

# Happiness



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## Questions + Themes

What do we **want**? What do we **need**?

Does getting what we want make us happy?

What **does** make us happy?

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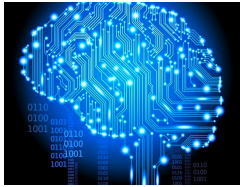
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# What do we want?



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Abraham Maslow  
(1908-1970)

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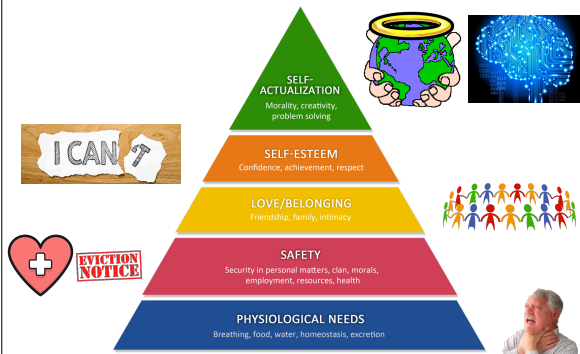
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## “Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs”



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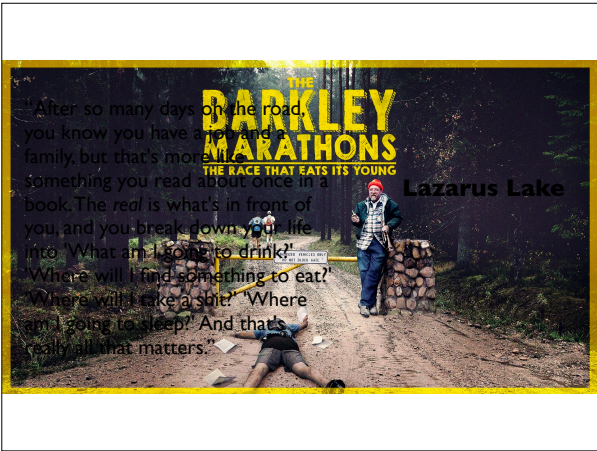
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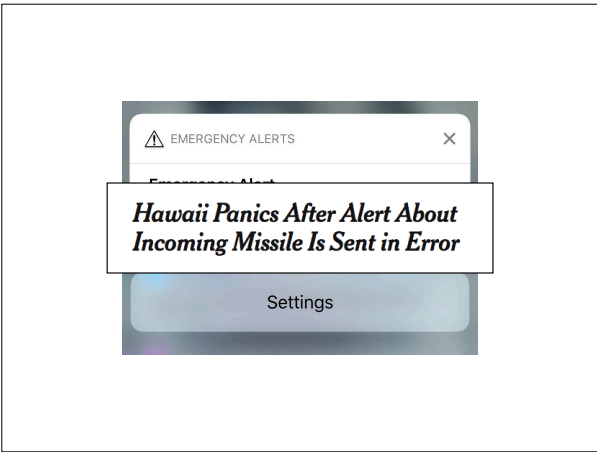
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# Testing the Hierarchy

**Life Satisfaction, Self-Determination, and Consumption Adequacy at the Bottom of the Pyramid**

KELLY D. MARTIN  
RONALD PAUL HILL

HOWARD YANG HITT  
KELLY D. MARTIN

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# Testing the Hierarchy

77,646 people

51 of the world's poorest countries

“Consumption Adequacy”

Autonomy

Life Satisfaction

(Martin & Hill, 2012)

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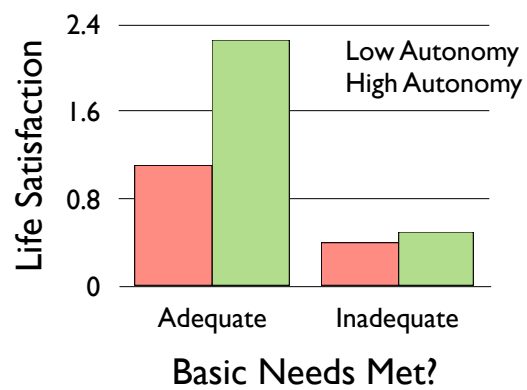
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(Martin & Hill, 2012)

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*Do we want what we need?*

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*Does what we want make us happy?*

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## Affective Forecasting

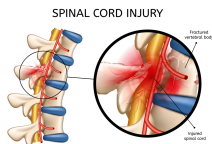
## Affective Forecasting

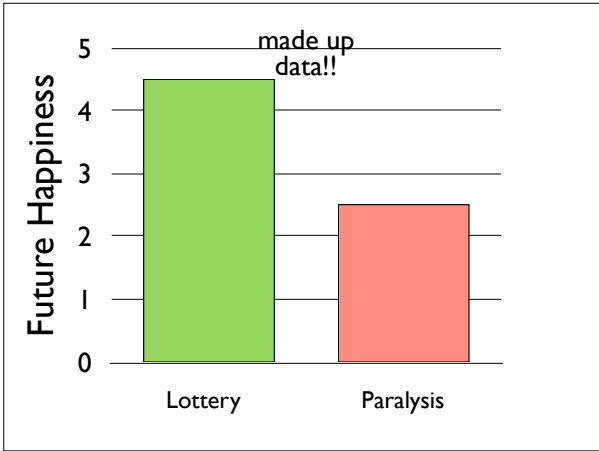
let's predict:  
how happy will \_\_\_\_ make us?

## Affective Forecasting



VS.





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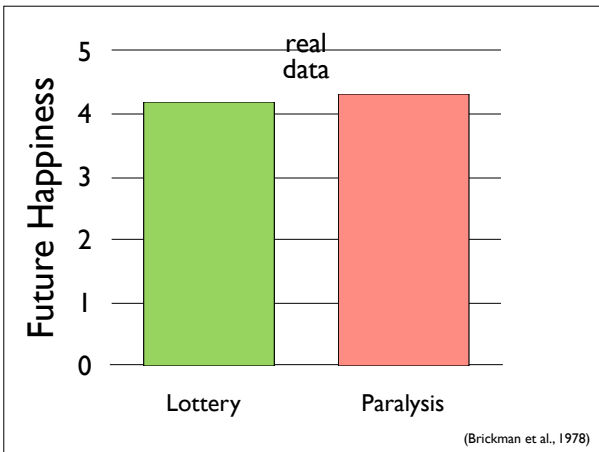
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**Dying**

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## Dying Is Unexpectedly Positive



Amelia Goranson<sup>1</sup>, Ryan S. Ritter<sup>2</sup>, Adam Waytz<sup>2</sup>,  
Michael I. Norton<sup>1</sup>, and Kurt Gray<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Psychology & Neuroscience, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; <sup>2</sup>Department of Psychology, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; <sup>3</sup>Management and Organizations Department, Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University; and <sup>4</sup>Marketing Unit, Business School, Harvard University

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1-12  
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DOI: 10.1177/0956797617701186  
www.psychologicalscience.org/PS  
SAGE

Abstract text in a non-Latin script, likely representing a placeholder or a specific encoding error.

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## Blog Posts of Terminally Ill Patients

### Non-Patient Forecast

Sometimes the flood of emotions becomes almost unbearable. Sitting here thinking about how ALS is robbing me of my voice, my breath, my stride and my dignity, it is tempting to retreat inside and isolate myself from family and friends who love me. Why burden them with what I am becoming? Why make a difficult future for me even worse for them?

(Goranson et al., 2017)

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## Blog Posts of Terminally Ill Patients

### Real Blogpost

Surrounded here by so much love and care I feel I am ready for the next step. I have no regrets at all – I have had a full life, touched and been touched by such wonderful family and friends.  
So if there is to be a final lesson for me it is that love is the ultimate gift — love and honesty.  
I am so grateful for the messages of support I have received from readers of this blog.

(Goranson et al., 2017)

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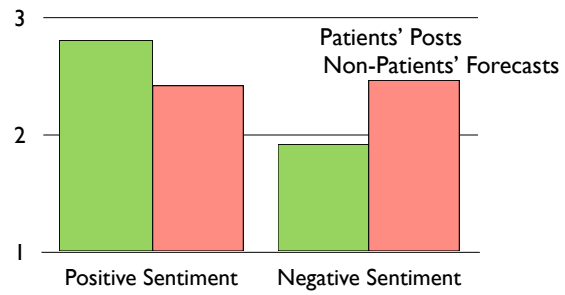
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## Blog Posts of Terminally Ill Patients



(Goranson et al., 2017)

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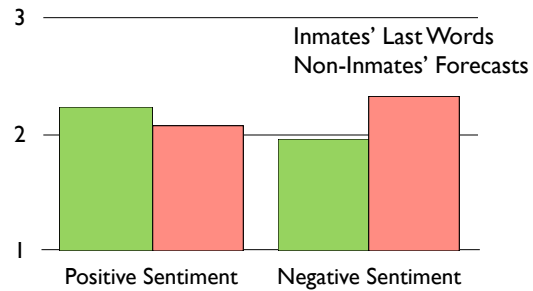
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## Last Words of Death Row Inmates



(Goranson et al., 2017)

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## “Impact Bias”



The tendency to overestimate the difference of alternatives

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# Does money buy happiness?

From wealth to well-being? Money matters, but less than people think

Lara B. Aknin<sup>a</sup>, Michael I. Norton<sup>b</sup> and Elizabeth W. Dunn<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Department of Psychology, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada; <sup>b</sup>Marketing Unit, Harvard Business School, Boston, MA, USA

(Received 25 January 2009; final version received 29 April 2009)

While numerous studies have documented the modest (though reliable) link between household income and well-being, we examined the accuracy of laypeople's intuitions about this relationship by asking people from across the income spectrum to report their own happiness and to predict the happiness of others (Study 1) and themselves (Study 2) at different income levels. Data from two national surveys revealed that while laypeople's predictions were relatively accurate at higher levels of income, they greatly overestimated the impact of income on life satisfaction at lower income levels, expecting low household income to be coupled with very low life satisfaction. Thus, people may work hard to maintain or increase their income in part because they overestimate the hedonic costs of earning low levels of income.

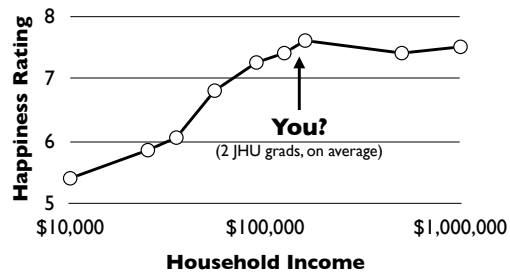
**Keywords:** income; well-being; wealth; happiness; predictions; overestimation

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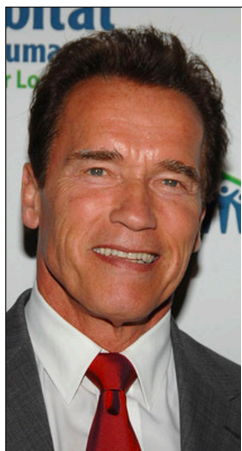
For further information on this article please go to the journal website

at <http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1467-8551.2009.00411.x>

# Does money buy happiness?



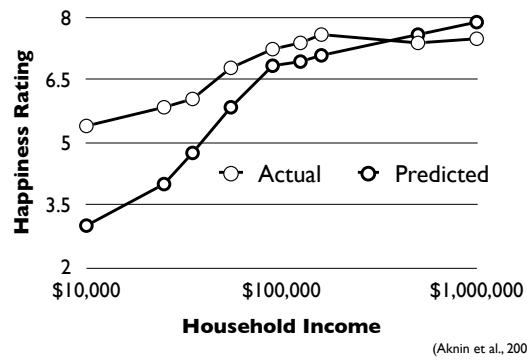
(Aknin et al., 2009)



“Money doesn’t make you happy. I now have \$50 million, but I was just as happy when I had \$48 million.”

theguardian

# Does money buy happiness?




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Available online at [www.sciencedirect.com](http://www.sciencedirect.com)



Journal of Consumer Psychology 21 (2011) 115–125

## Research Dialogue

If money doesn't make you happy, then you probably aren't spending it right

Elizabeth W. Dunn<sup>a,\*</sup>, Daniel T. Gilbert<sup>b,1</sup>, Timothy D. Wilson<sup>c,2</sup>

<sup>a</sup> University of British Columbia, Douglas Kenny Building, Room 2013, 2136 West Mall, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada V8T 1Z4

<sup>b</sup> Department of Psychology, Harvard University, William James Hall, Cambridge, MA 02138, USA

<sup>c</sup> Department of Psychology, University of Virginia, P.O. Box 406009, Charlottesville, VA 22904-4609, USA

\* Corresponding author. E-mail address: [edunn@psych.ubc.ca](mailto:edunn@psych.ubc.ca)

<sup>1</sup> E-mail address: [dgilbert@psych.harvard.edu](mailto:dgilbert@psych.harvard.edu)

<sup>2</sup> E-mail address: [timothy.d.wilson@virginia.edu](mailto:timothy.d.wilson@virginia.edu)

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# How to buy happiness

Save up to buy yourself something big




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# How to buy happiness

- Prefer **experiences** to **things**
- Spend on **others**
- Many **small** joys > a few **big** ones
- Avoid **comparison** shopping

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# How to buy happiness

- Prefer **experiences** to **things**
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# Things vs. Experiences

Journal of Personality and Social Psychology  
2011, Vol. 98, No. 1, 146–159

© 2010 American Psychological Association  
1073-271X/11/\$12.00 DOI: 10.1037/a0018114

## The Relative Relativity of Material and Experiential Purchases

Travis J. Carter and Thomas Gilovich  
Cornell University

When it comes to spending disposable income, experiential purchases tend to make people happier than material purchases (Van Boven & Gilovich, 2003). But why are experiences more satisfying? We propose that the evaluation of experiences tends to be less comparative than that of material possessions, such that potentially invidious comparisons have less impact on satisfaction with experiences than with material possessions. Support for this contention was obtained in 8 studies. We found that participants were less satisfied with their material purchases because they were more likely to ruminate about unchosen options (Study 1); that participants tended to maximize when selecting material goods and sacrifice when selecting experiences (Study 2); that participants examined unchosen material purchases more than unchosen experiential purchases (Study 3); and that, relative to experiences, participants' satisfaction with their material possessions was undermined more by comparisons to other available options (Studies 4 and 5A), to the same option at a different price (Studies 5B and 6), and to the purchases of other individuals (Study 5C). Our results suggest that experiential purchase decisions are easier to make and more conducive to well-being.

Keywords: happiness, experiential purchases, material purchases, comparisons, satisfaction, well-being

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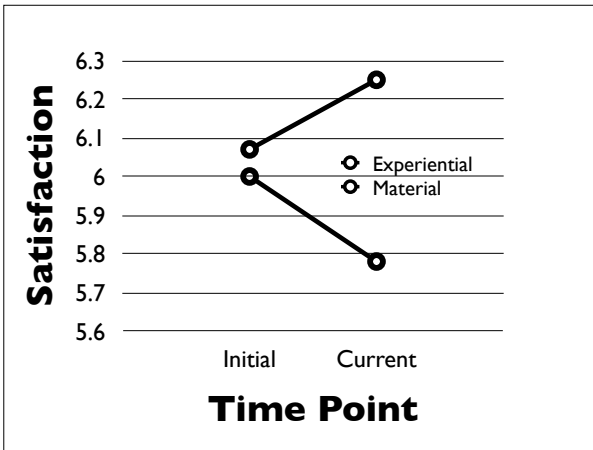
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**Maximizing**  
 material things  
  
**VS.**  
  
 experiences  
**Satisficing**

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**“Positional Concerns”**

Is more always better?: A survey on positional concerns  
 Sara J. Solnick<sup>a</sup>, David Hemenway<sup>b</sup>  
<sup>a</sup>Assistant Professor of Economics, University of Miami, 3101 SW 24th St, Coral Gables, FL 33134-6500, USA  
<sup>b</sup>Professor of Health Policy, Harvard School of Public Health, Boston, MA 02115, USA  
Received 2 April 1997; received in revised form 11 July 1997

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**Abstract**

We use survey data to provide some empirical information about concerns regarding relative standing. Respondents chose between a world where they have more of a good than others and one where everyone's enjoyment of the good is higher, but the respondent has less than others. Questions asked about education, attractiveness and intelligence for one's child and spouse, income, vacation time, approval and disapproval from a supervisor, and papers to write. Half of the respondents preferred to have 50% less real income but high relative income. Concerns about position were strongest for attractiveness and supervisor's praise and weakest for vacation time. © 1998 Elsevier Science B.V. All rights reserved.

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 Journal of Economic Surveys (1998) 12, 1-14  
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## “Positional Concerns”

A: Your yearly income is \$100,000; others earn \$50,000  
B: Your yearly income is \$150,000; others earn \$300,000

(Prices are what they are currently, and prices [therefore the purchasing power of money] are the same in states A and B.)

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A: You have 2 weeks of vacation; others have 1 week  
B: You have 3 weeks of vacation; others have 6 weeks

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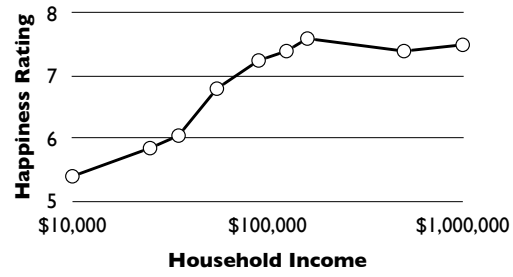
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## Does money buy happiness?



(Aknin et al., 2009)

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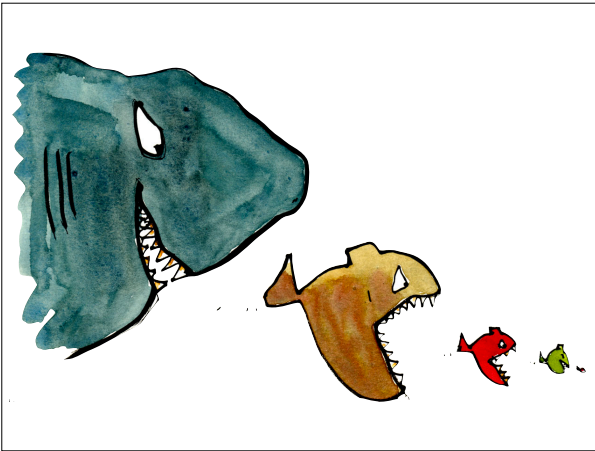
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## Which Experiences?

What would you do if you won the lottery? See how these millionaires spent their cash windfall



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# Which Experiences?

## Experience Sampling

2,250 people with an iPhone App

“What are you doing right now?”  
“How are you feeling right now?”  
(0-100)

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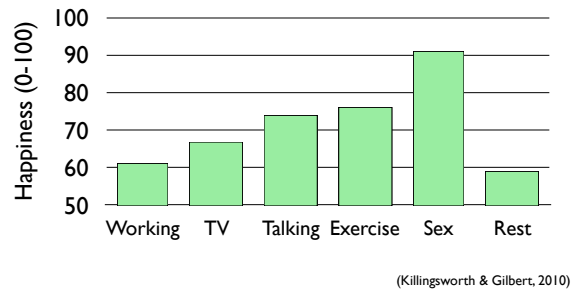
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# Which Experiences?



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## A Wandering Mind Is an Unhappy Mind

Matthew A. Killingsworth\* and Daniel T. Gilbert

Unlike other animals, human beings spend a lot of time thinking about what is not going on around them, contemplating events that happened in the past, might happen in the future, or will never happen at all. Indeed, “stimulus-independent thought” or “mind wandering” appears to be the brain’s default mode of operation (1–3). Although this ability is a remarkable evolutionary achievement that allows people to learn, reason, and plan, it may have an emotional cost. Many philosophical and religious traditions teach that happiness is to be found by living in the moment, and practitioners are trained to resist mind wandering and “to be here now.” These traditions suggest that a wandering mind is an unhappy mind. Are they right?

Laboratory experiments have revealed a great deal about the cognitive and neural bases of mind wandering (3–7), but little about its emotional consequences in everyday life. The most reliable method for investigating real-world emotion is experience sampling, which involves contacting people as they engage in their everyday activities and

more of 22 activities adapted from the day reconstruction method (10, 11), and a mind-wandering question (“Are you thinking about something other than what you’re currently doing?”) answered with one of four options: no, yes, something pleasant, yes, something neutral, or yes, something unpleasant. Our analyses revealed three facts.

First, people’s minds wandered frequently, regardless of what they were doing. Mind wandering occurred in 46.9% of the samples and in at least 30% of the samples taken during every activity except making love. The frequency of mind wandering in our real-world sample was considerably higher than is typically seen in laboratory experiments. Surprisingly, the nature of people’s activities had only a modest impact on whether their minds wandered and had almost no impact on the pleasantness of the topics to which their minds wandered (12).

Second, multilevel regression revealed that people were less happy when their minds were wandering than when they were not (slope  $b = -8.79$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ), and this was true during all activities,

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# Which Experiences?

What would you do if you won the lottery? See how these millionaires spent their cash windfall



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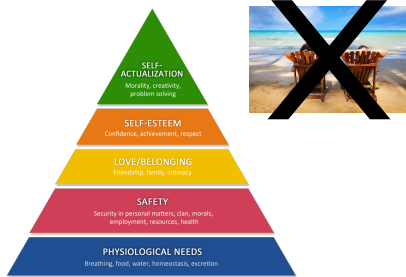
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# Which Experiences?



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Happiness is something you **do**

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Happiness



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