

Happiness in the Face of Adversity: Reformulating the Dynamic and Modular Bases of Subjective Well-Being

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Addressing diversity and apparent contradictions in manifestations of happiness, this article delineates subjective well-being (SWB) as a dynamic system in the face of possible adversity. SWB constitutes a favorable psychological environment that regulates the hostile-world scenario, defined as one's image of actual or potential threats to one's life or integrity. SWB operates in various modules: experiential, wherein private awareness of SWB dwells on relevant core themes; declarative, wherein public self-reports of SWB function as social behavior; differential, wherein synchronic dimensions of SWB form well-being types; and narrative, wherein diachronic valences of SWB construct trajectories along one's life story. By explicating the regulatory and configurational nature of SWB, the present conceptualization emphasizes the process, rather than the outcome, of pursuing happiness.

I leave Sisyphus at the foot of the mountain! . . . This universe henceforth without a master seems to him neither sterile nor futile. . . . The struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man's heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy. (Camus, 1955, p. 123)

Subjective well-being (SWB) refers to evaluations that people make about their lives. Such evaluations may represent judgments of one's life or may reflect one's relative dominance of positive versus negative affect. Whereas the former mode is termed *life satisfaction*, the latter is often referred to as *happiness*. This terminology suggests that SWB is a superordinate construct consisting of cognitive and affective components (Diener, 1984). However, "satisfaction" and, especially, "happiness" are also used to denote SWB in general (Veenhoven, 1991b).

SWB widely designates desirable psychological outcomes. Classical contributions delineated SWB as an indicator of quality of life and mental health (Andrews & Withey, 1976; Brad-

burn, 1969; Campbell, Converse, & Rodgers, 1976; Cantril, 1965; Gurin, Veroff, & Feld, 1960). Later reviews (Diener, 1984; Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999; Veenhoven, 1984, 1996) and compilations (Kahneman, Diener, & Schwarz, 1999; Strack, Argyle, & Schwarz, 1991) have specified how SWB permeates mainstream concerns in psychology such as personality, emotions, social cognition, goal-directed behavior, life span development, and cross-cultural diversity. Countering traditional emphases on maladjustment and distress, SWB has contributed to the newly established agenda of positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Even in ancient times, philosophers offered rival conceptions about the definition, ingredients, attainability, and worthiness of happiness (McGill, 1967; Telfer, 1980). A major division was between schools that regarded happiness as a predominance of pleasure over pain (e.g., Epicurus and Bentham) and schools that related happiness to meaningful pursuits and a virtuous life (e.g., Aristotle and Kant). It has been argued that SWB represents "hedonic" well-being and thus contrasts with the Aristotelian concept of "eudaimonia," in which well-being derives from self-realization of human potentials (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff, 1989a; Waterman, 1993). Research indicates that the two well-being conceptions are indeed distinct and yet maintain intriguing relations that facilitate multiple paths for people to optimize their well-being (Keyes, Shmotkin, & Ryff, 2002).

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In this article, I propose a systemic framework for interpreting SWB and SWB-related phenomena. This framework addresses a number of complexities that are often bypassed in the SWB literature. In brief, my approach derives from two propositions:

1. *SWB is a dynamic system that has an adaptational role: It constitutes a favorable psychological environment in the face of an actually or potentially hostile world.* This regulatory activity contrasts with earlier views of SWB as a mere outcome or concomitant of other processes.

2. *The system of SWB operates in modules that ensure its flexibility and plurality.* This article depicts four modules (experiential, declarative, differential, and narrative) that correspond to distinct contexts of psychological space and time (private, public, synchronic, and diachronic). This modularity represents diverse paths by which SWB encounters possible adversity.

I specify key findings on SWB and refer to their counterintuitive aspects. Then I present the notion of “hostile world” as a missing component in appreciating the dynamics of SWB and describe the SWB modules. Finally, I address implications for the observed diversity of SWB phenomena as well as a renewed research agenda that lies ahead.

A Reason for Rethinking: Findings on SWB Contradict Expectations

A compelling part of the SWB research consists of findings that run counter to expectations. Although these results hardly surprise researchers who are by now familiar with the literature, their originally counterintuitive nature is apparent. This section focuses on six major findings, pointing to the contrary expectations and some of the suggested resolutions associated with them.

Finding 1: Objective Life Conditions Have Little Effect on SWB

Life conditions, as reflected by sociodemographic characteristics (age, sex, race, marital status, education, and income), have been shown to correlate weakly with SWB, typically in the range of .03 to .19 (DeNeve & Cooper, 1998). Jointly, they explain no more than 8% to 20% of the variance in SWB (Andrews &

Withey, 1976; Campbell et al., 1976). Health status has correlated with SWB strongly when assessed by self-ratings but weakly when assessed by objective measures such as physicians' ratings (Brief, Butcher, George, & Link, 1993; Okun, Stock, Haring, & Witter, 1984). As to the troubling question of whether money brings happiness, studies have shown that beyond the provision of necessities, affluence has little effect on SWB (Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2002; Myers, 2000).

The finding that life conditions matter little in terms of SWB surprised many researchers. Can it be that humans dedicate ceaseless effort to improving their standard of living only to discover that it barely affects their happiness? People desire to be richer and generally associate wealth with higher SWB (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999; Myers, 2000). Supporting these expectations, the association of socioeconomic status with SWB, albeit small, is consistent (Haring, Stock, & Okun, 1984; Pinquart & Sorensen, 2000). Also, rich nations show higher levels of SWB than poor ones (Diener & Oishi, 2000). Along these lines, Veenhoven (1991a, 1995) concluded that people are happy to the extent that they enjoy “livable” conditions that suit their needs.

The waning effect of life conditions on SWB is explained by *adaptation*. In the long run, people adapt to the circumstances of their life, whether favorable or unfavorable (Frederick & Loewenstein, 1999). Another explanation is adjustment of *comparison standards*. Because higher SWB relates to small discrepancies between actual conditions and desirable standards (Michalos, 1985), people raise their aspirations in advantageous conditions and lower them in adversity.

Finding 2: Life Events Affect SWB Only for a Short Period

Both positive and negative life events have been found to have only a short-lived impact on SWB, detectable for no longer than several months (Suh, Diener, & Fujita, 1996). In a landmark study, Brickman, Coates, and Janoff-Bulman (1978) reported that in about a year's time, people who had won the lottery were no happier than controls, and people who had become paralyzed after an accident were not as unhappy as might have been expected. Various other findings show that personal disasters and

major disabilities usually do not substantially lower SWB unless the trauma is recent (Diener & Diener, 1996; Matlin & Stang, 1978).

The finding that significant life events affect SWB only for a short period contradicts the expectations of a long tradition. A key psychoanalytic principle stresses the lifetime role of events occurring early in life. There are indeed long-term effects of childhood and adult adversity on later distress (Kessler, 1997; Turner & Lloyd, 1995; Wheaton, Roszell, & Hall, 1997) as well as SWB (Royse, Rompf, & Dhooper, 1993; Stallings, Dunham, Gatz, Baker, & Bengtson, 1997).

According to the model of *dynamic equilibrium* (Headey & Wearing, 1989), events cause only short-term deviations (positive or negative) from one's baseline SWB because adaptation restores SWB to its normal level. Another explanation is the notion of *cumulative advantage and adversity* (Ryff, Singer, Love, & Essex, 1998). In this view, experiences accumulated over extended periods, rather than discrete events, exert a lasting effect on current outcomes.

Finding 3: Aging Does Not Necessarily Involve a Decline in SWB

A meta-analysis conducted by Stock, Okun, Haring, and Witter (1983) indicated a small positive relation between age and SWB. In international data sets, older people exhibited equivalent, or even higher, life satisfaction than younger people, whereas affective SWB showed a stability of negative affect along with a decline of positive affect in progressive age cohorts (Diener & Suh, 1997). In U.S. studies, negative affect has been shown to remain stable or decrease with increasing age, whereas positive affect remains stable or even increases (Carstensen, Pasupathi, Mayr, & Nesselroade, 2000; Charles, Reynolds, & Gatz, 2001; Mroczek & Kolarz, 1998). Although they depend on design (cross sectional vs. longitudinal) and adjustments of background variables (Kunzmann, Little, & Smith, 2000; Shmotkin, 1990), the data suggest that aging does not necessarily involve a decline in SWB.

Laypeople would expect SWB to decline in old age because this life period involves irrevocable losses (Schulz, 1985). Researchers were thus prompted to explain the "paradox of well-being" (Mroczek, 2001) in old age. Heidrich and Ryff (1996) reviewed mechanisms of main-

taining well-being in the face of aging-related stress, for example using downward social comparisons, reducing self-discrepancies, and increasing social integration. According to Carstensen's (1995) socioemotional selectivity theory, older people sustain high SWB by improving their emotional regulation, largely through selectively engaging in close relationships.

Finding 4: Positive Affect and Negative Affect Are Relatively Independent

Voluminous studies have addressed Bradburn's (1969) model of happiness as an affect balance between two independent affects: positive and negative. Empirically, positive and negative affect function as separate entities with different antecedents and consequences (Diener, Smith, & Fujita, 1995; Lucas, Diener, & Suh, 1996). Thus, the two types of affect have different links with biological systems of activation (Cacioppo, Gardner, & Berntson, 1999) and personality dispositions (Costa & McCrae, 1980).

Researchers acknowledge that the independence of positive and negative affect contradicts the expectation that happiness and unhappiness should be inversely related. The principles of parsimony and congruity guide us to presume that "positive" and "negative" are bipolar opposites of the same evaluative continuum. Thus, certain investigators have argued that when measurement errors (e.g., scale format) are handled, the bipolarity of positive and negative affect remains a most plausible model (Green, Goldman, & Salovey, 1993; Russell & Carroll, 1999).

Seeking to resolve this issue, Feldman Barrett and Russell (1998) adopted the circumplex model, wherein the bipolarity of positive and negative affect can be delineated in relation to an activation-deactivation dimension. Tellegen, Watson, and Clark (1999) posited a hierarchical model with a higher order happiness-unhappiness bipolar dimension and lower order independent dimensions of positive and negative affect. In the evaluative space model of Cacioppo et al. (1999), the separable approach and avoidance systems often yield a reciprocal activation of positive and negative affect, yet both of these types of affect can also be uncoupled, coinhibited, or coactivated. These potential variations may be conditional upon life exigencies such as stress and coping (J. T. Larsen,

Hemenover, Norris, & Cacioppo, 2003; Reich, Zautra, & Davis, 2003).

Finding 5: Self-Illusion Is a Basis for SWB

In their seminal article, Taylor and Brown (1988) specified three “positive illusions” that people universally foster: overly positive self-evaluations, exaggerated perceptions of control, and unrealistic optimism. When kept to modest proportions, these biased self-beliefs are beneficial in regard to coping and adaptation (Taylor & Armor, 1996; Taylor, Kemeny, Reed, Bower, & Gruenewald, 2000). Notably, the illusory quality pertains to three constructs (self-esteem, sense of control, and optimism) that serve as consistent correlates, or regulators, of SWB (Cummins & Nistico, 2002; Myers & Diener, 1995). Hence, there is a close affinity between self-illusion and SWB.

The notion of positive illusions contradicts a long tradition that accurate perception of reality is essential to mental health (e.g., Allport, 1961; Jahoda, 1958). Several investigators have thus criticized Taylor and Brown on conceptual and empirical grounds (Colvin & Block, 1994; Shedler, Mayman, & Manis, 1993). In response, Taylor and her colleagues (Taylor & Armor, 1996; Taylor & Brown, 1994) have explicated that positive illusions are beneficial in terms of mental health only when they are mild. As put by Baumeister (1991), an optimal margin of illusion erases small pitfalls and failures yet prevents gross distortions that are difficult to sustain.

Finding 6: Most People Are Happy

In an article titled “Most People Are Happy,” Diener and Diener (1996) presented evidence that the vast majority of respondents worldwide report above-medium levels of SWB. Thus, mean levels of SWB do not converge at a neutral point but prove to be positively biased (Veenhoven, 1991a). The inclination for positive SWB is consistent within nations (including in disadvantaged groups) as well as across measurement methods (self-report and other methods).

The evidence that most people are happy may not conform to prevalent expectations. Thus, Diener and Diener (1996) also reported that

people grossly underestimate the level of SWB in the population. Indeed, the expectation that unhappiness prevails over happiness is deeply rooted in Western traditions. The classical tragedy, as shaped by the great dramatists, is only one expression of the unhappiness paradigm of life. In philosophy, disbelief in the attainability of happiness ranges from the extreme claim that happiness does not exist at all to milder formulations of its illusory nature (Tatarkiewicz, 1976). Freud (1930/1985) contended that happiness is always doomed to clash with restrictions and penalties and therefore can hardly materialize. More recent observations show a rising tide of depression (Seligman, 1998) along with escalating aggression, crime, family breakdown, loneliness, and suicide in most modern societies (Lane, 2000).

High levels of happiness can be explained from an adaptational perspective. It has been claimed (Lykken, 1999) that heredity accounts for 80% of the long-term variance of happiness, indicating that happiness has evolutionary advantages and hence is the natural condition of humankind. One might assume a universal homeostatic mechanism of maintaining a positive baseline SWB that facilitates coping, social interaction, and psychological resources (Cummins, 1998; Fredrickson, 1998). These explanations clarify the vital function of SWB, but they leave open the question of why human thought so often expects unhappiness, rather than happiness, to prevail.

Between Conflicting Messages: The Pursuit of Happiness in a Hostile World

Rudimentary though it is, the preceding review gives impetus to a reconsideration of the dynamics surrounding SWB. Generally, the empirical findings convey good news: People in distress—whether because of poor life conditions, negative life events, or aging declines—can usually enjoy their normally positive SWB after a fairly short period of adaptation or following the amelioration of self-serving comparisons. Moreover, SWB is protected by universal, biologically rooted mechanisms that allow people to produce positive affect independently of negative affect, benefit from comforting illusions about themselves even when reality is less complimentary, and rely on a solid SWB baseline with a naturally positive bias. SWB appears robust indeed.

This good news bears an encouraging message for poor, unfortunate, and unsuccessful people. It also has compelling implications for well-off, lucky, and successful people: As a result of the adaptation effect, good conditions and pleasant experiences boost SWB only moderately and for short periods. Therefore, to sustain a high level of SWB, people must constantly improve their living circumstances rather than indulging in already-attained achievements.

The present review, however, also points to widespread expectations that contradict the major findings on SWB. Such expectations indicate reluctance to accept the good news about SWB not only because of lay beliefs but also in view of sound empirical evidence that “bad is stronger than good” (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, & Vohs, 2001; Rosin & Royzman, 2001). This evidence shows that bad events (e.g., traumas, poor health, social conflicts, and failure) have stronger and more lasting effects on people’s functioning and well-being than comparable good events. In terms of SWB, this viewpoint conveys a gloomy message: Struggling to remain safe and well in a hostile world, people cannot afford fallacious and imaginary SWB; rather, they must be assured that SWB is really justified and substantiated. Accordingly, one finds it hard to believe that actual adversity (e.g., poor life conditions, negative life events, and aging-related declines) does not necessarily result in negative SWB. Reasonably, adversity breeds adversity, in that it drains resources and produces consequences that are more likely to engender worse, rather than better, contingencies. Hence, negative affect is expected to tax positive affect, illusions are not expected to override the vital instinct to be wary of reality, and humans are not expected to be mostly happy when they are constantly threatened by distressful eventualities. As demonstrated in the phenomenon of affective forecasting (Gilbert & Wilson, 2000), expectations about the overwhelming impact of adversity are commonplace and lead people to grossly underestimate their future happiness.

Spiritual traditions that cherish happiness, optimism, and humor have always run parallel to those that dwell on unhappiness (Tatarkiewicz, 1976). However, in view of the finding that most people are happy, one wonders whether the pessimistic traditions have indeed failed so miserably to grasp the mainstream

mentality of the human mind. It is therefore intriguing to explore why solid research on SWB and long-standing expectations offer conflicting messages. Arguing that this conflict is neither incidental nor trivial, I propose a new conceptual framework that seeks to integrate the extant knowledge with certain confusing aspects of the SWB construct.

The Role of SWB in a Hostile World

My framework departs from the large bulk of studies that treat SWB as an outcome of antecedent factors such as sociodemographics, predispositions, and situations (see Lent, 2004, for a recent review of this traditional approach). As presented here, SWB is a dynamic system whose principal role is *to constitute a favorable psychological environment in the face of an actually or potentially hostile world*. When at medium or higher levels, SWB constitutes a favorable psychological environment, conceived as a positive state of mind that allows an individual to maintain ongoing tasks without being mentally disrupted. With this agentic function, SWB regulates a possibly disturbing aggregate of beliefs hereby termed the “hostile-world scenario” (HWS), defined as an image of actual or potential self-perceived threats to one’s life or, more broadly, to one’s physical or mental integrity. This image of adversity functions as a system of appraisal that scans for any potentiality of a negative condition, whether dangerous or distressing, or for an even worse condition when a negative one already prevails.

SWB as a Favorable Psychological Environment

A favorable psychological environment is a quality of SWB referring to a positive state of mind that facilitates ongoing behavior by shielding individuals from unwarranted disturbances. It should not be confused with more generalized constructs of psychological fitness such as adjustment and mental health. This mental status is geared to daily life and cannot be maintained in disruptive states such as unbearable distress, gross excitation, or apathetic withdrawal. Notably, psychopathology does not invariably preclude a favorable psychological environment, as in ego-syntonic personality disorders or between depressive and psychotic ep-

isodes. Nor does positive mental health exclude lapses of favorable psychological environment at stressful times. In all cases, when high enough, SWB constitutes a favorable psychological environment by adjusting individuals' evaluations of their life and world. A low level of SWB (unhappiness) means a failure to manage one's psychological environment favorably.

In line with the "Pollyanna principle" (Matlin & Stang, 1978), SWB is programmed to produce an environment that is more pleasant at the output than at the input stage. This program of SWB to induce positivity derives from predispositions (McCrae & Costa, 1994) but also reacts to transient situations (Schwarz & Clore, 1983). Generally, the "positivity offset" characterizes large functioning systems wherein it ensures that the motivation to approach is stronger than the motivation to avoid (Cacioppo et al., 1999). Positive affect is a major facilitator of functioning (Isen, 2003) and can replenish the self's resources after their natural depletion by efforts to cope with stress (Baumeister, Faber, & Wallace, 1999). Positive affect and other SWB-related positive emotions (e.g., joy and contentment) take part in the broaden-and-build process of widening thought and action tendencies, which foster, in turn, enduring personal resources (Fredrickson, 2001).

In summary, by acting as a favorable psychological environment, SWB helps to maintain the proper climate in which human functioning flows. This is a major contribution to the management of life within the rival environments of a hostile world.

Shadowing SWB: The Hostile-World Scenario

The very process of evolution feeds on an organism's ability to scan the dangers of a hostile world. Despite staggering progress, humankind lives in the midst of imminent dangers such as war, violence, malnutrition, deprivation of rights, epidemics, pollution, and political upheaval. Even in prosperous countries, people face constant threats of failure, illness, accidents, interpersonal conflicts, breakups of relationships, crime, disasters, aging, and death. Hence, the HWS, as an image of actual or potential threats, pertains to essential concomitants of life.

Karen Horney (1939) pointed to the developmental significance of the "hostile-world" notion by defining *basic anxiety* as "a feeling of

helplessness toward a potentially hostile world" (pp. 74–75). When a child is insecure or intimidated, basic anxiety may become fertile soil for later "neurotic trends" by which "the environment is dreaded as a whole because it is felt to be unreliable, mendacious, unappreciative, unfair, unjust, begrudging, and merciless" (p. 75).

Extreme images of the hostile world are linked to eruptions of evil. Murders, terrorism, wars, and other atrocities are daily news items. Although most people keep such horrors distant in their mind, the study of evil (Bauman, 1989; Baumeister, 1997; Staub, 1989) suggests that it is ever present within our social and mental makeup. Lifton's (1986) work on Nazi physicians showed how ordinary people could become cruel perpetrators. Classic studies on authoritarianism (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950), obedience (Milgram, 1974), and prisonlike behavior (Haney & Zimbardo, 1998) indicated that safeguards against inhuman behavior are shaky even in modern democracies. The belief that the social world is dangerous appears sound for those victimized by human aggression, but ironically it also drives those who favor aggression as part of their ideological and prejudiced attitudes (Altemeyer, 1988).

Death is the ultimate failure to rule the hostile contingencies of life (Kastenbaum, 1992). Becker (1973) argued that avoiding the terror of death is a principal motivator in human activity. The theory of terror management (Greenberg, Solomon, & Pyszczynski, 1997) dwells on this terrifying concern of finitude. It postulates that mortality salience, involving conscious (or near-conscious) thoughts about death, affects attitudes and behaviors that protect against death anxiety. Direct protective reactions are suppression and rational minimization of death threats ("proximal defenses"). More elaborate strategies adopt cultural worldviews consisting of social values that transcend the individual's death, along with self-esteem that identifies the individual with these values ("distal defenses"). Worldviews promise either literal immortality in the afterlife or the symbolic immortality of being part of an enduring and valuable reality (Pyszczynski, Greenberg, & Solomon, 1999). The theory posits that the effects of mortality salience, as well as the primary role of self-esteem as a buffer of anxiety, are tied to heightened accessibility of death-related thoughts and not merely to other adverse conditions such as

failure, pain, and social exclusion. Notably, SWB and other positive self-conceptions are considered in this view as ancillary benefits of self-esteem (Pyszczynski, Greenberg, Solomon, Arndt, & Schimel, 2004).

The emphasis on death anxiety just described is obviously relevant to the concept of HWS. However, the currently proposed framework clearly deviates from the terror management theory by assuming an independently operating system of SWB whose function is to regulate the HWS that epitomizes the broad sense of vulnerability in the human condition. As proposed here, the HWS constitutes a cognitively processed set of appraisals about present and future threats along with an emotionally based apprehension concerning the world in which one lives. Hence, the HWS contains an inherent experiential quality of negativity. In its mild manifestation, the HWS takes the form of a stance of vigilance and prudence regarding negative eventualities, and as such it has a vital adaptational function (Rosin & Royzman, 2001). In its extreme manifestation, it generates a day-by-day sense of survivorship of imminent calamity (Bauman, 1992).

The HWS should not be confused with close concepts such as negative affect and pessimism. Unlike the HWS, which reflects central existential concerns, negative affect refers to recent occurrences of negative emotions typically situated in mundane life. In fact, as the counterpart of positive affect, negative affect is considered an internal component of SWB. As to pessimism, theorists proposed definitions such as a disposition to hold negative expectancies for future outcomes (Scheier & Carver, 1992) or an explanatory style regarding the causes of bad events (Seligman, 1990). Whereas the core experience of pessimism is helplessness (Seligman, 1990) or hopelessness (Beck, Weissman, Lester, & Trexler, 1974), the HWS does not necessarily render people either helpless or hopeless. Rather, the HWS may prompt proactive coping (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997) whereby people take preparatory or preventive steps to overcome dangers. For certain people, however, the HWS reflects a "catastrophizing" appraisal style (Peterson & Moon, 1999) that overstates the severity of bad events and understates one's ability to cope with them.

Counteracting the HWS

Fairy tales provide a naive paradigm of the contest between the HWS and the promise of

SWB. Innocent heroes such as Little Red-Cap, Cinderella, Snow White, and Hansel and Gretel fall prey to shrewd villains, deserting parents, cruel rulers, and evil witches. As Bettelheim (1976) explained, the common ending, "And they lived happily ever after," helps to dissipate children's fears even though children do realize that the harsh reality has not really disappeared.

Humans create conceptions that deny the reality of a hostile world. Lerner (1980) described the belief in a "just world" where people get what they truly deserve, which suppresses one's fear of being a victim of undeserved suffering. According to Janoff-Bulman (1992), people construct an "assumptive world" that consists of core beliefs that the world is benevolent, events are meaningful, and the self is worthy. This assumptive world provides a sense of protection against harm or disaster. According to Taylor and Brown (1988), positive illusions (exaggerated beliefs of self-worth, mastery, and optimism) help people face threatening information and buffer extreme adversity. Paradoxically, depressed individuals, who often stick to worst-case scenarios, have been shown in certain studies to see the world more realistically than their nondepressed counterparts.

In the preceding formulations, illusions of a benevolent world are essential to induce SWB and ward off the HWS. Nevertheless, the battle against the HWS takes place in realistic ways as well. Thus, people maintain agencies to handle disasters, practice emergency and rescue drills, take precautions against hazards, adopt preventive health behaviors such as dieting and exercising, enjoy overcoming the horror of thrillers in movies and books, and buy insurance for their property, body, and life. Hence, although most people underestimate their risks, their optimism remains situated in reality (Armor & Taylor, 1998; Aspinwall, Richter, & Hoffman, 2001).

When the optimistic bias faces a challenge of disconfirmation, people may resort to an opposite mode of "bracing for the worst" so that they can avoid a hurtful disappointment (Shepperd, Findley-Klein, Kwavnick, Walker, & Perez, 2000; K. M. Taylor & Shepperd, 1998). Research on "worst fears" (King, 1998; King, Richards, & Stemmerich, 1998) indicates that the salience of dreaded eventualities is detrimental to SWB. However, such salience may be necessary to protect SWB in the long run because facing a dreaded life outcome often bears

critical consequences. In summary, whether from optimistic, pessimistic, or realistic stands, people must manage their HWS. SWB and SWB-related phenomena appear to counter the HWS, but their effect requires a more detailed examination.

Models Explaining How the Positivity of SWB Meliorates the Negativity of the HWS

Taylor (1991) theorized that organisms respond to negative events, including those that have not yet occurred but are perceived as potentially threatening, with short-term mobilization and long-term minimization. Mobilization involves rapid reactions aimed to contend with immediate dangers, requiring that negative information be weighted more heavily than positive. The second phase, however, activates mechanisms by which positive experiences minimize the impact of the negative events. This process is further elucidated by Baumeister et al.'s (1999) model of ego depletion, which posits that coping with threats consumes the self's resources and therefore must be followed by a recovery period that restores strengths and positive functions.

These propositions provide a rationale as to why SWB, as a prototypical positive experience, plays a role in offsetting the HWS, which represents negative experiences. This operation is pertinent to Fredrickson's (2001) "undoing hypothesis," which specifies how positive emotions function as antidotes for the lingering effects of negative emotions, mainly by dismantling physiological and psychological concomitants of negative states.

The ameliorative impact of SWB on the HWS involves not only emotional but also cognitive pathways. This impact is implied by evidence that happy and unhappy people differ in processing information about their world (Bless, 2001; Lyubomirsky, 2001). According to the logic of affect-as-information theory (Clore, Gasper, & Garvin, 2001; Schwarz & Clore, 1996), high SWB signals perceived adequacy and competence and thus suppresses self-appraisals of vulnerability that summon the HWS. Therefore, higher SWB results in lower probability estimates of undesirable events and risks (Gasper & Clore, 2000; E. I. Johnson & Tversky, 1983; Oishi, Wyer, & Colcombe, 2000). The model of affect infusion (Forgas,

1995) would further specify that SWB-related affect is most influential when the information processing relating to the HWS is complex or ambiguous rather than routinized or overridden by other motivational needs. In summary, SWB levels serve as a heuristic for judging the world as either benign or hostile, thus regulating the accessibility, relevance, and salience of the beliefs that compose the HWS.

The inclination to perpetuate high SWB to suppress the HWS fits the basic motive to maintain a positive hedonic balance (R. J. Larsen, 2000). Hedonic motivation, however, is not necessarily tenable in the SWB-HWS relationship. For example, it is positive, rather than negative, affect that enhances the ability to handle negative information when this information is relevant and useful (Trope, Ferguson, & Raghunathan, 2001). Moreover, people use strategies of emotional self-regulation whereby they consciously, sometimes deliberately, forgo the experience of well-being to meet social constraints or properly handle bad news, distressing tasks, and sad afflictions (Erber & Erber, 2000). The next section addresses such intricate phenomena.

Models Explaining How the Positivity of SWB Cofunctions With the Negativity of the HWS

The intriguing notion of happiness in the midst of suffering attracted both philosophers and theologians (Hudson, 1996). Systematic data on the coexistence of negative and positive emotions were found in stressful conditions such as bereavement, grave illness, and caregiving (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004). Also, people can simultaneously feel happy and sad in less severe situations, yet emotionally charged, such as watching a film and graduating from college (J. T. Larsen, McGraw, & Cacioppo, 2001). Thus, although a clear switch between negativity and positivity provides a well-targeted road map for behavior, there are situations (mainly complex, unstable, or novel) wherein positive and negative affect are coactivated to allow one to benefit from seemingly hospitable events while fostering vigilance for, and rapid retreat from, hostile conditions (Cacioppo & Berntson, 1999). Under severe stress, the co-functioning of positive and negative affect may be vital for reaching a properly balanced resolution (J. T. Larsen et al., 2003).

Hence, contrary to simple hedonistic assumptions, positivity and negativity do not always function antagonistically. Also, the valence of emotions, whether positive or negative, does not ensure their directive impact: There are contexts in which positive emotions designate problematic situations and negative emotions designate nonproblematic ones (Martin, 2000). Thus, in certain contexts, coping is improved by deliberate elicitation of distressful experiences. Known as “paradoxical intention” (Frankl, 1963), this phenomenon underlies the “paradoxical psychotherapy” that instructs patients to produce or augment their symptoms to gain self-awareness and self-control (Seltzer, 1986). Related to this is “the hedonistic paradox” (Yalom, 1980) whereby deliberate activities designed to attain happiness hamper, rather than promote, SWB. “Defensive pessimism” (Norem & Cantor, 1986) is another phenomenon referring to people who opt to reflect about negative scenarios (such as total failure) before performing tasks and then harness their worries in ways that ultimately facilitate, rather than inhibit, successful performance. In summary, there are contexts in which high SWB may not serve to ward off the HWS. Overly high SWB, as in the case of excessive positive illusions (Taylor & Armor, 1996), may even drive people into a risky fools’ paradise that is easily shattered by harsh reality. In other words, management of SWB in a hostile world involves circumstances wherein unhappiness may prompt good outcomes and happiness may be easy prey to disillusionment.

Setting Limits: What SWB Can and Cannot Do

The Conclusion So Far: SWB Is a Positivity-Generating System That Regulates the HWS

As has been argued here, SWB counteracts the HWS—and vice versa—but *only to an optimal level*. As an agent of a favorable psychological environment, SWB has the role of regulating the HWS. People are often attracted to simplistic conceptions of this role, as conveyed by the popular phrase “*Don’t worry—be happy*,” which implies that avoiding worries brings happiness closer, or, alternatively, being happy keeps worries away. Contrary to this lay truism, I have mentioned possible “*Worry—*

then be happy” sequences in which the need to endure negative feelings takes precedence over, or co-resides with, the need to endure positive ones.

Following Higgins’s (1997) regulatory-focus theory, I deal here with two complementary systems: Whereas SWB is part of the *promotion-focus* self-regulation that is responsible for nurturance and accomplishment needs, the HWS is part of the *prevention-focus* self-regulation that is responsible for safety and protection needs. Separately, each system resorts to simplified and biased depictions of the self and the world. Together, however, they sustain a dialectical balance wherein activation of SWB is obviously perceived as more desirable but activation of the HWS is often more imperative: “People are more motivated to avoid the bad than to embrace the good” (Baumeister et al., 2001, p. 349). In this dialectic, the HWS may initiate sequences of coping that eventually minimize distress and restore SWB. Generally, dismissing the HWS results in recklessness that endangers survival, whereas renouncing the quest for SWB results in disruption of the positive engagements of life. The balance between SWB and the HWS flexibly maximizes their relative advantages. I have specified an array of mechanisms that possibly influence this balance, but determination of the relative weighting of SWB and the HWS is a task for future studies.

Another Conclusion: The SWB–HWS Encounter Undermines Naive Happiness

The coactivation of SWB and the HWS may largely account for the counterintuitive aspect of the major SWB findings reviewed at the beginning of this article. This coactivation often bears confusing results: People tend to maintain positive SWB for themselves (as confirmed by findings that SWB eventually prevails) while projecting their HWS onto others (as expressed by expectations that happiness is scarce in this world). However, even when projected outward, the HWS remains within reach as a monitor of existential dangers.

The apparent contradictions between findings and expectations in the SWB domain may also be explained by the “reality negotiation” process (Snyder, 1989; Snyder & Higgins, 1988) by which people strive to sustain a “good” and “in control” self-conception even in the face of

discrepant information. To this end, people link themselves to positive outcomes and distance themselves from negative outcomes. This process usually generates self-theories that are illusional to some extent and yet adaptive in daily life. Relating to the issues considered here, such self-theories depict a believable reality wherein people can feel entitled (good) and able (in control) to be happy. People's neverending negotiation with reality allows for these comforting self-theories but also confines their illusional quality by setting expectations as to what reality really is. The limits of SWB are better understood, then, in relation to the HWS construct. The following describes such limits when SWB is challenged by trauma and meaning in life.

SWB Overridden by Trauma: When the HWS Is Chronically Activated

The earlier-noted finding that life events affect SWB only for a short period may not override the lasting debilitating effect of traumas such as bereavement, illness, family breakup, and abuse (Baumeister et al., 2001). For several reasons, SWB-sustaining mechanisms cannot easily handle the aftermath of trauma. First, trauma is hard to extinguish in that it tends to conserve its emotional momentum (Frijda, 1988). Thus, posttraumatic reactions may be notoriously persistent (Herman, 1992; Shalev, 1997). In this vein, earlier trauma is often reactivated by later stress (Kahana, 1992; Solomon, 1995). Also, trauma may trigger a loss cycle that impedes later adaptation (Shmotkin & Barilan, 2002). According to Hobfoll's (1991; Hobfoll & Wells, 1998) conservation of resources theory, loss may generate excessive demands that further deplete resources. Second, trauma leaves a conceptual void after shattering the victim's assumptive world (Janoff-Bulman, 1992). Even when normalcy is reestablished, the trauma may still affect thought processes and transfuse into the victim's picture of the world (Baumeister & Bratslavsky, 2000). In summary, "the emotional impact of traumatic events never really wanes, it can only be overwritten" (Frijda, 1988, p. 354).

However, most trauma survivors manifest resilient adaptation (Bonanno, 2004; Kahana, 1992; Shmotkin, 2003). Thus, the vulnerability of Holocaust survivors in nonclinical samples persisted in differential domains of well-being

rather than in overall adjustment to life (Shmotkin, Blumstein, & Modan, 2003; Shmotkin & Lomranz, 1998). As trauma and normal life correspond to contradictory principles of existence, trauma survivors often form a "serial" or "paradoxical" self (Laufer, 1988; Lomranz, 1995). In this self, the trauma chronically activates the HWS and may thus be irreversibly deleterious to the protective function of SWB; yet, through the induction of a favorable psychological environment, SWB may accompany restoration and growth.

SWB Overridden by Meaning in Life: When the HWS Can Be Reconstructed

Although trauma survivors cannot easily rely on SWB to dress the uneradicable wounds of hostile-world attacks, they may find redemption in the reestablishment of meaning in life. Frankl (1963) claimed that happiness is only auxiliary to one's search for meaning in recovery after suffering. Studies of posttraumatic growth show that people coping with traumas often display positive outcomes through new meanings attached to the self, social relationships, and philosophy of life (Tedeschi, Park, & Calhoun, 1998). Other meaning-making strategies for restructuring experiences of anguish have also been documented (Davis, Nolen-Hoeksema, & Larson, 1998; Folkman & Moskowitz, 2000; Shantall, 1999; Smyth & Pennebaker, 1999).

A strong argument against confusing SWB with meaning in life emerges from Ryff's (1989a; Ryff & Keyes, 1995) concept of *psychological well-being*, which refers to positive functioning in the face of challenge. Ryff delineated six dimensions of meaningful functioning: self-acceptance, environmental mastery, positive relations with others, autonomy, purpose in life, and personal growth. These dimensions constitute criterial goods of positive health (Ryff & Singer, 1998), yet none of them include happiness or SWB. Keyes et al. (2002) showed that psychological well-being and SWB were empirically related but formed distinct faculties of well-being. Other studies also have revealed empirical distinctions between SWB and a partly related construct termed "meaning" (McGregor & Little, 1998), "personal growth" (Compton, Smith, Cornish, & Qualls, 1996), or "personal expressiveness" (Waterman, 1993).

Review of the dual track of well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2001) raises questions about the differ-

ential roles of SWB and meaning in life. SWB bears on the perceived favorableness of one's psychological environment (e.g., by setting a certain degree of happiness), whereas meaning produces the schemas (e.g., beliefs, values, or goals) that give purpose, coherence, and justification to oneself and one's behavior (Baumeister, 1991; Kreitler & Kreitler, 1976; Wong & Fry, 1998). Hence, SWB functions to regulate, or control, the HWS; yet, it is meaning making that can actually reconstruct the HWS by integrating self-representations of adversity (e.g., threats, failures, and suffering) into a coherent and comprehensible structure (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002).

Remarks on the Conceptual Boundaries of SWB

The systemic view of SWB casts doubt on the suitability of the reference to SWB as "hedonic well-being" (e.g., Ryan & Deci, 2001). The term *hedonic* denotes "a valence, a sense of positivity or negativity" (Carver, 2001, p. 345). As dictionaries indicate, "hedonic" is typically defined in relation to either pleasure or hedonism. Hedonism, which designates a lifestyle of seeking pleasurable experiences whenever possible, may reinforce SWB (Veenhoven, 2003) but does not relate to its essence. As elaborated earlier, the task of SWB is not to allow one to indulge in mere pleasure but to sustain one's favorable psychological environment in the face of the HWS. In line with Carver's (2001) functional analysis of affect, SWB monitors the entire spectrum from "doing well" to "doing poorly" and collaborates with its HWS counterpart in responding to both approach (incentive-related) and avoidance (threat-related) processes. Therefore, this article argues against the narrow focus on SWB as an end product of pleasurable experience.

Although striving to delineate SWB in its fullest sense, the current systemic view is *not* a call for crossing the boundaries of SWB into neighboring constructs. Thus, I have distinguished between SWB and meaning-driven concepts of psychological well-being. Whereas SWB refers to individuals' *generalized* evaluations of their overall or present life (e.g., "I am satisfied with my life" or "I am happy now"), other positive constructs are targeted at otherwise demarcated self-attributes such as goal attainment (hope), expectancies about future outcomes (optimism), perceived capability to perform actions that make up desirable outcomes (self-efficacy), and self-appraisals of one's worth as a person (self-esteem; see Snyder, 2002, for a comparison of these constructs). The separability of SWB from related constructs (e.g., Lucas et al., 1996) is essential for tracking underlying processes. For example, SWB is highly responsive to progression toward goals (see the section on "experiential SWB" to follow), and its quality as a favorable psychological environment presumably facilitates the management of desired goals. Yet, the construct of hope (Snyder, 2000, 2002) fully dwells on the processing of goal pursuits by delineating the synergy between agency (being motivated to exert goal-directed energy) and pathways (planning to meet goals via usable routes).

Where SWB Actually Functions: The SWB Modules

This article locates SWB within four major contexts of psychological space (private vs. public) and psychological time (synchronic vs. diachronic). As can be seen in Table 1, each context incorporates a particular *module* of SWB, defined here as an integrative pattern of SWB-related activity. Together, the modules expand the implications of SWB across the con-

Table 1
Contexts and Modules of Subjective Well-Being (SWB)

Context of psychological activity	SWB module	Definition of module	Key concept
Private	Experiential	Introspectively derived self-awareness of SWB experiences	Core SWB-related themes
Public	Declarative	Social act of self-reporting SWB to an actual or imaginary audience	Declarative functions of SWB
Synchronic	Differential	Self-organization of different dimensions of SWB	SWB types
Diachronic	Narrative	Temporal pattern of SWB valences along life story	SWB trajectories

textual mosaic of the self. In the private context, SWB experiences dwell on generative core themes; in the public context, SWB reports fulfill declarative functions; in the synchronic context, SWB dimensions combine into differential types; and in the diachronic context, SWB valences narrate trajectories across time. SWB-related activities, or modules, are thereby embedded in large contexts of functioning and adaptation, thus providing SWB with many options to fulfill its role.

The four modules described subsequently are neither mutually exclusive nor exhaustive. Their choice, however, is not random. The first two modules represent an attempt to disentangle the inner experience of SWB (experiential SWB) from its outer report (declarative SWB). Often skipping this distinction, most studies infer people's experience of SWB from their self-reports. Indeed, this confusion reflects the objective limits of science in regard to accessing subjective experience. Nevertheless, an explicit distinction between these modules is vital because they supply raw materials (experiences and declarations) for the other two modules, which deal with more elaborate constructions of SWB types (differential SWB) and SWB trajectories (narrative SWB).

Module 1: Experiential SWB

Experiential SWB occurs in the private context of one's introspection into one's thoughts and feelings. In this context, the module of experiential SWB relates to the self-awareness of SWB experiences. Such experiences are qualified by certain core themes.

SWB and Self-Awareness

When people introspect on their SWB, they activate a certain degree of self-awareness. This is a process that typifies most emotional experiences (Frijda, 1999). Self-awareness facilitates the appraisal of one's state relative to relevant standards. When the standards are believed to be met, positive emotions ensue; otherwise, the discrepancy (or the expected failure to reduce it) arouses negative emotions (Carver & Scheier, 1981; Duval & Wicklund, 1972). These emotional and cognitive processes modulate the experiential SWB.

Can there be an experience of SWB without self-awareness? Probably yes, because aware-

ness varies in terms of level of reflexiveness (Lambie & Marcel, 2002). People may not realize how happy their life was until their happiness is over (King & Pennebaker, 1998). Usually, however, people have no difficulty in reporting SWB (Veenhoven, 1996), suggesting that SWB is introspectively accessible. A major concern is whether private awareness of SWB can be tapped before it is biased by memory or public self-report. A feasible option is to cross-reference a variety of verbal and nonverbal indicators of SWB (R. J. Larsen & Fredrickson, 1999). Seeking to assess "objective happiness," Kahneman (1999) advocated using a continuous record of momentary well-being ("good-bad") values aggregated over time. Whereas experiential SWB is utterly subjective, the term *objective* signifies a systematic use of the self as the observer of its own awareness.

Core Themes of SWB Experiences

The notion of theme-bound SWB draws on Lazarus's (1991) theory that each emotion is defined by a "core relational theme." This is a pattern of appraisal that provides a basic account for the aroused emotion. Thus, the core relational theme of happiness is "making reasonable progress toward realization of our goals" (p. 267). However, empirical studies suggest that experiences of SWB may optionally dwell on a variety of core themes.

Conventional measures of SWB often mask core themes because they usually include either a single item or only a few items (Andrews & Robinson, 1991). Open-ended analyses of well-being provide richer data about themes of SWB (Ryff, 1989b; Thomas & Chambers, 1989). Systematic evidence of theme-based experiences of SWB comes from the dominant gerontological measures of SWB: the Life Satisfaction Index A (LSIA; Neugarten, Havighurst, & Tobin, 1961) and the Philadelphia Geriatric Center Morale Scale (PGCMS; Lawton, 1975). Analyses of the LSIA (Liang, 1984; Shmotkin, 1991b) yielded factors of mood tone, zest for life, and congruence; analyses of the PGCMS (Lawton, 1975; Liang & Bollen, 1983) yielded factors of agitation, attitude toward one's own aging, and dissatisfaction. An integrative study of the LSIA and PGCMS (Shmotkin & Hadari, 1996) confirmed that the variability of specific themes does not reduce the coherence of the global experience of SWB.

A core theme of SWB is hereby defined as *the individual's account of his or her current experiential SWB*. The literature on SWB reveals several core themes that can be conceived as sufficient causes of positive experiences of SWB:

Theme 1: Fulfillment of needs. Primary needs can be a salient theme in the experience of SWB (Diener & Lucas, 2000; Veenhoven, 1991a). As noted earlier, however, when basic needs are met, their effect on SWB is weaker. The theory of self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 2000) highlights the psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, whose fulfillment is vital for SWB as well as for growth, integrity, and psychological health at large.

Theme 2: Preponderance of positive over negative experiences. Following Bradburn's (1969) affect-balance model, Parducci (1995) defined happiness as "a theoretical average across all pleasures and pains" (p. 1). This bifurcated experience draws on Epicurean hedonism and Bentham's utilitarianism. As explicated earlier, however, the interactive influence of positive and negative experiences on SWB does not accord with simple dichotomous formulations.

Theme 3: Congruence between aspects of the self. This experiential aspect of SWB is rooted in the conception that self-discrepancies, whether cognitive or emotional, are a source of tension. Hence, the quest for self-congruence is a major psychological motivator (Higgins, 1987) and underlies an array of theories that concern well-being (Michalos, 1985; Rogers, 1961).

Theme 4: Challenging activity. According to Aristotle's concept of eudaimonia, happiness relates to activity rather than to a state of mind (McGill, 1967). Csikszentmihalyi's (1997) "flow" theory refers to a challenging activity that is worth doing for its own sake and stimulates competence and growth. Other models also relate SWB to fulfilling activities such as "personal projects" (Omodei & Wearing, 1990) and "life tasks" (Cantor & Sanderson, 1999).

Theme 5: Progression toward goals. Goal pursuits determine self-coherence and affective experience (Emmons & Kaiser, 1996). Full attainment of goals often fails to boost happiness (Kruglanski, 1996), but progress toward goals potently enhances SWB, particularly when goals are proximate and attainable (Emmons,

1986) and suit one's authentic values (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999).

Theme 6: Adherence to culturally cherished self-construals. Cultures foster construals that are entwined with the experience of well-being (Triandis, 2000). Thus, different prescriptions of individualistic and collectivistic cultures (e.g., self-enhancement vs. self-criticism) induce SWB through a protective experience of legitimacy and adequacy (Kitayama & Markus, 2000).

This list is not exhaustive, nor is it clear which core themes predominate and to what extent they operate separately or jointly. As posited by Diener and Lucas (2000), SWB evaluations are based on standards that change their salience according to the ongoing relevance of accessible information. In this line, core themes generate or accompany experiential SWB according to their current relevance. Opening versus closing modes of approach to inner experience (Rosenbaum, 1998) are likely to adjust the salience of the core themes. Cognitive operations such as knowledge schemas and choice strategies (Bless, 2001; Lyubomirsky, 2001) may also serve differing priorities of specific SWB core themes in providing accounts of experiential SWB.

Module 2: Declarative SWB

Declarative SWB occurs in the public context of interpersonal interaction. In this context, the module of declarative SWB relates to *any self-report of SWB to an audience*. SWB self-reports acquire their declarative nature by any sort of communication (oral, handwritten, or typed) through which an individual addresses others with a self-endorsed statement about her or his SWB. Although people can convey their SWB through nonverbal means (e.g., gestures, facial expressions, and drawings), most SWB self-reports are verbal. In fact, wherever there is an audience (be it even one person), any self-statement is a declaration that accomplishes declarative functions (Shmotkin, 1998).

Reporting SWB is a daily social behavior. It may be spontaneous (as in a chat), or it may follow conventions such as the "How are you?" script. Purporting to ask about someone's SWB, this question occasions routinized responses, such as "Fine, thanks," that are hardly informational. The related formality "How do you do?" is not even intended to elicit an answer. These

formulas facilitate social interaction under the superficial impression of happiness (Parducci, 1995). During social interactions, people regulate (either inflate or suppress) their presented happiness to maintain socially appropriate relationships (Erber & Erber, 2000; Pataki & Clark, 2004).

Exercising declarative SWB is the common way people inform others about their experiential SWB. Yet, as clarified by Robinson and Clore (2002), people can access their private emotional experience mainly in online self-reports. When delivering overall or retrospective self-reports, people actually rely on their beliefs about what emotions they are supposed to have. Reporting one's experiential SWB is complicated further by the very use of words, which often prescribe emotions rather than describe them (Schooler & Fiore, 1997). Evidently, the dynamics of declarative SWB must be understood beyond its alleged correspondence to experiential SWB.

Theoretically, SWB declarations may be approached from various angles. According to *speech act* theory (Austin, 1962), saying something is doing something. Speech acts convey meanings, activate certain operations, and achieve certain effects. Reporting SWB can also be seen as *self-identification*, a goal-directed activity specifying certain aspects of one's identity to some audience (Schlenker, 1985). The targeted audience is an influential actor who imposes evaluative standards and goal priorities on the declarative transaction (Higgins, 1992). Moreover, declarer-audience interactions induce a mutual process of *identity negotiation* (Swann, 1987). This process becomes more intricate when declarers address imaginary audiences or even serve as their own audience (Greenwald & Breckler, 1985). Finally, declarations constitute *commitment*, whose binding power stems from an assumed striving for consistency (Festinger, 1957). Thus, people who chronically avow happiness may feel compelled to really be happy; otherwise, they may upset their audience if their happy image proves to hide a miserable life.

Declarative Functions of SWB

The strategy proposed here examines SWB self-reports through the declarative functions that these reports serve. The concept of "declarative functions" refers to *the declarers' desired*

effects on their audience or on themselves via their audience. Whether the desired effects are actually obtained is a separate issue relating to the efficiency of declarative functions. Self-reports of SWB may serve one or more of the declarative functions specified in the paragraphs to follow (see summary in Table 2).

Function 1: Self-expression. This function refers to the desired effect of *displaying one's sincere feelings.* In fact, the typical working hypothesis of the audience is that the declarer is sincere and therefore believable. Reporting one's SWB may be regarded as part of the inclination to express one's emotions spontaneously (Gross & John, 1998). However, conflict over emotional expression is common and taxes the adaptational benefits of expressive behavior (King & Emmons, 1990).

Self-expression indicates psychological authenticity, which is the self-perception that one's behavior genuinely expresses self-determination and personal experience (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Authenticity enables the self to feel enhanced and coherent (Harter, 2002). Another aspect of self-expression is self-disclosure, which facilitates self-understanding and social relations (Kowalski, 1999; Stiles, 1995). According to Swann's (1990) self-verification theory, people seek feedback that validates their self-views, whether positive or negative. Hence, self-verification raises no problems for people in expressing either low or high SWB.

Function 2: Self-presentation. This function refers to the desired effect of *creating one's social image.* It is designed to generate, modify, or maintain the manner in which one is perceived by others (Leary, 1996). The interchangeable term *impression management* also indicates activity designed to control information beyond the self (Schlenker, 1980). Serving as a vehicle for self-enhancement, self-presentation facilitates social interaction, social rewards, and self-identity (Brown, 1998).

Happy people are perceived as more likable (Clark, Pataki, & Carver, 1996) and as having desirable lives (King & Napa, 1998). It is thus expected that those who wish to appear socially desirable report positive SWB. However, self-presentation may not always conform to social expectations (Baumeister, 1982). Apart from the common ingratiation, people may be motivated to appear competent, powerful, virtuous, or supplicant (Jones & Pittman, 1982). Thus, declaring low SWB ("I feel miserable") may

Table 2
Declarative Functions of Self-Reported Subjective Well-Being (SWB)

Declarative function	Description of function	Motto	Relevant concepts
Self-expression	Reporting high or low SWB serves to display one's sincere feelings	"I report my SWB to let others know what I really feel"	Expressivity Self-authenticity Self-disclosure Self-verification
Self-presentation	Reporting high or low SWB serves to create one's social image (mostly positive but may also be negative)	"I report the kind of SWB that makes others think of me the way I want them to"	Impression management Self-enhancement Social desirability
Self-deception	Reporting high SWB serves to maintain a positive self-perception while ignoring self-threatening information	"I report the SWB that truly describes the good feelings I have about myself"	Repression Defensive styles Positive illusions
Self-reinforcement	Reporting high SWB serves to reward oneself for a high self-prescribed standard of positive feelings	"I report the SWB that strengthens the positive feelings I set for myself"	Self-talk Auto-suggestion Self-regulation Self-improvement
Self-simulation	Reporting high or low SWB serves to explore a hypothetical situation so that relevant feedback can emerge and be worked out	"I report an SWB that I pretend to have because I am interested in others' reactions to my report"	Self-exploration Self-assessment Role playing Dramaturgy
Defensive pessimism	Reporting low SWB serves to handle fears of failure or disappointment	"I report the SWB that helps me reflect, both privately and publicly, on my anxiety about bad outcomes"	Dispositional pessimism Strategic optimism Reflectivity

help to solicit sympathy (Shepperd & Kwavnick, 1999), constitute a self-handicapping tactic for excusing failure (Arkin & Baumgardner, 1985), avoid the moralistic criticism that being happy is too selfish, or project an unsociable image that says "Beware, I may not be nice." Conversely, declarers may feign high SWB to protect the privacy of their bad feelings or to spare people this disturbing information (DePaulo & Kashy, 1998).

Function 3: Self-deception. This function refers to the desired effect of *maintaining a positive self-perception while ignoring self-threatening information*. According to Sackeim and Gur (1978), when an individual simultaneously holds two contradictory beliefs, he or she may be motivated to be aware of holding only one. Unlike self-presentation, self-deception is unconscious and generates favorably biased but honestly held self-descriptions. It aids adjustment by reducing anxiety (Paulhus, 1984, 1986) and supporting well-being (Erez, Johnson, & Judge, 1995).

Self-deception draws on the notion of defense mechanisms, notably repression. Both self-deception and repression refer to a motivated exclusion of undesirable content from

awareness (Weinberger, 1990). Contrary to positive illusions, which continue to readjust to a reasonable bias of reality, the defensive motivation of self-deception becomes more forceful in the face of harsher information (Taylor & Armor, 1996). Reporting to others helps self-deception when the audience is expected to fortify the declared self-deceptive belief (e.g., having high SWB) at the expense of the rejected self-threatening belief (e.g., having low SWB). A social context also provides self-deception with self-enhancement effects beyond its defensive function (Paulhus & Reid, 1991).

Function 4: Self-reinforcement. This function refers to the desired effect of *rewarding oneself for a high self-prescribed standard of positive feelings*. As addressed in the cognitive-behavioral tradition (e.g., Bandura, 1976), self-reinforcement is a response designed to afford control over positive consequences of one's behavior (Heiby, 1983). It builds on self-referent thoughts and phrases as used by models of self-talk in cognitive therapy (Beck, 1976; Meichenbaum, 1977) as well as models of auto-suggestion (Duckworth, 1979) and "positive thinking" (Peale, 1952). By means of this self-talk quality, declared SWB at a self-prescribed

level (e.g., “I am very happy”) serves as self-reinforcement for the desired attainment of such a level (e.g., being very happy).

Self-reinforcement is positively related to life satisfaction (Seybolt & Wagner, 1997) and negatively related to depression (Wilkinson, 1997). It is more effective in a social context that supports the self-prescribed standards for which reinforcement is given (Hayes et al., 1985).

Function 5: Self-simulation. This function refers to the desired effect of *exploring a hypothetical situation so that relevant feedback can emerge and be worked out.* In this case, the SWB self-report simulates a pretended state of mind when the actual experience of SWB is inconclusive or unknown. Declaring this kind of “as if” SWB is expected to result in feedback by an audience that reflects reality (cf. Taylor & Pham, 1996).

Self-simulation is an exploratory behavior emitted in conditions of uncertainty about oneself. According to Trope (1986), such conditions give priority to self-diagnostic, rather than self-enhancing, information. Self-simulated variants of SWB can thus function as “possible selves” (Markus & Nurius, 1986), that is, future self-conceptions that serve as criteria against which experiences can be assessed. An unhappy person may simulate a “happy possible self” by reporting high SWB, thus gaining an opportunity to experience, rehearse, or plan his or her potential SWB. Self-simulation offers heuristics of “might be” construals, which facilitate self-evaluation and coping (Kahneman & Tversky, 1982; Sanna, 2000; Taylor & Pham, 1996). Public simulation of SWB is also pertinent to the dramaturgical, “life as theater” approach of analyzing people as performers of self-images in social interactions (Buss & Briggs, 1984; Goffman, 1959).

Function 6: Defensive pessimism. This function refers to the desired effect of *avoiding disappointment about oneself by endorsing negative self-expectations.* Contrary to the defensive strategy of self-deception, certain people sensitize, rather than repress, threatening information (Byrne, 1964). By using “defensive pessimism” (Norem, 2001; Norem & Cantor, 1986), people set unjustifiably low expectations for themselves. They thus reduce anxiety over potential failure by having the justification of these negative expectations and acting to refute them. Unlike dispositional pessimism, defensive pessimism involves efficient coping and

may even have an advantage over optimism in preparing for stressful tasks (Showers & Ruben, 1990; Spencer & Norem, 1996).

Thus, some people declare low SWB as a self-defensive position against the possibility of failing to achieve higher SWB or of losing it when it exists. This position ensures that low SWB is no reason for disappointment, whereas high SWB is a good achievement. This is an intriguing case wherein negative SWB (whether experienced or merely declared) serves the positive function of regulating one’s anxiety over failure. In a different vein, self-reports of low SWB may also be self-defensive for people who superstitiously fear that, by declaring their good luck, they tempt their fate (compare with the fear of reversing one’s good luck that underlies the “knock on wood” phenomenon).

Adaptational Implications of the Declarative Functions

In the past, researchers traditionally expressed concern about biases in self-report measures (Paulhus, 1991; Sudman, Bradburn, & Schwarz, 1996). Social desirability was particularly suspected of being a threat to the validity of self-reports, including self-reports of SWB (Carstensen & Cone, 1983). Further analyses, however, revealed that social desirability does not necessarily distort, but rather amplifies, the meaning of psychological constructs (Furnham, 1986; McCrae & Costa, 1983). Thus, controlling for social desirability does *not* enhance the validity of SWB measures and may even attenuate it (Diener, Sandvik, Pavot, & Gallagher, 1991; Kozma & Stones, 1987). In line with the view that contextual artifacts for attitudes may actually be inherent in attitude formation (Tourangeau & Rasinski, 1988), it is concluded, then, that self-report measures of SWB constitute a vehicle of social declarations that are part and parcel of SWB at large.

All of the declarative functions of SWB support adaptational motives: self-assessment, self-verification, self-enhancement, and self-improvement (Sedikides & Strube, 1997; Taylor, Neter, & Wayment, 1995). Each function facilitates at least one motive but may have cross effects on other motives as well. With this motivational base, declarative functions indicate that we do not necessarily mean what we say when reporting our SWB, but we certainly

mean to achieve something that is beyond the appearance of the report itself.

Module 3: Differential SWB

Differential SWB occurs in the synchronic context of relations among the concurrent representations of the self. In this context, the module of differential SWB specifically relates to the *self-organization of one's different dimensions of SWB into distinct types*. An SWB type, then, is an organized aspect of the self as derived from differential SWB constituents.

The notion of SWB types was implemented by McKennell (1978), who cross tabulated ratings of happiness (affective SWB) and satisfaction (cognitive SWB). McKennell found that the higher happiness/lower satisfaction type was typical of young adulthood, whereas the lower happiness/higher satisfaction type was typical of old age. A few researchers applied this typology (Haes, Pennink, & Welvaart, 1987; Michalos, 1980). The typology presented next might be considered an extension of McKennell's approach.

A Differential Typology of SWB

Shmotkin (1998) proposed a differential typology of SWB that reflects certain relations among its key dimensions (see Figure 1). The differential types are produced by cross tabulating three pairs of relevant SWB dimensions: positive affect and negative affect as emotional components, affect balance (Bradburn's, 1969, formula of positive affect minus negative affect) and life satisfaction as the respective constituents of emotion and cognition, and evaluations of present and future SWB as temporal coordinates. These cross tabulations form three sets of 2×2 typologies in which each dimension is split into high and low (based on interindividual variability), with negative affect being the only dimension in which "high" signals a *low* level of SWB. As a result of the correlations between SWB dimensions (positive and negative affect are often an exception), a distinction is made between *congruous types*, in which a person is either high or low in SWB according to both cross-tabulated dimensions (designated as Cells 1 and 4 in Figure 1), and *incongruous types*, in which a person is high in SWB according to one dimension but low according to the other (Cells 2 and 3). Whereas the congruous

types indicate a higher (Type 1) or lower (Type 4) level of SWB, the incongruous types indicate intermediate levels of SWB.

In the *positive-negative types* (Figure 1, Panel A), the congruous types reflect the predominance of either positive over negative (happy) or negative over positive (unhappy) affect. Incongruous types reflect no dominant valence, but the arousal level of both positive and negative affect is either elevated (inflated) or flattened (deflated). This coexistence (or co-absence) of positive and negative affect may designate more intricate, and possibly ambivalent, modes of SWB.

In the *cognitive-affective types* (Figure 1, Panel B), the joint effect of life satisfaction and affect balance (happiness) is likely to reflect the extent to which judgmental and emotional processes regulate each other. Being both satisfied and happy reflects a highly gratifying position (amply gratified), whereas being both dissatisfied and unhappy reflects deprivation (essentially ungratified). The incongruous types, wherein higher satisfaction involves lower happiness (satisfied but unhappy) or vice versa (happy but unsatisfied), apparently represent reverse modes in which cognition and affect tax or, alternatively, compensate for the other.

In the *present-future types* (Figure 1, Panel C), the perception of present SWB provides different bases for visualizing future SWB. For the congruous types, a high evaluation of the present may justify a positive outlook on the future (reasonably optimistic), whereas a low evaluation may justify a gloomy one (reasonably pessimistic). In the incongruous types, one may be reluctant to trust in the future despite an admittedly good present (unreasonably pessimistic), or, alternatively, one may foster high expectations of the future unsubstantiated by the low-evaluated present (unreasonably optimistic). The terms *reasonably* and *unreasonably* refer merely to the apparent congruity or incongruity between the temporal evaluations and do not imply any critical stand with regard to the appropriateness of these evaluations.

Underlying Assumptions of the Differential Typology

Any typology runs the risk of oversimplification. The three presented pairs of dimensions do not exclude additional SWB types based on other dimensions. However, as proposed by

A. Positive-Negative Types

		Positive Affect	
		<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>
Negative Affect	<i>High</i>	Unhappy (4)	Inflated (2)
	<i>Low</i>	Deflated (3)	Happy (1)

B. Cognitive-Affective Types

		Life Satisfaction	
		<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>
Affect Balance	<i>Low</i>	Essentially Ungratified (4)	Satisfied-but Unhappy (2)
	<i>High</i>	Happy-but Unsatisfied (3)	Amplly Gratiified (1)

C. Present-Future Types

		Present Evaluation	
		<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>
Future Evaluation	<i>Low</i>	Reasonably Pessimistic (4)	Unreasonably Pessimistic (2)
	<i>High</i>	Unreasonably Optimistic (3)	Reasonably Optimistic (1)

Shmotkin (1998), this typology depicts a differential structure of SWB that relies on several assumptions:

1. The raw materials for the differential SWB types can be either experiences residing in experiential SWB or self-reports constituting declarative SWB.

2. Although representing distinct qualities, the differential types are subsumed under the general, higher order construct of SWB (Shmotkin & Hadari, 1996; Stones & Kozma, 1985).

3. The differential types reflect interactive effects between SWB dimensions such as *amplification* (the effect of the combined dimensions is more potent than the effect of either of them separately), *complementariness* (certain effects are produced only by the combination of the dimensions), and *compensation* (an effect of one dimension becomes excessively strong when the effect of the other dimension is unsuitably weak).

4. The differential SWB types are not fixed predispositions. Types are patterns of individual differences that cannot be captured by dimensional analysis alone (Weinberger & Schwartz, 1990; York & John, 1992). SWB types, even if they are grounded in one's personality, serve as adjustable modes of managing and optimizing SWB.

Adaptational Implications of the Differential SWB Types

SWB types offer various adaptational options. Congruous types, in which one's positions on the SWB dimensions converge, induce a sense of coherence. Such congruity is advantageous when the type's intersecting dimensions are high (e.g., happy) and may be double edged (instigating either enfeeblement or mobilization) when they are low (e.g., unhappy). Incongruous types, although incurring the strain of diverging dimensions, may offer a flexibility that maximizes SWB by substituting and compensating higher for lower dimensions.

A preliminary validation of the suggested typology in a life span sample (Shmotkin, 1998) showed a sizable proportion of participants in

the incongruous types: 39% were classified into an incongruous type only once, 25% twice, and 6% all three times. A discriminant analysis revealed that the first discriminative function consistently differentiated between the two congruous types, whereas the second orthogonal function differentiated between the two incongruous types. Variables that discriminated between types were health, marital status, economic status, and education. These findings show that differential SWB types can be empirically characterized and that these types reflect adaptations to different psychosocial resources in the course of adulthood and aging.

Further validation of the differential approach to well-being was provided by Keyes et al. (2002), who cross classified participants in a national U.S. sample according to their SWB (evaluations of life and current affect) and Ryff's (1989a) construct of psychological well-being (engagement with life challenges). Both sociodemographic and personality variables distinguished between the well-being types. For instance, the congruous type of high SWB and high psychological well-being related primarily to low neuroticism, whereas the incongruous type of high psychological well-being and low SWB related to high openness to experience. This study indicates that coexisting modalities of well-being reflect adaptive processes contoured by personal resources and dispositions.

In summary, differential SWB, with its embedded SWB types, represents combinatory modes of SWB along synchronic dimensions. The dynamic formation of SWB types enables individuals to tackle both consistencies and inconsistencies in their life conditions.

Module 4: Narrative SWB

Narrative SWB occurs in the diachronic context of one's accumulative lifetime experiences. In this context, the module of narrative SWB specifically relates to *the temporal pattern of SWB valences that characterizes trajectories in an individual's life story*. In other words, narrative SWB tells the story of the way a person's SWB evolved in the course of his or her life.

Ingredients of Narrative SWB

Most studies assess people's present SWB. However, SWB functions within past and future time coordinates as well (Shmotkin & Eyal, 2003). A rudimentary temporal frame was proposed by Cantril (1965) in his Self-Anchoring Scale, which consists of three ratings of satisfaction with the past (e.g., 5 years before), present, and future (e.g., 5 years ahead). Using this scale, Shmotkin (1991a) found a consistent configuration whereby progressive age (in a cross-sectional design) was associated with stability in ratings for the present, a decline for the future, and an increase for the past. Other extensions of measures into past and future evaluations (Fleeson & Heckhausen, 1997; Pavot, Diener, & Suh, 1998; Ryff, 1991; Staudinger, Bluck, & Herzberg, 2003) also demonstrate the dynamics of temporal perspectives. In fact, time-referent ratings of SWB contain a narrative about a person's progression in time: They tell a story.

The experience of time is expressed in narratives (Ricoeur, 1988). Narrative psychology posits that people are storytellers by nature (Bruner, 1986; Sarbin, 1986). McAdams (1993) conceptualized the self-narrative as a self-defining story that constitutes a coherent identity with unity and purpose. In another view, Gergen (1994) held that the self-narrative reflects many identities produced by relations and negotiations between an individual and his or her audiences. In both views, self-narratives involve sequences of events and outcomes that strongly reflect SWB (Gergen & Gergen, 1988; McAdams, Reynolds, Lewis, Patten, & Bowman, 2001).

As proposed here, narrative SWB captures the perceived evolvement of one's SWB over one's lifetime, thus encapsulating a core scheme of one's life story. Narrative SWB represents one's *present outlook*, whether projected retrospectively or prospectively: "In this psychological time labyrinth of past, present, and future, our only point of entry is now" (M. K. Johnson & Sherman, 1990, p. 517). However, present SWB is molded by ongoing back-and-forth interactions with memories of the past (Seidnitz, Wyer, & Diener, 1997). Hence, a major outcome of narrative SWB is a self-perceived trajectory that connects one's *SWB markers* along life. An SWB marker is defined as a specific

self-evaluation of SWB relating to a particular point of time in one's life course.

The notion of SWB markers dwells on Shmotkin's (1999) model of *anchor periods*, which posits that individuals map their self-narratives by markers of outstanding periods or events (e.g., "the happiest period in my life" or "the most difficult period in my life"). These anchor periods set valence boundaries for the evaluative space of the self-narrative and establish a basic frame of temporal order, distances, and density of formative events. Representing paramount experiences in life, anchor periods serve as reference points with which other experiences can be compared and interpreted. The anchors constitute a skeleton that provides a heuristic outlook on one's perceived format of life. Self-narratives thus build on functional structures that incorporate and support remembered experiences, incoming occurrences, and anticipated eventualities.

SWB Trajectories

Narrative SWB consists of at least one SWB trajectory, defined as a *personally constructed pattern of SWB directions*. An SWB trajectory includes at least one direction along at least one time zone (past, present, or future). Each direction is an imaginary line that proceeds in a specific course and is established by a connection between at least two SWB markers. An SWB trajectory may be *continuous* (when it progresses in one direction or combined directions) or *discontinuous* (when it progresses in at least two directions that proceed in courses that do not connect).

Although bearing similarity to previous works on life-course trajectories (Elder, 1985; Singer, Ryff, Carr, & Magee, 1998; Wheaton & Gotlib, 1997), the current conception of an SWB trajectory differs in certain respects. First, it is based on personal evaluations of SWB rather than on presumably objective biographical data; second, it specifies SWB markers that function as "turning points" where directions change but may also solidify continuity in existing directions. The current scheme of SWB trajectories extends Gergen's (1994) "narrative forms," which are plots "converted to a linear form in terms of their evaluative shifts over time" (p. 195). Gergen and Gergen (1988) adapted the narrative forms to SWB and presented them as life graphs.

The “life-graph” technique (Bourque & Back, 1977; Schroots & Ten Kate, 1989; Whitbourne & Dannefer, 1985–1986) aptly reflects SWB trajectories. Respondents are asked to draw their own life (past, present, and future) along a horizontal axis representing the age (time) continuum, often in reference to a vertical axis representing level of SWB (satisfaction or happiness). The age continuum can be pre-marked by chronological ages or can be left blank. Up and down shifts on the SWB axis are often associated with particular life events.

Table 3 presents the proposed classification of SWB trajectories (for illustrative life graphs, see Figure 2). Most of the continuous trajectories fit Gergen’s (1994) narrative forms. The ascending, descending, and stable trajectories respectively replicate Gergen’s “progressive,” “regressive,” and “stability” narratives, pointing to a monolithic direction in which the narrative proceeds along time. The curvilinear trajectory involves differently shaped curves specified by Gergen as the “tragic” narrative (a progressive direction followed by a rapid downfall), the “comedy-romance” narrative (a regressive direction followed by progress), and the “happily-ever-after” narrative (a progressive direction

that levels off). The fluctuating trajectory corresponds to Gergen’s “heroic saga” narrative, wherein victories and defeats repeatedly alternate with each other. The current classification adds another continuous trajectory, namely the spiral, which has a fluctuation that maintains an overall consistent direction, whether upward or downward.

Also proposed here are three discontinuous trajectories: split, segmented, and divergent. The split trajectory, with two disconnected directions, is actually a particular case of the segmented trajectory, which has at least three. However, the former differs from the latter by presenting a narrative SWB built on a single break that renders two parts of life unbridgeable in terms of the feelings governing each. This kind of trajectory may characterize victims of a massive trauma, who feel that their posttrauma life cannot regain the quality of their pretrauma life. The segmented trajectory, conversely, is a pattern of discontinuity that may stem either from repeatedly disruptive events or from a dispositional failure to integrate SWB across life. Whereas split and segmented trajectories cannot integrate *successive* directions of SWB, the divergent trajectory cannot integrate *simul-*

Table 3
Subjective Well-Being (SWB) Trajectories: Classification and Characteristics

SWB trajectory	Underlying message	Possible representation(s) on life graph
Continuous		
Ascending	“My SWB steadily gets better”	Line connects points in an upward direction
Descending	“My SWB steadily gets worse”	Line connects points in a downward direction
Stable	“My SWB remains the same”	Points are connected in a flat line
Curvilinear	“My SWB has consecutively moved in at least two different directions”	Line combines at least two trajectories, ascending through stable
Spiral	“My SWB variably moves upward and downward, yet maintains a certain direction as a whole”	Line connects points scattered in a discernible direction
Fluctuating	“My SWB abruptly has its ups and downs”	Line sharply changes directions at points that are scattered on grossly different levels
Discontinuous		
Split	“My SWB is divided into two disconnected parts of my life”	Points constitute two disconnected lines; each line may maintain any other kind of trajectory
Segmented	“In the course of life, my SWB has had different qualities that cannot be compared”	Points constitute at least three disconnected lines; each line may maintain any other kind of trajectory
Divergent	“My SWB simultaneously moves in different directions”	Two groupings of points are connected by two different lines that represent concurrent directions; the lines may be parallel or cross each other; each line may maintain any other kind of trajectory

Note. “Life graph” refers to an actual or imaginary drawing of one’s life along a horizontal axis of age and a vertical axis of SWB (see text for explanation). “Point” refers to any two-coordinate entry on this graph.

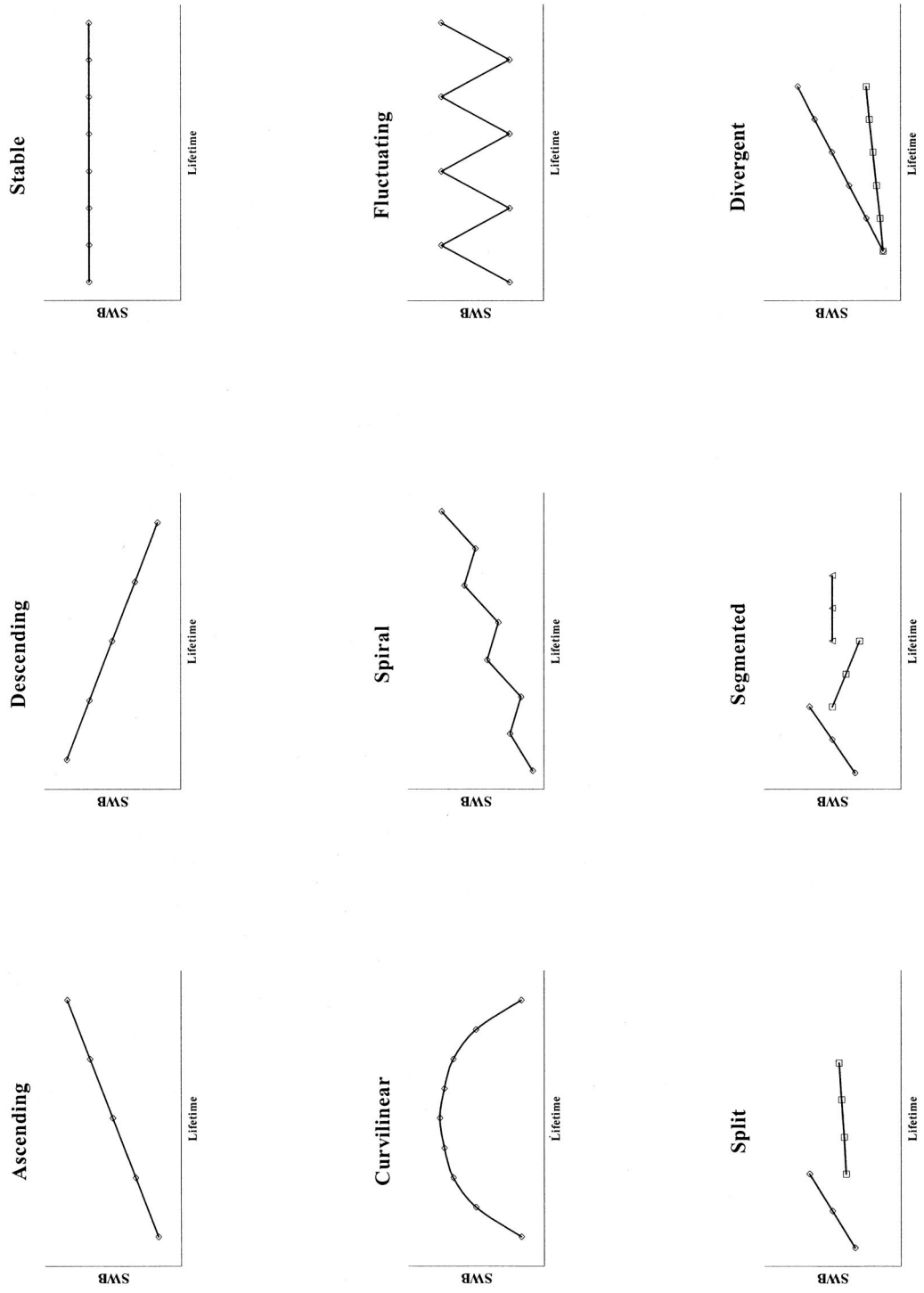


Figure 2. Life graphs illustrating trajectories of narrative subjective well-being (SWB).

taneous ones. In the latter case, individuals feel that their SWB is moving in two concurrent directions.

As specified in Table 3, each SWB trajectory bears an *underlying message*. Messages may convey certain meanings that pertain to an individual's life narrative in general, such as growth (ascending), deterioration (descending), self-preservation (stable), recovery from a crisis or loss of achievements (curvilinear), mastery of life's vicissitudes (spiral), ceaseless struggle against evil fate (fluctuating), irreparable trauma (split), sweeping life transformations (fragmented), or unresolved conflict about life's meaning (divergent). Such meanings provide the trajectory with a *motto*: a unique account of an existential condition that pervades one's life over time. The motto resembles Gergen's (1994) concept of "valued endpoint" that sums up the story's essence.

Although life graphs have a heuristic appeal, they are not the only way to tap SWB trajectories. People can describe trajectories through purely verbal accounts. Also, concurrent self-ratings of time-referenced SWB (as in the aforementioned Cantril scale, but preferably referring to more SWB markers) depict a rudimentary SWB trajectory. Notably, longitudinal SWB self-ratings collected at different points in time, although offering a perspective on temporal changes, do not constitute a self-constructed plot that underlies the narrative SWB. Another cautionary note relates to the declarative quality of SWB trajectories when tapped by public measures (e.g., life graphs or self-ratings). An SWB trajectory, however, may remain entirely private within the experiential SWB. Hence, people may have more than one SWB trajectory of a private or public nature.

Putting the Dynamic and the Modular Bases of SWB Together

SWB Modules as Arenas for Regulating the HWS: A Configurational View

The regulatory operation of SWB vis-à-vis the HWS is conducted through the SWB modules described earlier. Representing major contexts of psychological space and time, these modules facilitate the functioning of SWB by permeating larger psychological processes. Thus, private introspection into SWB (experiential SWB) is part of self-consciousness; pub-

lic SWB reports (declarative SWB) serve the socially interactive self; the synchronic organization of SWB dimensions (differential SWB) typifies congruent and incongruent self-concepts; and the diachronic integration of SWB markers (narrative SWB) taps a basic construction of one's life story. This contextual and operational diversity of the SWB modules accounts for the flexible and plural manifestations of SWB in daily life; it further offers numerous paths to absorb the possibly deleterious effects of the HWS.

The configuration of SWB modules constitutes an *SWB profile*. The following sketches of two hypothetical women (A and B) illustrate this notion. Both women report the same SWB levels (e.g., high positive affect and low negative affect) and thus have an identical declarative SWB. However, their self-report overlies strikingly different SWB profiles. *Woman A* represents an ideal picture of SWB: Her experiential SWB relates to progression toward goals as a core theme; her declarative function is self-expression, and thus she maintains consistency between experiential and declarative SWB; she is happy as a type, because her differential SWB reflects congruity of high-positive versus low-negative affect dimensions; and, finally, she perceives that the SWB markers along her life form an ascending trajectory in her narrative SWB. *Woman B* is the opposite: The core theme that preoccupies her experiential SWB is the predominance of negative over positive affect; using the declarative function of self-presentation, her report of positive SWB is only a social pretense; and when her differential SWB and narrative SWB refer to her true experiences, she is unhappy as a type and perceives her SWB markers as forming a descending trajectory. These contrasting examples point to the detrimental implications of relying on isolated manifestations of SWB (self-reports, in this case) without looking at overall configurations. These examples also allude to the numerous combinations that can make up SWB profiles.

Using terms from Mischel and Shoda's (1995, 1998) cognitive-affective personality system theory, one can characterize SWB profiles as consisting of cognitive-affective units that are characteristic mental representations. In addition to the major experiences of SWB (satisfaction and happiness), SWB modules include other characteristic units, such as encodings of

experiences (core themes), expectancies about desired outcomes (declarative functions), self-organizing plans of experiences (SWB types), and beliefs about the self in time (SWB trajectories). According to Mischel and Shoda's "if . . . then" paradigm, the units in the SWB profile select and interpret situations (the "ifs") that engender behaviors (the "thens"). In the preceding illustration, the engendered behavior is self-report declarations.

Configurations of SWB modules are vital to the regulation of the HWS. Through such configurations, optimization of happiness is processed through negotiation with the challenges and complexities of life (Keyes et al., 2002; Labouvie-Vief & Medler, 2002). Because this negotiation is ongoing, it is the processing, more than the outcomes, of SWB that matters.

Toward an Expanded Conception of SWB and a Renewed Research Agenda

As argued, the dynamic and modular bases of SWB substantiate the notion that SWB is not merely a matter of attained levels of happiness but, rather, the process of pursuing happiness. This process is essential in facing life exigencies. However, the presently proposed framework does *not* purport to explain human wellness in general. Thus, SWB and the HWS can reflect only part of the fundamental approach (appetition) versus avoidance (aversion) biobehavioral systems that underlie motivation and emotion at large (Cacioppo et al., 1999; Gray, 1987). With this caution, the present framework can serve as a blueprint for an expanded conception of SWB.

An expanded conception may better handle the dilemma over personality versus judgmental theories of SWB. Personality research shows that SWB is a stable disposition across the life span (McCrae, 2002; McCrae & Costa, 1994). Dwelling on the Big Five personality model, McCrae and Costa (1991) suggested that extraversion and neuroticism are primary temperamental agents of SWB, thus determining its traitlike qualities of consistency and stability. Other traits such as conscientiousness and agreeableness foster or moderate SWB by organizing and controlling relevant emotional outputs (R. J. Larsen, 2000).

A dynamic view of SWB–HWS relations does not necessarily contradict a personality-based approach. Along with personality deter-

minants of SWB, enduring dispositions determine the appraisal of potential stressors (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997) and hence shape the HWS as well. In McCrae and Costa's (1996) terms, SWB and the HWS are characteristic adaptations that transform basic personality traits into real life via dynamic processes (e.g., information processing, coping, and self-regulation) in combination with biographical and external influences.

In a different vein, social cognition studies show that SWB is reactive to momentary conditions such as good or bad weather and watching a soccer team win or lose (Schwarz & Strack, 1999). Such transient effects do not hamper the long-term reliability and validity of SWB (Pavot & Diener, 1993), but they do point to its contextual appearances. The paradigm presented here regards these appearances as reflections of the multifaceted modular activity of SWB, which ultimately adheres to the unifying role of sustaining a favorably functional environment.

This article has presented an evolving framework that naturally leaves loose ends. It seeks a fresh conception of well-being, but it may also encourage a renewed research agenda. Indeed, studies designed to test key propositions are currently under way and will be reported in due time. An urgent task now being undertaken is to construct measures for the newly introduced concepts, such as the HWS, core themes of SWB, and declarative functions of SWB self-reports. Techniques have already been established to measure other central concepts such as SWB types and trajectories (see the relevant earlier sections).

Future research should map the operations of the SWB modules. Core themes generate SWB experiences, declarative functions generate SWB self-reports, intersecting dimensions generate differential SWB types, and markers in life narratives generate SWB trajectories. In fact, we are dealing here with a variety of "well-beings" that have agentic powers in hostile environments. Research should attend to the complexity of causal paths that these "well-beings" constitute. Another challenge would be to differentiate the role of SWB in warding off adversity from roles played by a host of related constructs that jointly aim to explain positive health and human thriving (Aspinwall & Staudinger, 2003; Keyes & Haidt, 2003; Snyder & Lopez, 2002).

Conclusion

The human quest for happiness is a source of perplexity. Is happiness an elusive experience that is likely to betray us, or is it an experience within the daily reach of most people? According to ancient wisdom, "one must ever wait for the last day of a man's life, and call no one happy until he is dead and buried" (Ovid, 1955, p. 77). A contrasting message that happiness can be readily procured is conveyed by titles such as *You Can Be Happy, No Matter What* (Carlson, 1997) and *Life Without Limits: Ten Easy Steps to Success and Happiness* (Stone, 1998). These polar views of happiness are still unresolved by psychological research: On one hand, bad experiences are pervasively found to have a stronger impact than good ones; on the other hand, positive SWB proves prevalent for most people. This confusion invites a reconsideration of SWB.

In this article, I have sought to integrate previous theory and research achievements relating to SWB into a new conceptual framework. My objective has been to explicate the inherently protective function of SWB along with its multiple, often dialectical appearances. The proposed framework delineates SWB as a dynamic process of pursuing happiness rather than a merely static attribute of being happy or unhappy. In this view, the agentic powers of SWB, particularly its quality as a favorable psychological environment, support the existential task of regulating an ever-present HWS. This scenario of adversity is indeed the very reason why Ovid refused to trust the attainability of happiness, on the one hand, and why some people are driven to trust promises of instant happiness, on the other.

Postmodern streams emphasize multiplicity, relativity, and incongruity as an inherent part of life (Gergen, 1991; Lomranz, 1998). In the present conception, individuals resort to various modules by which they experience, declare, differentiate, and narrate different representations of SWB. Such plurality does not reflect any problematic inconsistency; rather, it represents beneficial management of "multiple identities" (Thoits, 1983) or "possible selves" (Markus & Nurius, 1986) that all foster flexibility and adaptability. It is this very plurality of SWB that facilitates the pursuit of happiness in a hostile world.

Sisyphus, the absurd hero of ancient myth, was condemned by the gods to ceaselessly roll a heavy rock to the top of a mountain from where it would roll down again. This myth has fascinated generations because it exemplifies the human ordeal of both obeying and defying the torment of fate. Albert Camus, as quoted at the beginning of this article, proposed that Sisyphus, with his persistent fidelity and resolute struggle, could rise above his fate. But did Camus not go too far by also assuming that Sisyphus was happy? Whether or not this was the case, it is the very option to *pursue* happiness in a hostile world that may provide Sisyphus with the vigor of challenging his destiny.

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