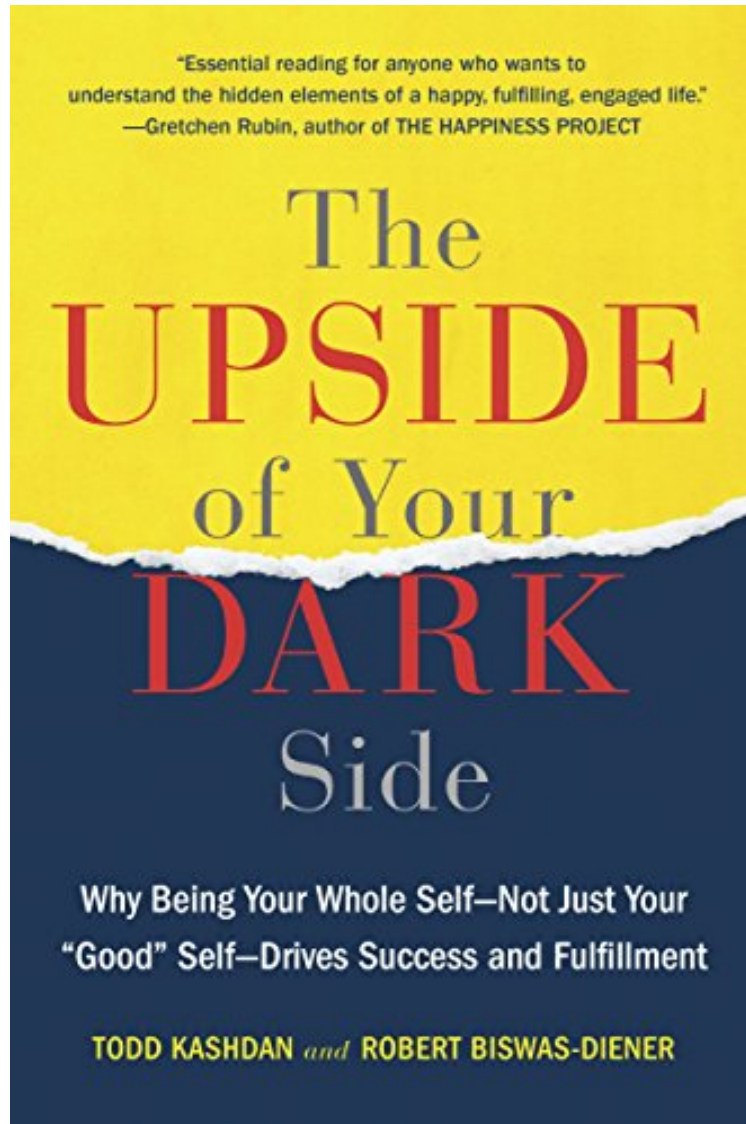


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quot;Goodquot; Self--Drives Success and Fulfillment

## The Upside of Your Dark Side: Why Being Your Whole Self--Not Just Your quot;Goodquot; Self--Drives Success and Fulfillment

*Todd Kashdan, Robert Biswas-Diener*  
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**Todd Kashdan, Robert Biswas-Diener : The Upside of Your Dark Side: Why Being Your Whole Self--Not Just Your quot;Goodquot; Self--Drives Success and Fulfillment** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Upside of Your Dark Side: Why Being Your Whole Self--Not Just Your quot;Goodquot; Self--Drives Success and Fulfillment:

71 of 74 people found the following review helpful. An Amazing Book About Embracing Your Full SelfBy David

Bennett I have always been a pretty happy and cheery person, and I have rarely allowed my "dark" side to realistically ever rear its head. I grew up in an environment where conflict was avoided at all costs, and negative emotions considered to be bad, so reading this book was not only highly informative but allowed me to access and harness a side of myself I have ignored. The authors begin by observing that most people don't know what makes them happy. We estimate the effect events will have on us, and typically don't experience the highs or lows that we expect from events. So rather than striving for happiness all the time, the authors suggest going for something closer to 80/20, 80% positive to 20% negative, taking advantage of the benefits of perceived negative concepts like anger, guilt, anxiety, and mindlessness. This leads to social, emotional, and mental agility, the ability to function optimally across the wide range of human emotions rather than unrealistically pretending to be happy all the time. The authors focus on the downsides of being happy, such as that happy people are less persuasive and less likely to spot lies. Happy people tend to take mental short cuts and thus when things get stressful, happy people are more likely to rely on stereotypical views of others. They also explain the benefits of negative emotions. For example, anger can lead to greater creativity and guilt can cause positive change in people. The authors provide ways to effectively use anger and guilt, avoiding rage and shame, which are rarely effective accomplishing anything. The quest for happiness at all costs, evidenced by our "comfort at all costs" culture, is actually hurting our ability to be happy. In fact, studies show that doing things with the expectation to be happy actually decreases the happiness we get from them. In fact, our own brain gets in the way of us being happy, and there is nothing wrong with this, if you know how to deal with it. They also explain the benefits of mindlessness (more creativity and instant access to our valuable subconscious mind), the downsides of being polite (polite people get their way less than assertive people), and the upsides of following one's impulses (taking risks that lead to great rewards). What about "dark triad" traits like Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy? Yes, they too have a place in our mental toolbox, demonstrated by the fact that the most effective presidents possessed these traits in greater amounts than the least effective. The authors are careful to admit that there are limits to embracing our "bad" sides, and that is why this book is so amazing, as it provides research-backed guidelines to making states like anger, mindlessness, impulsiveness, narcissism, etc, work for our benefit. Overall, I highly recommend this book. It has opened up a new realm of possibility for me. Rather than effectively pretending I don't have a bad side, I have the tools to make \*all\* of myself function optimally. This is quite possibly the best book I have read in 2014. 62 of 64 people found the following review helpful. It's About Time By Book Fanatic It's about time somebody said enough to the overselling of positivity. Please be clear that these authors are part of the positive psychology movement and have contributed a lot to it, but they make a great case for not going to the extreme in being positive and valuing your negative emotions. I loved the chapter about the obsession with mindfulness. As someone who is not naturally positive but who believes in not being too negative, I've decided over the years that some people like me just can't change their basic nature and this book gives us consolation that there can be advantages in certain so-called negative outlooks and emotions. They document their arguments with scientific research. This book is extremely well written and an easy and enjoyable read. It makes intuitive sense and I think will appeal to reasonable people who are tired of the happiness and mindfulness fads. Highly Recommended. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. good advice By J. Parr It's not always quite clear what they're recommending, but a lot of it is very good advice.

Two mavericks in the field of positive psychology deliver a timely message Happiness experts have long told us to tune out our negative emotions and focus instead on mindfulness, positivity, and optimism. Researchers Todd Kashdan, Ph.D., and Robert Biswas-Diener, Dr. Philos., disagree. Positive emotions alone are not enough. Anger makes us creative, selfishness makes us brave, and guilt is a powerful motivator. The real key to success lies in emotional agility. Drawing upon extensive scientific research and a wide array of real-life examples, *The Upside of Your Dark Side* will be embraced by business leaders, parents, and everyone else who's ready to put their entire psychological tool kit to work.

At long last, here's a book on why happiness can make us sad and mindfulness might be overrated. *The Upside of Your Dark Side* offers a provocative, evidence-based case for a balanced life. If you haven't read it yet, you should feel guilty—and it turns out that will be good for you.—Adam Grant, author of *Give and Take* With verve, humor, solid research, and lots of examples, the authors cut through prevailing myths about happiness to show what actually creates a fulfilling, contributing life. Brave, bold, and brilliant.—Rick Hanson, PhD, author of *Buddha's Brain* Anger, guilt, regret, and anxiety have no place in a happy life, right? Wrong. *The Upside of Your Dark Side* illuminates the essential role played by negative emotions. And then goes further, revealing the benefits of personality traits we tend to downgrade such as grandiosity and selfishness. Essential reading for anyone who wants to understand the hidden elements of a happy, fulfilling, engaged life.—Gretchen Rubin, author of *The Happiness Project* *The Upside of Your Dark Side* offers one of the most important messages of recent psychological science: that you don't need to avoid discomfort or distress to have a meaningful and joyful life. The authors provide a highly refreshing alternative to the idea that one

must pursue happiness at all costs. There is much to be learned from the experience of negative emotions, and from this book."—Kelly McGonigal, PhD, author of *The Willpower Instinct*"I feel like I have five new superpowers after reading this book. It turns out that leading a good and satisfying life doesn't mean we have to try to be happy, calm or optimistic all the time. We can learn to use uncomfortable feelings like anger, anxiety, guilt, sadness or boredom to be kinder, braver, smarter, more creative and more persuasive. The dark side does indeed have an upside -- and this book teaches us how to harness it, so we can truly lead more heroic and purposeful lives."—Jane McGonigal, PhD, author of *Reality Is Broken*"Full of scientific research yet laugh-out-loud funny, this book is a must read. The authors turn everything on its head—questioning the wisdom of positive psychology and the pursuit of happiness—all in order to help us flourish and be happy!"—Kristin Neff, PhD, author of *Self-Compassion*"My experience with hundreds of clients tells me that happiness and well-being result from facing and accepting bouts of fear, shame and self-doubt. I am so glad that Todd and Robert chose to illustrate the science behind embracing negative emotions in this engaging book. It will help you live a deep, rich and meaningful life."—Pamela Slim, author of *Body of Work* and *Escape from Cubicle Nation*"Do we really need another book about happiness? Don't we all already know those '10 Steps to Certain Happiness'? The answers, surprisingly, are "Yes" and "No". Yes, we need this book by Todd and Robert because No, we don't know it all about happiness. It turns out there's a hugely under-utilized tool to increase your capacity for happiness. The very Dark from which we run away is often the path to the Light. If you've ever wondered how you can use what's difficult to get closer to what's good, this just might be the book for you."—Michael Bungay Stanier, Senior Partner, Box of Crayons and author of *Do More Great Work*About the Author Todd B. Kashdan, Ph.D., is a recognized authority on personality, well-being, and social relationships. He has published more than 150 scholarly articles and trains professionals to become emotionally and socially agile. He has been honored with the Distinguished Faculty Member of the Year Award at George Mason University and the 2013 Distinguished Scientific Early Career Award from the American Psychological Association. His work has been featured in several media outlets, including the New York Times and the Washington Post. Robert Biswas-Diener, Dr. Philos. has published more than forty scholarly articles and has trained thousands of professionals on six continents. He is known as the "Indiana Jones of Positive Psychology" because he has conducted research with groups typically overlooked by psychologists, including Amish farmers, sex workers in Kolkata, Maasai tribespeople, and seal hunters in a remote corner of Greenland. Excerpt. copy; Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.

INTRODUCTION THE PROMISE OF WHOLENESS PERHAPS THE MOST difficult test commonly used for recruiting elite special forces soldiers has nothing to do with marksmanship or proficiency in hand-to-hand combat. It's a simple jog down a remote road. Young men are instructed to don full gear and report to the starting point early in the morning, often sleep deprived and hungry. What makes this particular run unusually challenging is that none of the candidates are told the length of the course. Is it three hundred yards? Three miles? Thirty miles? The stakes are high as the recruits begin their jog into the unknown. Some sprint forward in hopes of being first if the run is short. Others pace themselves, carefully conserving energy in the thought that the run could turn out to be a marathon. Some keep to themselves, trusting in their resolve and determination. Others jog together as a group, shouting words of encouragement. Running with sixty-pound packs is tiring, but the physical exertion is less demanding than the mental strain. The pressure of not knowing the distance to the finish line pushes many to the breaking point. Ambiguous tasks are a good place to observe how personality traits bubble to the surface. Although few of us are elite soldiers, we've all experienced the kind of psychological distress these trainees encounter on their training run: managing unclear expectations, struggling with self-motivation, and balancing the use of social support with private reflection. These issues are endemic not only to the workplace, but also to relationships, health, and every aspect of life in which we seek to thrive and succeed. Not surprisingly, the leading predictor of success in elite military training programs is the same quality that distinguishes those best equipped to resolve marital conflict, to achieve favorable deal terms in business negotiations, and to bestow the gifts of good parenting on their children: the ability to tolerate psychological discomfort. This is what psychologists refer to as distress tolerance, a quality found in people who can handle the emotional equivalent of camping (no shampoo, flush toilets, or walls to keep out creepy crawlers), who don't shy away from anger, guilt, or boredom just because they feel bad. Instead, they withstand the discomfort of those feelings—and when appropriate—even draw from this darker palette of emotions. You might be asking, why would I want to do that? Pain hurts. I'd rather be happy. If this question occurs to you, we're nodding our heads in full agreement. We want you to be happy too. Distress tolerance is important not just because it makes you a better camper or soldier, but also because it allows you to become stronger, wiser, mentally agile, and, most important, happier in a more resilient, and therefore durable, way. After more than a decade of working with patients, clients, students, small companies, and organizations as large as the military and the Fortune 100, we, the authors, are putting forward a new way to pursue what is desirable in life; it's not happiness, exactly, although it does have the side effect of making us happier. We call this state wholeness. Beyond Happiness, Becoming Whole There will always be experts—especially in psychology—who argue that one particular way of being (happy, hardy, optimistic) is a cure-all. In this book, we take a different approach. Instead of suggesting

that one state is best, we suggest that they all are. We believe—and new research supports—the idea that every emotion is useful. Even the ones we think of as negative, including the painful ones. Anger is a good example. Research shows that only rarely does anger turn into the kind of overwhelming rage that leads to violence. Instead, it tends to bubble up when you perceive an encroachment on your rights as a person. Anger stirs you to defend yourself and those you care about, and to maintain healthy boundaries. Similarly, embarrassment is sometimes an early warning sign of humiliation. More often it's a signal that we've made a small mistake and that a small correction is required. Even guilt is not as awful as you might guess. It's a signal that you're violating your own moral code and therefore need to adjust either your actions or your code. All psychological states have some adaptive advantage. Rather than steering you toward a single feeling state, then, we urge you to consider the usefulness of many—especially the ones we turn away from—and to develop the ability to navigate every one. For some people, seeing the bright side of life is an uphill battle; for others, feeling sad is an unusual event. We don't suggest an extra helping of happiness or a dash of negativity; we suggest both. It is by appropriately flipping back and forth between these two states that you can achieve a balanced, stabilizing sense of wholeness. Simply put, people who are able to use the whole range of their natural psychological gifts—those folks who are comfortable with being both positive and negative, and can therefore draw from the full range of human emotions—are the healthiest and, often, the most successful. Wholeness does not come easily, however. We get comfortable with pursuing a certain set of emotions. They make us feel good. Riding high in the moment is hard to pass up—think of a perfect kiss when your lips meld into the moistness of your partner's, or of hearing the cheers of fellow employees when your name is announced for having won an award. Other emotions, like anger and guilt, are so painful that we avoid or suppress them. It turns out that the uncertainty, frustration, and occasional dash of guilt that stem from broken hearts, missed basketball shots at the buzzer, and botched interviews are the seeds of growth in knowledge and maturity. These often unwanted, negative experiences end up shaping some of the most memorable and inspiring experiences of our lives. By learning to embrace and use negative emotions as well as positive ones, we position ourselves for success.

Two Authors, One Quest  
So who are we, the authors in whom you have chosen to invest your time and entrust your confidence? Both of us entered the field of positive psychology more than a decade ago, when this new scientific movement was just finding its legs. We were drawn to the promise of a fresh discipline with a new way of tackling old issues. In a discipline dominated by anxiety and depression research, we found the focus of positive psychology refreshing. I'll give you just a single example: sex. In the years since Sigmund Freud made it the main event, human sexuality has been a bit sidelined from psychology. Scientists, like many people, can be prudish. Given the amount of time we think about sex, crave sex, have sex, or, more easily, purchase 50 Shades of Gray novels, you'd think that human sexuality would be the most researched topic in history: we should know more about sex than we do about the speed of light or genetic engineering. But when we recently entered the keyword terms sex and depression into the leading professional psychological database, we found just over two thousand hits for the former and two hundred thousand hits for the latter. Now that's depressing!

The two of us went about investigating whether sex can serve as a free, fun form of therapy for anxiety. We were particularly interested in socially anxious folks who avoid making social connections for fear of rejection. In our study, we had more than a hundred participants report on hundreds of sexual episodes across a two-week period. We had people rate the degree to which they felt intimacy, experienced pleasure, and reached an orgasmic climax during sexual episodes. It turns out that people who suffer with social anxiety problems benefit from sexual contact, even as much as twenty-four hours after an anxiety attack. Sex that left people feeling intimately tied to another person lowered anxiety the following day by 10 percent. Even better, hot sex—escapades that were downright lusty—lowered anxiety by 25 percent! We concluded that there is a place, even a curative place, for talking about positive experiences in conjunction with so-called negative experiences like anxiety and depression. But even as we tilled the fields of positive psychology, both of us were also increasingly put off by the gung-ho happinessology we often witnessed. Over the past fifteen years, positive psychology has been transformed from a reminder that "positive experiences are important" to a kind of smiling fascism. Nowhere is cultural shift toward the positive more obvious than in the world of business. It was only three decades ago that Jack Welch took the helm of GE and introduced the world to "stretch goals." His idea was that placing people in uncomfortable and demanding positions could accelerate personal growth and, ultimately, performance. Fast-forward to the present moment, when the latest business management fad is the idea that a good mood translates to business success. The so-called happiness advantage. Some data even back this up: happy employees get better customer evaluations, are more likely to help a colleague, and make more money. There are enough data that positivity evangelists feel comfortable touting an upbeat approach as a workplace panacea. Discussed less frequently, however, are the research findings that the most satisfied people of all actually make less money and are less conscientious in their work habits. Some companies that surfed the happiness wave to success have been wondering how to deal with legitimate discontent within the ranks. At Ruby Receptionists, for instance—a business that Fortune magazine rated the "#1 best small business place to work in America"—employees are rightly proud of their positive work culture. They are supportive of one another. Their office is fun and playful. Receptionists receive paid sabbaticals, on-site fitness

classes, bonus trips to Hawaii, and a host of other upbeat perks. People can walk around 90 percent of the time with authentic smiles on their faces. But the company has wrestled with the other 10 percent. Management and employees are uncertain what to do about the gripes, frustrations, cattiness, and other negative experiences that are an inevitable part of professional life. We began to wonder too, and in our research we became more and more interested in the intersection of positive and negative. Drawing on the Upside of the Dark Side

In 1972, as the world's attention turned to the Olympic Games in Munich, Germany, American athlete Frank Shorter was mentally preparing for the greatest challenge of his career: appearances in both the marathon and the 10,000 meter event. It would turn out to be one of the weirder moments in Olympic history. On the morning of September 10, there were a number of reasons why Shorter had a difficult time finding that all-important inner focus. He had earlier finished a disappointing fifth place in the 10,000 meter race; his teammate, legendary runner Steve Prefontaine, petered out in the last lap of the 5,000 meter race to take fourth, failing to medal; and, of course, the games themselves were eclipsed in emotional significance by the shocking massacre of Israeli athletes by Palestinian militants. For Shorter, the marathon must have been a roller coaster of doubt and confidence: confidence as he glanced over his shoulder to assess the size of his lead, and doubt when he finally entered the stadium for the last part of the race and inexplicably found himself in second place. Unbeknownst to him, while Shorter was running toward the stadium, a German student named Norbert Sudhaus slipped past security, jumped onto the racetrack, and impersonated an athlete running in the lead position. To further complicate matters, just before Shorter entered the stadium, the crowd had erupted in cheers for the impostor in first place, and Shorter had to redouble his efforts amid a chorus of boos as the audience realized it had been duped. Despite the many mental, emotional, and physical obstacles, Shorter ended up with the gold medal.

Frank Shorter's unusual case is proof that in running, as in so many other aspects of life, two experiences are taking place at the same time. Although a long-distance race seems to be a physical feat, mostly a matter of putting one foot in front of the other, it is, actually, a largely mental affair. We have interviewed dozens of athletes—especially runners—and the same themes emerge. Time and again, we were told that there was “more than one racer” on the track that day. Many athletes distinguish between the beginning, the middle, and the end of the race. Intense focus marks the beginning of the race, the middle is characterized by deep self-reflection, and the end is an all-out burst of primal energy. It is this last portion, in particular, that bears so directly on our thesis. This is the part of the race where athletes are most likely to use anger, self-castigation, an aggressive desire to crush the competition, and other so-called negative states to spur their own performance to new highs. If positivity and optimism account for 80 percent of success, more or less, then tapping the whole range of experience offers that remaining 20 percent edge. We are no different from you, dear reader. We prematurely discard our painful feelings, thoughts, and urges without giving them a fair chance. Seduced by the obvious benefits of kindness, compassion, mindfulness, optimism, and positivity on our health, social relationships, and work, we often forget the value of uncomfortable states. Our minds were changed on this issue, however, when we considered results from a number of studies showing the counterintuitive truth: happiness sometimes backfires, and bad states are sometimes good. What's more, we are attracted to the notion of wholeness because it fits with all that we know about science and life. Wholeness has an ancient place of honor in myths across all cultures and, therefore, in the archetypal landscape of the human psyche. Would it be great to possess full access to the endless energies of creation instead of shackling ourselves to just being positive, cheerful, kind, loving, and selfless? We'll never free ourselves to soar in that infinite potential if we're busy trying to avoid the darker parts of our selves, the aspects we fail to appreciate. What we're offering you here is an anti-happiness book that, paradoxically, opens you up to a far greater degree of joy than you could ever experience with a more direct approach. In fact, the latest studies show that there is no direct path to happiness. We are not opposed to happiness, positivity, kindness, or mindfulness. In fact, we embrace them. We also wish to ask you, the reader, one further question: are you ready for more? Will you join us in taking happiness to the next level? To go there you'll need access to everything in the human psychological knapsack, which means unpacking and integrating previously ignored and underappreciated parts of who you are. In the pages that follow, you will learn how to become more emotionally, socially, and mentally agile. By accepting the challenge of drawing on the dark side when it's most helpful, you bring wholeness within reach, perhaps for the first time.

CHAPTER 1  
The False Nose of Happiness

IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY DENMARK, Tycho Brahe was as renowned for his flamboyant lifestyle as he was for his scientific genius. Brahe's nose was cut off in a duel (he replaced it with a metal one), and he attended parties with his pet moose (who drank copious amounts of alcohol), but Brahe's lasting claim to fame is his contribution to astronomy. Instead of accepting ancient philosophical or religious notions about the nature of the heavens, Brahe carefully observed and charted all the stars he could see in the night skies. His notes led to a number of astounding discoveries, including the birth and death of stars, a phenomenon that contradicted ancient notions that all things celestial were fixed. False nose and inebriated moose aside, Brahe's work earned him a place in history as the father of modern astronomy who formed the foundation on which his assistant, Johannes Kepler, and all modern astronomers, would build their science. Today psychology is having a “Brahe moment.” Until this point, people have been pretty good about creating intuitive approaches to improving their quality of life. You've probably come across some of these theories, such as the Abraham Maslow hierarchy of

needs—the idea that people have to satisfy basic requirements like food and safety before they can address their need for self-esteem and fulfillment. There’s also no shortage of commonsense advice on how to become happier: be kind, count your blessings, commute less, spend more time with friends and family, be frugal, and everything in moderation. Great suggestions, but is there reason to believe that these chestnuts are either universally applicable or always true? Fortunately, we are living in a remarkable time in psychology, thanks to the introduction of sophisticated neuroscience, advanced statistics, handheld computers that allow for better sampling of daily experiences, and other methodological and technical breakthroughs. This is our Brahe moment, when the fundamental understanding of quality of life changes. In the field of psychology in general, and on the subject of happiness specifically, these new tools have yielded two transformative findings: first, we tend to go about the business of happiness all wrong; second, we can do something to fix this.

Why the Way We’ve Been Pursuing Happiness Is Not Going to Make Us Happy

Humans have come a long way since we lived in hunter-gatherer societies. As we spend less time worrying about shelter, drought, or our next kill, it makes sense that we would turn our collective attention to the pursuit of happiness. In fact, in a study of more than ten thousand participants from forty-eight countries, psychologists Ed Diener of the University of Illinois and Shigehiro Oishi of the University of Virginia discovered that people from every corner of the globe rated happiness as being more important than other highly desirable personal outcomes, such as a meaningful life, becoming rich, and getting into heaven. The rush to happiness is spurred on, at least in part, by a growing body of research suggesting that happiness doesn’t just feel good: it’s good for you. Happiness researchers have linked positive feelings to a host of benefits, ranging from higher incomes to better immune system functioning to boosts in kindness. Not only are these desirable outcomes related to happiness, but science also points to positive emotions as their cause. Some researchers, like Barbara Fredrickson from the University of North Carolina, even argue that happiness is humanity’s evolutionary birthright. It is happiness, the argument goes, that helps people to build personal and social resources that are vital to success in life—and from an evolutionary point of view—survival itself. But one question keeps raising its not so happy head: if happiness provides an evolutionary advantage, and if we value it so highly and possess thousands of years of good advice about how to achieve it, why isn’t it more widespread? Why aren’t we talking about the current happiness epidemic instead of skyrocketing rates of depression and anxiety? Emory University researcher Corey Keyes examined a diverse sample of more than three thousand adult Americans of all ages and found—alarmingly—that only 17 percent were psychologically flourishing. The Flourishing Scale

Eight statements with which you may agree or disagree follow. Using the following 1–7 scale, please provide a response for each statement.

1—Strongly agree 2—Agree 3—Slightly agree 4—Neither agree nor disagree 5—Slightly disagree 6—Disagree 7—Strongly disagree

\_\_\_\_ I lead a purposeful and meaningful life. \_\_\_\_ My social relationships are supportive and rewarding. \_\_\_\_ I am engaged and interested in my daily activities. \_\_\_\_ I actively contribute to the happiness and well-being of others. \_\_\_\_ I am competent and capable in the activities that are important to me. \_\_\_\_ I am a good person and live a good life. \_\_\_\_ I am optimistic about my future. \_\_\_\_ People respect me.

Scoring: Add the responses, varying from 1 to 7, for all eight items. The possible range of scores is from 8 (lowest possible) to 56 (highest possible). A high score indicates a person with many psychological resources and strengths.

How could this possibly be the case? It turns out that, despite all the attention being paid to the topic, people are not very good at making choices that lead to happiness. We don’t mean to criticize your gym workouts, Hawaiian vacations, meditation practice, or decision to put your kids in four different after-school enrichment activities. We’re as guilty as you when it comes to missing the mark where happiness is concerned. In fact, a range of brand-new research shows that, more or less, everyone is off the mark. Let’s begin with the research of Barbara Mellers at the University of Pennsylvania and her colleagues Tim Wilson and Daniel Gilbert—author of the bestselling book *Stumbling on Happiness*. This trio conducted a series of studies on what can be called emotional time travel errors. Just as trained meteorologists make small mistakes that can have a big impact on forecasting the week’s weather, it turns out that people do much the same thing when predicting how an event will make them feel in the future. We overestimate, for instance, how happy we will be if our favored political candidate wins the election or our home team wins the game. We also tend to underestimate how difficult things will be, like moving to a new city. Take, for example, the study in which Mellers and her colleagues investigated women who took a pregnancy test at Planned Parenthood. (It’s important that none of the women in this study were trying to get pregnant.) Roughly speaking, the women fell into two groups: those who dreaded having a baby and hoped for a negative result, and those who hoped the pregnancy test turned out positive. The researchers asked women to make predictions about how happy they would be if their hoped-for outcome came to pass. Women who were hoping for a negative result expected to feel a sense of elation if they ended up with an empty womb. Women who wanted to be pregnant also expected to feel joyful if they got the positive result they were hoping for. After the test was over, the researchers found—to their surprise—neither agony nor ecstasy. In fact, they found nothing more than a tiny blip in the women’s emotional equilibrium. Women who wanted a baby were not crestfallen when told it didn’t work out; instead, they were mildly disappointed and then bounced back to their regular mood (we might expect different results if these women had been unsuccessfully trying for months or years). As for women who

didn't want a baby but ended up with an unplanned, living embryo inside them, their anticipated dread never materialized; instead, they had a softer reaction (and a small minority found an unexpected burst of pleasure). It turns out that one reason we wrongly predict what will make us happy in the future is that we overlook our capacity to tolerate, and even adapt to, discomfort. Sure, that new job—to take a different example—is intimidating the first week, but before long you're cruising along as if you had worked there for years. The big reason you should care about emotional time travel errors is that nearly every decision you make now is based on an assumption of how you expect to feel in the future. You purchase a dream suburban house with five bedrooms and a sprawling lawn, picturing yourself having coffee on the sweeping veranda while mentally minimizing the added thirty-minute drive to visit friends and to get to work. You give up being with your family for long stretches of time to have a better shot at that big promotion. You choose a mate, decide when (or whether) to have a baby, or select the part of the country where you'll live, but these big decisions are often compromised by lack of insight into your emotional world. You're not alone in this. It turns out that we all tend to exaggerate how positively we'll feel in response to positive events and underestimate our capacity to tolerate distress. When it comes to how we're going to feel in the future, we most often guess wrong. Most damning of all when your pursuit of happiness is concerned is information gathered in a recent series of studies by Iris Mauss from the University of California, Berkeley. Mauss is a bit like Tycho Brahe; instead of accepting commonly held assumptions like "we can achieve happiness," she prefers to chart the metaphorical skies to see what actually hangs in the emotional heavens. She even asks unpopular questions such as "Should people be pursuing happiness?" In one study, Mauss and her colleagues found that people who value the pursuit of happiness actually feel lonelier than other folks. Researchers manipulated the importance placed on happiness by having half the participants read a fake newspaper article extolling the many benefits of happiness. Those who read the article reported feeling lonelier than those who did not, and even produced lower rates of progesterone (a hormone that gets a boost when we feel connected to other people). It turns out that putting too much stock in happiness has health implications too! To put it succinctly, we humans are horrible at guessing how happy we will feel in the future, and yet we base important life decisions on these flawed predictions. We purchase TVs, plan retirement, and say yes to dinner dates all because of an imperfect guess about how happy they will make us. No wonder we fare poorly in the happiness department, and business is booming for happiness authors, coaches, and consultants. The universal heavy-lifting approach to happiness—when someone follows a prescribed set of commonsense steps that are held out as helpful for everyone—doesn't work. It's a bit like Brahe's false nose: a reasonably close approximation, but it won't really help you smell any better. So what we need with regard to happiness is a new set of strategies. We need a more relevant and complete understanding of what's involved. In a world where rejection, failure, self-doubt, hypocrisy, loss, boredom, and annoying and obnoxious people are inevitable, we, the authors, reject the notion that positivity is the only place to search for answers. We reject the belief that being healthy is marked by a life with as little pain as possible. In fact, it's only when we are unwilling to take on the inevitable pain in life—whether it's the death of a parent, a divorce, or not getting that big promotion at work—that pain turns into something we experience as suffering. Suffering arises when we turn our backs on an escalation in emotional, physical, or social discomfort. Rather than working to promote more happiness, we endorse the ability to access the full range of psychological states, both the positive and the negative, to respond effectively to what life offers. In a word, wholeness. When faced with the inevitable challenges life brings, we fare best when we stop making ineffective or unnecessary attempts at controlling negative thoughts and feelings. A whole person acts in the service of what he or she defines as important, and sometimes that requires us to draw on the darker range of our emotions. Scientific research supports the idea that what we usually see as negative feelings can be more beneficial than positive ones. Studies have shown the following, for example: Students who are confused but work through the confusion perform better on subsequent tests than their peers who "get it" right away. Centenarians—people who are a hundred years old or older—find that negative feelings, not positive ones, are associated with better health and more physical activity. Police detectives who have themselves been victims of crime show more grit and work engagement when working with civilian victims of crime. Spouses who forgave physical or verbal aggression were likely to receive more of it, whereas those who were unforgiving enjoyed a precipitous decline in spousal aggression. Workers who are in a bad mood in the morning but shift to a good mood in the afternoon are more engaged in their work than their counterparts who were happy all day. With regard to creativity, researchers have found that the ideas suggested by folks who experience both negative and positive moods are judged as 9 percent more creative than ideas put forward by happy people; at work, the stress associated with challenges appears to promote motivation. Ronald Bedlow and his colleagues, who conducted this last study on worker involvement, described their discovery this way: We argue that it is the balance of being able to endure phases of negative affect and then engage in a shift to positive affect that is adaptive. Minimization of negative experiences and suppression of negative affect are functional neither for work motivation nor for personal development. The Bedlow research team also emphasizes a vital and often overlooked point regarding psychological states: they're temporary. When people speak of happiness, or depression for that matter, they make the assumption that these experiences are relatively stable. In the

modern positive psychology movement it has become vogue to talk about sustainable happiness, as if once the switch is flipped on the smile is permanent. The truth is, we shift between states, positive and negative. People who are whole, those of us who are willing and able to shift to the upside or the downside to get the best possible outcomes in a given situation, are the healthiest, most successful, best learners, and enjoy the deepest well-being. We think of this as the 20 percent edge because wholeness describes those who experience positivity roughly 80 percent of the time but who can also avail themselves of the benefits of negative states the other 20 percent. We do not mean to suggest, of course, that these percentiles are exact figures that should be used as definitive cut-offs. Rather, we argue that the 80:20 ratio is a useful rule-of-thumb approach to understanding wholeness.

The Rising Tide of Anxiety Anxiety is one of the top news stories of the last decade. Wars, terrorism, government gridlock, housing market crises, childhood obesity—all of these are important geopolitical and economic events. But the insidious rise in anxiety is every bit as noteworthy. Stress is epidemic and, like any virus, does not discriminate based on social class, IQ, or occupation. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, in any given twelve-month period one of five American adults is afflicted with an anxiety disorder. The number is higher for teenagers: 25 percent will suffer from a clinically significant anxiety disorder. When we look across an entire adult life span, the numbers climb even higher: a whopping one in three Americans is afflicted by anxiety. And these statistics only highlight the suffering of people who wrestle with diagnosable anxieties. If we throw into the mix everyday stresses such as fear of flying, public speaking, and financial worries, the number of afflicted approaches 100 percent.

Paradoxically, we are increasingly stressed because we put such an emphasis on comfort. We have air purifiers, heated car seats, polarized sunglasses, bubble baths, waterproof jackets, electric blankets, and beds that conform to the unique shape of our spines. It's difficult to emphasize this point strongly enough: while people have historically chosen pleasure over pain—and who wouldn't?—the modern era is an outlier in human history. We don't just enjoy our creature comforts; we are addicted to them. Why is comfort indicative of a problem? Our current high levels mirror the trend in using antibacterial soaps. These soaps mean we are exposed to fewer bacteria and are therefore less able to resist them. Yes, life in ye olde days was more rough and tumble, but it had the positive side effect of mentally toughening up our forebears. Evidence for this can be seen in the sentiment expressed in the classic 1939 British wartime public service announcement "Keep calm and carry on." In other words, bombs may be falling, but don't panic: go on about your business. Today we're moving in the opposite direction. Consider the popular contemporary American public service announcement "Give a hoot, don't pollute." At the heart of this message is the idea that modern people have so many luxury and convenience items that—hey!—can't we just quit throwing them on the ground and throw them in the garbage bin instead? When citizen waste is a pressing issue, you know society has reached an elevated state of creature comfort. Given so many amenities available to us today, we've developed a tendency to avoid discomfort. We whip out our smartphones the moment we're left alone—boredom vanquished! We jockey for the fastest line on the freeway—no frustrating waits! We flip on the television when we get home from work—no other unwinding and de-stressing needed! What most folks don't realize is that this seemingly natural attraction to an easier life is rooted in avoidance of discomfort. People who fear rejection avoid meeting others; people who fear failure don't take risks; and people who fear intimacy turn to television and e-mail when they get home from work. Avoidance is the tectonic issue of our time. Two types of avoidance cause problems for people: avoiding pleasure and avoiding pain. At first glance, it might be hard to believe that we sometimes want to steer clear of pleasure, but we all know people who can't enjoy fun because they believe there are better ways to spend time. (You may even be one of them.) In this same vein, we can also be afraid that by celebrating happiness we will jinx it, or fear that celebrating something good—a birthday, a promotion, the perfect cardio kickboxing class—will focus too much attention on us, thereby turning other people off. Psychologists call this disqualifying the positive. Unfortunately, by disqualifying positives we lose out on those amazing golden moments that are part of a life well lived. By depriving others of the opportunity to share in our positive emotions, our social relationships become less intimate. When we fail to savor the details of positive events, it becomes more difficult for us to access these memories for a mood boost on a rainy day.

The other form of avoidance, by far the more common, is turning away from so-called negative psychological states, such as anger and anxiety. This sentiment reflects the philosophy of the Hedonists of ancient Greece—the intellectual crosstown rivals of the Stoics—who held the view that the best life is to be found in pleasure. The problem with the hedonistic philosophy is that people can become overly skeptical of anything negative. This is especially true in modern times, when we advise friends to "find the silver lining," "turn that frown upside down," and "buck up." Not to mention Fritz Strack's famous study showing that research participants who held a pencil between their teeth (unknowingly activating smile muscles) wrote clearer, more positive statements about themselves than other participants. In a cringe-worthy move, happiness consultants have been using this study as evidence that people should "fake it until they make it." Essentially, all of these strategies try to talk people out of their negative states. Unfortunately, avoiding problems also means avoiding finding the solutions to those problems. Can you imagine the historic fights for racial equality or gender rights without a touch of anger? Can you imagine living in a world in which no one felt remorse? Can you imagine a trip to an exotic country in which

everything proceeded according to plan? Or a life in which you never wrestled with the tough decision to give up on a goal but, rather, just continued to plug away despite the low chance of success? There is a not so hidden prejudice against negative states, and the consequence of avoiding these states is that you inadvertently stunt your growth, maturity, adventure, and meaning and purpose in life.

### What Wholeness Looks Like

This might be an opportune time to illustrate what wholeness looks like in real life. Here we turn for support to scientists who believe that personal stories are as meaningful as the artificial happiness scales that dominate so much research. If there is anything close to a true blood test or X-ray for quality of life, it's the rich stories of our daily experiences. The stories we tell about the events of our day—*I had a flat tire, I was late for a meeting, I met a really interesting person, I saw an amazing sunset*—reveal accomplishments, failings, attitudes, desires, and yearnings; they flesh out our identities and what we aspire to be and to do. In this spirit, we briefly describe three people we've come across who embody aspects of this quality we call wholeness.

### Beyond the Impostor Syndrome

Although Jennifer was in her third year of graduate school in clinical psychology at Pacific University, she still checked her mailbox expecting to receive a letter printed on university stationary. In her imagination, the letter would say, *"Jennifer, we're sorry but we made a terrible mistake when we accepted you to our graduate program. Your application should have been turned down."* Jennifer, like many people, was feeling the sense of personal inadequacy known as impostor syndrome, which is especially common when people jump up to a new level: a promotion at work, a change of career, or advanced schooling. Often these feelings of self-doubt are uncomfortable, even painful. In the most extreme cases, they are upsetting enough to cause the person to reject the new opportunity. What many people fail to realize is the fact that doubt, in moderation, performs a healthy function. Doubt is a psychological state that prompts us to take stock of our skills and to work to improve in areas where they might be deficient. Karl Wheatley, a researcher at Cleveland State University, argues that doubt can be beneficial—at least in the case of schoolteachers. He points to the fact that when teachers experience uncertainty about their performance, these feelings spur collaboration with others, foster personal reflection, motivate personal development, and prepare the person to accept change.

In Jennifer's case as an inexperienced therapist, she used doubt to help her make good decisions about which clinical patients to refer to more experienced therapists and which ones to treat herself. When she became more skilled, she used doubt as motivation to continue to refine her abilities and to monitor her psychotherapy patients for progress. By embracing doubt as one tool among many (rather than suppressing or rejecting it), Jennifer became a first-rate therapist and continues to improve to this day.

### The Virtues of Throwing in the Towel

In 1995, a Swedish adventurer named Gouml;ran Kropp set a new standard for extreme among an already superfluous group of Mount Everest climbers. Unlike his high-altitude peers, Kropp wanted to ascend the mountain without the aid of supplemental oxygen, fixed ropes and ladders, Sherpa climbing support, porters for gear, or motorized transportation of any sort. To do this, he embarked on a bicycle journey of more than eight thousand miles between his home in Sweden and Kathmandu. From there, he ferried multiple loads to Everest base camp on his back. From base camp, he blazed a trail through steep rock, ice, and snow before any other expedition. On the day of his summit bid, however, Kropp made the difficult decision to turn around just three hundred feet shy of the highest point on earth. His choice was based on the late-afternoon conditions and the likelihood that he would have to descend cold, fatigued, and in the dark.

Kropp's amazing feat of self-control, the decision to turn around so close to his goal after having invested so much, turned out to be a prescient choice. A week later, members of several expeditions were afflicted with what can only be called summit fever and were stranded high on Everest's flanks by severe weather after failing to turn back at the agreed-upon time. The days that followed became known as the 1996 Everest Disaster, a period that claimed eight lives in the deadliest season on the mountain in history. In this context, Kropp's decision to turn back was, perhaps, lifesaving. It also throws new light on the commonly held assumption that perseverance is good and that quitting is bad.

### Goals are an easy sell. People with specific goals have a yardstick by which to measure success, guidelines for adhering to their values, a clear target to motivate them, and a compass for making decisions. Businesses use goals to improve performance, and sports teams use goals—often literally—to tally success. To many people, having a goal is synonymous with commitment, and commitment to a goal—in turn—is nearly synonymous with success. Legendary boxer Muhammad Ali once quipped, "I hated every minute of training but I said, 'Don't quit. Suffer now and live the rest of your life as a champion.'" And there you have it—the clear sentiment that doubling down on goals is more likely to lead to success. Quitting, on the other hand, is reserved for the morally and physically weak. As you might guess, we challenge the notion that giving up (an indisputable psychological discomfort, by the way) is so awful. Blind allegiance to goals has led to, among other things, "gold fever," most often associated with the California Gold Rush of 1859, when miners expended enormous physical, emotional, and financial capital in their fruitless pursuit of riches. In fact, researcher Eva Pomerantz of the University of Illinois argues that heavy investment in a goal can erode a person's psychological quality of life by creating a spike in their anxiety. This is especially true when people push themselves by focusing on the potential negative impact of not achieving their goals.One of the major benefits of low moods—those that we would argue are typically uncomfortable for people and which they often try to avoid—is that when we feel them we tend to pull back from our goals. Sadness, frustration, doubt, confusion, and

even guilt all serve a similar purpose: they signal you to apply the brakes, to retreat within yourself in order to reflect, and to conserve energy and resources. This is especially important in our human tendency to continue investing in impossible causes, or to act based on sunk costs, instead of making the decision to cut one's losses when the desired outcome looks less and less likely. Whole people have the ability to approach goals flexibly by continuing to invest when progress occurs at an acceptable pace, and by swapping old goals out for new ones when failure is almost certain.

### The Benefits of Fantasy

From the time she was a schoolgirl, Melanie Baumgartner dreamed of being a judge. While at university, however, she fell in love and her life took an unexpected turn. Rather than go on to law school, Melanie found new meaning in being a stay-at-home mother. Ferrying her children home from school, she sometimes caught herself daydreaming about that other life, the one in which she holds a gavel and calls for order in the court. In a psychological phenomenon known as *sehnsucht* [pronounced ZAYN zookt], it's not unusual to find that yearning for a missed opportunity or unfulfilled goal can inspire a rich fantasy in which we imagine ourselves successful in those aims. *Sehnsucht* is important as a psychological balm against the sting of opportunity lost: participants in an international research study who felt *sehnsucht* were able to embrace the fantasy, plucking it for emotional reward. The one noteworthy exception was Americans. Unlike our European counterparts, we are far more likely to see our dreams as achievable, so we're often reluctant to relegate them to the realm of fantasy, which we tend to see as a negative. But fantasy can be a valuable resource. Today Melanie's children are grown and she may return to law school. She feels less of a burning need to be a judge, however, in part because she has reaped the emotional rewards of her fantasies. *Sehnsucht* is one of many strategies that whole people employ to help them manage the psychological fallout from the road not taken, to make quitting palatable when it makes sense and to handle disappointment.

### Our Approach in This Book

We know that pain sucks. So we want to clarify that we don't want your heart to be torn apart by frustrated goals, or by a romantic partner who sleeps with your sibling. Nor are we pushing you to hold your breath in ice-cold water without flinching. We're just arguing that accumulating emotions that feel good right now and avoiding emotions that feel unpleasant right now is not the best strategy for living well. In this book, we offer wholeness as an alternative to only trying to profit from the positive. The central feature of a person who is whole is that they show great skill in negotiating all that life serves up. They possess what we call emotional agility. Why? Because they can get the best possible outcome in a situation by matching their behavior—*from the bright side or the dark side*—to the challenge being faced. They can draw both sides of nearly every personality trait: serious and playful, passionate and objective, extraverted and introverted, selfless and selfish. They are kind but selective about who their time and energy goes to. Finally, people who are whole benefit from their unwillingness to discard qualities just because society deems them less valuable. In the following section, we flesh out what it means to be emotionally, socially, and mentally agile so that you can understand the breadth, beauty, and benefits of being whole.

### Emotional Agility

The trick when wholeness is concerned is not to avoid negative emotions, but to take the negative out of them. This can be seen in the science behind successful psychotherapy. Psychologists Jonathan Adler from the Franklin W. Olin College of Engineering and Hal Hershfield from New York University tested the prevailing wisdom suggesting that therapy works by getting rid of people's problems, such as depression, and then helping them enact new strategies that boost their positivity. These researchers carefully observed forty-seven adults being treated by a therapist for anxiety and depression, and getting help coping with stressful events such as the transition to parenthood. Adler and Hershfield wanted to know what happens before a client's problems resolve, before their quality of life improves, and before they begin to truly like themselves. You might be surprised, as the researchers were, to find that people in therapy don't simply experience fewer negatives and more positives and then, lo and behold, describe themselves as happier. What actually happens is that success in therapy begins when people start to become comfortable experiencing mixed emotions (both happy and sad) about their work, their relationships, and any situation they enter. Consider this description from a client after a few sessions: "This has been a difficult couple of weeks. My wife and I celebrated the good news of a healthy pregnancy report at nine weeks (the time when we lost our pregnancy last January). But I also feel the sadness of still looking for a job and for my wife, whose grandmother is dying. It feels like 'what more can I take?' But at the same time I also feel reasonably confident and happy. Not that I don't feel down, but I'm also grateful for the good things in my life, especially my marriage. The crucial point here is that this person, and others like him who show the capacity to experience both positive and negative emotions about their lives, showed the greatest subsequent gains in well-being. However, the opposite did not prove to be the case: feeling positive did not improve people's ability to be emotionally agile. This study suggests that instead of happiness providing the biggest advantage, the greatest advantage stems from being at full capacity, being whole, tolerating both the good and the bad as they come into play."