Topic 4 – Social Connection and Happiness

See pp. 32199 to 32200 of The Plasticity of Well-Being (Dahl et al, 2020) – The term ‘connection’ can mean ‘social connection’—a sense of care for, and kinship or connection with, other people.

See various articles (the numbers refer to the numbers given in the References to Dahl et al., 2020):

On gratitude as a predictor of happiness:

Article 52:

Janes, Jodith. (2001). Aging Well: Surprising Guideposts to a Happier Life from the Landmark Harvard Study of Adult Development. (Health & Medicine) [Review of Aging Well: Surprising Guideposts to a Happier Life from the Landmark Harvard Study of Adult Development. (Health & Medicine)]. Library Journal, 126(19), 92. Library Journals, LLC.

See also:

Vaillant, G. E. (2002). *Aging well : Surprising guideposts to a happier life from the landmark Harvard study of adult development / George E. Vaillant.* (1st ed.). Little, Brown.

The book is based on a very important and famous Harvard study (known as the Grant Study), which began in 1938 and continued for more than 30 years. The study has some very important findings on the importance of social connection for well-being and longevity.

A good summary of the study can be found in the following journal article by G. E. Vaillant:

Vaillant, G. E. (2000). Adaptive mental mechanisms. Their role in a positive psychology. *The American Psychologist*, *55*(1), 89–98. [https://doi.org/10.1037//0003-066X.55.1.89](https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.89)

See also News article from Harvard:

<https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2017/04/over-nearly-80-years-harvard-study-has-been-showing-how-to-live-a-healthy-and-happy-life/>

This article also contains a link to a ‘TED’ talk on the study, narrated by Robert Waldinger, one of the lead researchers of the study.

See also articles 53-54

Santini, Ziggi Ivan, Koyanagi, Ai, Tyrovolas, Stefanos, Mason, Catherine, & Haro, Josep Maria. (2014). The association between social relationships and depression: A systematic review. *Journal of Affective Disorders, 175*, 53–65. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2014.12.049>

See also article 55: Poor social relations are detrimental to health.

Holt-Lunstad, Julianne, Smith, Timothy B, & Layton, J Bradley. (2010). Social relationships and mortality risk: a meta-analytic review. PLoS Medicine, 7(7), e1000316–e1000316. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1000316

Articles on:

Gratitude (Article 9, 56):

Sin, Nancy L, & Lyubomirsky, Sonja. (2009). Enhancing well-being and alleviating depressive symptoms with positive psychology interventions: a practice-friendly meta-analysis. Journal of Clinical Psychology, 4(4), 467–487. https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.20593

Prosocial motivations (59, 60)

Goetz, Jennifer L, Keltner, Dacher, & Simon-Thomas, Emiliana. (2010). Compassion. Psychological Bulletin, 136(3), 351–374. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0018807

Empathy (61)

Morelli, Sylvia A, Lee, Ihno A, Arnn, Molly E, & Zaki, Jamil. (2015). Emotional and Instrumental Support Provision Interact to Predict Well-Being. Emotion (Washington, D.C.), 15(4), 484–493. https://doi.org/10.1037/emo0000084

Possible Exercise – intentionally strengthening your own ‘pro-social’ qualities or characteristics (see Article 78):

Another possible exercise = practice ‘Connection-Based Meditation’ (see Article 81)

Article 81:

Students who choose this topic must cite and paraphrase important information from at least two other peer reviewed Journal articles. Your essay must cite and use at least three articles provided in this memo, as well. (This will be ‘Part 1’ of your Essay Project.)

Finally, you must spend the last 10 days to two weeks of the course, using some method of intentionally strengthening your pro-social qualities (as per Article 78) or engaging in some form of ‘generosity’ (see Topic ) , writing at least two significant paragraphs describing your experience (in Part 2 of the Essay project).

See also:

Sandstrom, G. – link to part of her webpage

https://gilliansandstrom.com/talking2strangers\_research/

Talking to Strangers

Link to Atlantic Monthly article:

https://www.theatlantic.com/family/archive/2021/08/why-we-should-talk-strangers-more/619642/