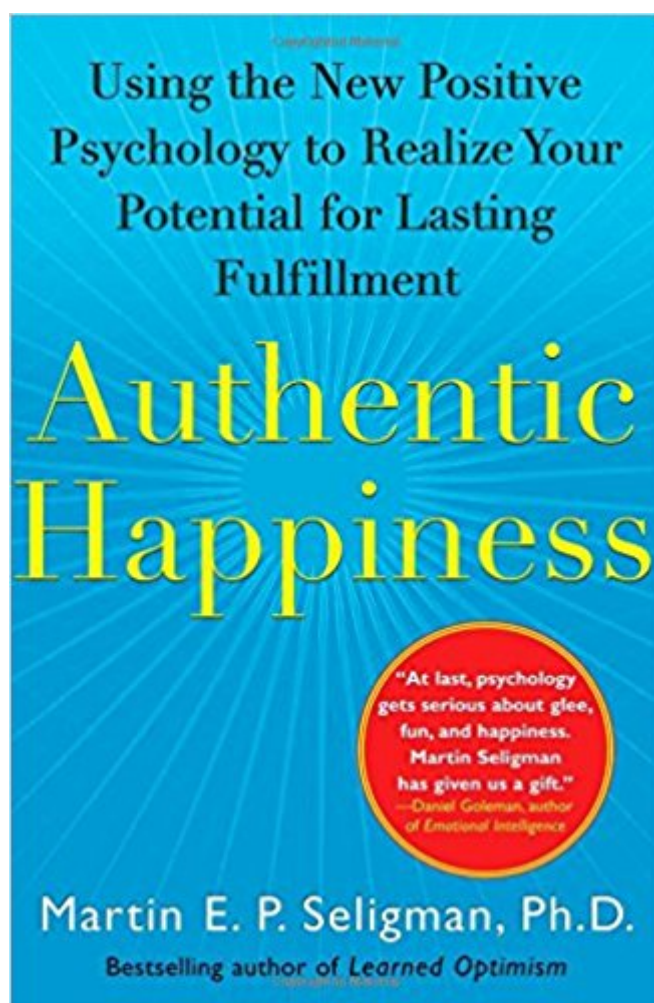


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Authentic Happiness: Using The New Positive Psychology To Realize Your Potential For Lasting Fulfillment



Synopsis

A national bestseller, *Authentic Happiness* launched the revolutionary new science of Positive Psychology and sparked a coast-to-coast debate on the nature of real happiness. According to esteemed psychologist and bestselling author Martin Seligman, happiness is not the result of good genes or luck. Real, lasting happiness comes from focusing on one's personal strengths rather than weaknesses and working with them to improve all aspects of one's life. Using practical exercises, brief tests, and a dynamic website program, Seligman shows readers how to identify their highest virtues and use them in ways they haven't yet considered. Accessible and proven, *Authentic Happiness* is the most powerful work of popular psychology in years.

Book Information

Paperback: 336 pages

Publisher: Atria Books; Reprint edition (January 5, 2004)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0743222989

ISBN-13: 978-0743222983

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.9 x 8.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 245 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #10,426 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #44 in Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Mental Health > Emotions #89 in Books > Science & Math > Behavioral Sciences > Cognitive Psychology #143 in Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Mental Health > Happiness

Customer Reviews

In his latest user-friendly road map for human emotion, the author of the bestselling *Learned Optimism* proposes ratcheting the field of psychology to a new level. "Relieving the states that make life miserable... has made building the states that make life worth living less of a priority. The time has finally arrived for a science that seeks to understand positive emotion, build strength and virtue, and provide guideposts for finding what Aristotle called the 'good life,'" writes Seligman. Thankfully, his lengthy homage to happiness may actually live up to the ambitious promise of its subtitle. Seligman doesn't just preach the merits of happiness e.g., happy people are healthier, more productive and contentedly married than their unhappy counterparts but he also presents brief tests and even an interactive Web site (the launch date is set for mid-August) to help readers increase the happiness quotient in their own lives. Trying to fix weaknesses won't help, he says; rather,

incorporating strengths such as humor, originality and generosity into everyday interactions with people is a better way to achieve happiness. Skeptics will wonder whether it's possible to learn happiness from a book. Their point may be valid, but Seligman certainly provides the attitude adjustment and practical tools (including self-tests and exercises) for charting the course. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Caroline Myss Author of Sacred Contracts Authentic Happiness is delightful and richly insightful. Martin Seligman has written a very practical book, guiding readers to make positive choices in life. Steven Pinker Author of The Language Instinct A highly insightful scientific and personal reflection on the nature of happiness, from one of the most creative and influential psychologists of our time. Elle A bold new plan for taking control of your life and finding lasting happiness.

I don't know when it happened, but somewhere along the line virtue became a dirty word. You can't say it without getting weird looks. You can't even think it without feeling like a hypocrite. Virtue? Isn't that something Victorians believed in? Look where that got us: a world so full of oppression that the sun never sets on it. I used to be in that camp. Virtue was a guilty pleasure of mine. I believed in it (sort of). But I always felt like either a faker or a cultural imperialist for doing so. Whenever the word popped into my mind, I gave myself one good mental flogging as penance. The field of psychology seems to have been beset by similar demons. Much of the research agenda has been dedicated to identifying pathology (things gone very wrong), and mitigating it where possible. That is, until now (or, to be more accurate, until about ten years ago). Martin Seligman is one of the founders of the field of Positive Psychology, a new branch of research that tries to identify what can go very right. His findings are compiled in Authentic Happiness. The book has vindicated virtue, at least in my mind. Seligman has spent the last decade plus trying to identify the sources of human flourishing. He has found a combination of six such sources appearing in literature from the Indus Valley to the Japanese Archipelago to the Mediterranean Sea (how about South America, Africa, or the annals of the Iroquois Nation? I'm not sure. I bet you'd find these traits in abundance there, too, if you looked). The six (drumroll please) more-or-less ubiquitous human virtues as uncovered by Seligman's team of graduate students are: 1) Wisdom and Knowledge 2) Courage 3) Love and Humanity 4) Justice 5) Temperance 6) Spirituality and Transcendence (defined as moving beyond narrow self-interest) Quibble as you will,

this seems like a good place to start. The first step to becoming a better person is believing that it is possible. For a long time I didn't. I thought that the best I could do was keep to myself; I cowered in fear of offending anyone's sensibilities with my notions of good and bad, or of taking on a model I couldn't live up to. I'm done with that. I may go down, but at least I'll go down swinging.

About four years ago I wrote an 85 page story about my life titled "A Roadmap for Happiness, When Traveling from Age 70 to age 90". Each year since then I have been adding a new chapter. One of my main references for this story was a book by Dennis Prager, titled "Happiness is a Serious Business". Between April of 2010 and March of 2011 I worked at job that fully utilized my technical skills (electronics engineer) and teaching abilities. Since this job ended I have been busily readjusting my roadmap. Part of this activity has been to read more books about happiness and to modify my goals. "Authentic Happiness" includes a thorough analysis about techniques for "realizing your full potential for lasting fulfillment". One of my favorite parts is the description of work as a "job, career, or calling". The author says that a key part of being happy is to understand your own "signature strengths" and to use them to help other people. Another key to happiness is being grateful and expressing that to others (especially your spouse) on a regular basis. A book titled "Aspire" (by Kevin Hall) describes eleven attributes of people that we can admire. He recommends that we let them know what we observe about them. There are many other books about happiness and numerous people who comment about them on .com. I am proud to be one of them.

Not his best work. The concept is very interesting but he uses the book as a platform to discuss his prior books and overly detailed anecdotes. If you can buy it cheap and used, it is worth perusing.

Great book. This book was a requirement for a college course I took last semester. I actually enjoyed reading it. Great Price too!

Seligman's take on psychology is intriguing and inspiring. Often, one can become discouraged by their past or current tendencies, but this book provides insights into reaching our fullest potential of happiness and hope for doing so. This book has helped me to understand myself and my general level of happiness, and that not every aspect of that is under my control. But I have also learned which parts of that happiness ARE under my control and how to maximize those aspects in order to increase my overall long term happiness. If you enjoy studies of Meta-cognition and optimistic

problem-solving, you might also be inspired by this book!

In this well-written, very accessible book, Martin Seligman points out that traditional psychology has always focused on the pathology of the human condition: illness and trauma. By understanding more about what makes people exceptionally well - happy, positive, optimistic - and recognizing that those who have these characteristics are more likely not only to have rewarding lives, but also to be successful in the world, Seligman believes that those who are naturally pessimistic or focused on the down-side can shift their perspective and become happier people. While this is not a self-help book per se, it does offer tools - including a series of self-evaluations (also available at the Authentic Happiness website) - to help readers understand their strengths and how they can adjust their own viewpoint to become happier. Highly recommended for anyone interested in positive psychology and the power of positive thinking. This book is grounded in solid research; it's not "fluffy" in any way!

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