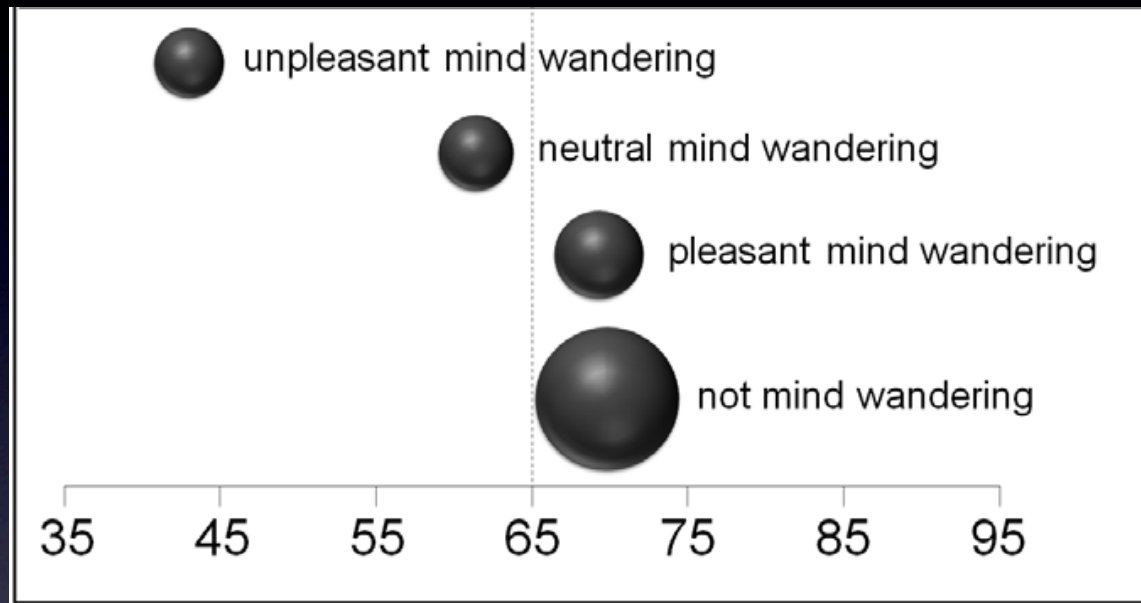
- 3. Does the happiness of a nation rise as its wealth rises?
 - Currently controversial
 - Some of the happiness money brings is from **relative** status – this isn't gained when everyone gets richer
 - But – nations growing wealthier is likely to make people in them happier on average

When are we happy?

Sex,
Exercise, &
Other People



Happiness is Being In The Moment



- What we're doing only accounts for a small percent of our happiness
- Being present with what we're doing actually seems to account for more than the thing itself! (Wandering minds = less happiness)

What are the
characteristics of happy
people?

What Are The Characteristics of Happy People?



“I’ve always been happy, but lately I’ve turned it up a notch or two.”

What do happy people have?

- Personality traits:
 - Self-esteem
 - Sense of Personal Control
 - Optimism
 - Extraversion

What Do Happy People Have?

- Good Genes – 50% of your baseline level of happiness is genetic

Religion and Happiness

- Religious people tend to be happier. Why?
 - Reverse causality?
 - Social connections?
 - Meaning making?

Can We Get Happier?

- Our “baseline” level of happiness appears to be heavily influenced by genetics
- Changing this baseline over the long term can be difficult – even major positive and negative life events have smaller impact than you’d think
- Key to sustaining boosts in happiness is avoiding **hedonic adaptation**

Do we know what makes us happy?

- We over-predict how much emotional impact life events will have on us – both positive events and negative events
- We over-emphasize our uniqueness
 - AKA: If 95% of people liked Avatar, you probably will too.



"For the reader who seeks to understand happiness, my advice is: Begin with Haidt."

—MARTIN E. P. SELIGMAN, author of *Authentic Happiness*

The Happiness Hypothesis

Finding Modern Truth in Ancient Wisdom

JONATHAN HAIDT

Stumbling on **HAPPINESS**

"THINK YOU KNOW WHAT MAKES YOU HAPPY?"

This absolutely fantastic book will shatter your most deeply held convictions about how the mind works."—STEVEN D. LEVITT, author of *FREAKONOMICS*



DANIEL GILBERT

THE NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

One Grump's Search for
the Happiest Places in the World

THE GEOGRAPHY OF

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ERIC WEINER

Correspondent, NPR

"This wise, witty ramble reads
like Paul Theroux channeling
David Sedaris on a particularly
good day."

-*Kirkus Reviews*

"Moving... profound...
a winning new book."

-*National Geographic*





YOU ARE AWESOME

YOU ARE APPRECIATED

YOU ARE LOVED

YOU ARE ENOUGH

YOU HAVE ENOUGH

EVERYTHING IS GOING TO BE OKAY

SPREADING HAPPY

SPREADING HAPPY

SPREADING HAPPY

SPREADING HAPPY

SPREADING HAPPY

SPREADING HAPPY

Exam #2

- Graded out of 51.5
- Mean Total Score: 41.5 (80.7%)
 - Questions 1 & 2: Jessica Gaby
 - Questions 3 & 4: Emily Rosenzweig
 - Questions 5 & 6: Ayse Candan
- FIRST: Read the grading rubric!