

# THE EXPERIENCE OF PERSONOLOGY OF HAPPINESS

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## Опыт персонологии счастья

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### Abstract

The goal of this study was to explore happiness within the context of general personology, which synthesizes theoretical, cultural-phenomenological, and reflective knowledge about personality. Classical and contemporary ideas about happiness have been consolidated and problematized through conceptual questions and answers, the sequence of which reflects the logic of the original integrative approach to understanding individual happiness. The article collects, supplements, and reinterprets well-known perspectives on happiness from the fields of philosophical anthropology, positive psychology, poetry, and folklore from around the world. The proposed personological model of happiness incorporates the results of problematizing happiness definitions, as well as insights about life-happiness, the semantics of the word "happiness," the architectonics of happiness, the paradoxes of experiencing happiness, the value dimension of happiness, "happiness impressions," activities conducive to happiness, personality traits as subjects of happiness, the dialogical nature of experiencing happiness, variations in the

### Резюме

Целью данной работы стало изучение счастья в контексте общей персонологии, предполагающей синтез теоретического, культурно-феноменологического и рефлексивного знания о личности. Классические и современные идеи о счастье обобщены и проблематизированы посредством концептуальных вопросов и ответов, последовательность которых отражает логику авторского замысла, состоящего в интегральном подходе к раскрытию индивидуального счастья. В статье собраны, дополнены и переосмыслены известные представления о счастье из области философской антропологии, позитивной психологии, поэзии и сказок народов мира. В предлагаемой персонологической модели счастья содержатся результаты проблематизации определений счастья, а также знания о жизни-счастье, о семантике слова «счастье», об архитектонике счастья, о парадоксах проживания счастья, о ценностном измерении счастья, о «впечатлениях счастья», о занятиях и видах деятельности, благоприятствующих счастью, о качествах личности как субъекта счастья, о диалогичности проживания счастья, о вариантах жизненного обретения счастья, о коллизиях пути к

life attainment of happiness, the conflicts on the path to happiness, and modern “practices of happiness.” Based on the formulation of conceptual questions about happiness and the authors’ answers to them, a reflective questionnaire, “What Is Happiness to Me?” is proposed. Working with this questionnaire can become a “practice of self-discovery in happiness” for individuals. The study presented in this article employs hermeneutic, theoretical, and reflective modeling aimed at advancing the personology of happiness, with a perspective on shaping and applying the developed models in counseling and psychotherapy practice.

*Keywords:* happiness, personality, general personology, synthesis model, hermeneutics, cultural phenomenology, experiencing happiness, life-happiness, happiness reflection.

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счастью, о современных «практиках счастья». На основе постановки концептуальных вопросов о счастье и авторских ответов на них предлагается рефлексивный опросник «Что есть счастье для меня?», работа с которым может стать для личности «практикой самопознания счастья». В исследовании, представленном в статье, осуществлено герменевтическое, теоретическое и рефлексивное моделирование, направленное на развитие персонологии счастья с перспективой преломления разработанных моделей в практике индивидуального консультирования и психотерапии.

*Ключевые слова:* счастье, личность, общая персонология, модель синтеза, герменевтика, культурная феноменология, проживание счастья, жизнь-счастье, рефлексия счастья.

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**Happiness** has myriad human faces, an endless array of events it fills, vast expanses of memories it stores, and continuous streams of joy and love that bind people together. It holds an enigmatic familiarity for each individual, a potential to

bestow gifts upon any living person, and an infinity of unique essences, each of which is birthed by a person living their life. Happy is the one who is born, who has lived, who brings life to the world, and who crafts their own life. The extensive fields of happiness research are filled with images, ideas, and symbols that inspire humanity to cherish and recreate it. These fields encompass mythology and religion, visual arts and literature, philosophy and cultural studies, as well as social and psychological sciences, and the implicit knowledge gained through individuals' intuitive insights into their own happiness (Djidaryan, 2000). In this context, **general personology**, which examines the personality, its properties, states, and activities in the lenses of culture, foundational knowledge, consultative and psychotherapeutic practice, and personal reflection, finds its place (Petrovsky & Starovoytenko, 2012; Petrovsky, 2013; Starovoytenko, 2023).

**The study** presented in this article **aims** to explicate and systematize categories, ideas, and paradigms that unveil different aspects of happiness within the realm of personology. The primary sources of the study include relevant philosophical, psychological, and philological works, fairy tales, and poetry. This work emphasizes well-known scientific texts on happiness, which preserve the “concept of personality” and the “concept of individual happiness” within culture. The primary research methods employed **are hermeneutics** and **modeling**, which focus on problematizing knowledge about personal happiness, substantiating its essence that cannot be reduced to other phenomena of personal existence, and fostering individual **reflection** on the experience and understanding of happiness.

In this study, commonly held perspectives on happiness, as presented in philosophical anthropology and positive psychology, served as navigation points. The principles of the traditional “science of happiness” include the unveiling of happiness in its distinctly positive significance for human existence; examining happiness in its two principal forms—hedonia, or the pleasure derived from fully satisfying one's desires and aspirations within the community, and eudaimonia, or the individual's transcendence to spiritual dimensions, viewing happiness as a supreme value and complete, perfect bliss. This research also constructs a categorical system for revealing happiness as a derivative of subjective well-being, psychological well-being, quality of life, satisfaction, and objective well-being. It further delineates, in studying the genesis of happiness, the innate preconditions of happiness, objective conditions that favor happiness, and individual actions oriented toward achieving it. Happiness is identified with its individual aspects, particularly well-being, in the unity of its subjective and objective forms; at the same time, it rejects the possibility of reducing happiness to its component factors and determinants, such as genetic predispositions, hedonic adaptation, physical and mental health, physical attractiveness, absence of depression, or a positive outlook on life (Argyle, 2003; Kahneman & Tversky, 2003; Levitt & Radchikova, 2012; Leontiev, 2020; Lyubomirsky, 2014; Seligman, 2006; Tatarkiewicz, 1981; Deci & Ryan, 2008; Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2008; Diener & Ryan, 2009; Huta & Waterman, 2014; Sheldon & Elliot, 1999).

Examples of conceptualizations of happiness rooted in current psychology and philosophical anthropology include the following authors' definitions.

M. Argyle: Happiness is subjective well-being, or SWB (Argyle, 2003).

M. Seligman: Happiness is a stable, enduring effect of the alignment of innate “happiness” with favorable life circumstances and personal activity (Seligman, 2006).

D. Kahneman and A. Tversky: Happiness is an effective adaptation to the environment and the pursuit of pleasure, which separates positive outcomes of behavior from negative ones, aligning with both individual and societal expectations (Kahneman & Tversky, 2003).

S. Lyubomirsky: Happiness is the individual’s experience of joy, well-being, and satisfaction in connection with intentional, purposeful actions that enable one to transcend baseline life conditions (Lyubomirsky, 2014).

M. Csikszentmihalyi: Happiness is a life lived in “flow” or full immersion in what one does; it involves the realization of all psychological and physical potentials, fulfilling personally set goals, and experiencing positive emotions related to achievements, openness to life’s changes, and self-transformation (Csikszentmihalyi, 2011).

W. Tatarkiewicz: Happiness is the possession of the highest goods — faith, love, friendship, knowledge, creativity—combined with intense pleasure, a sense of holistic positivity, joyful awareness, and a complete satisfaction with the balance of one’s external and internal life (Tatarkiewicz, 1981).

Maxim Bakhtin: Happiness is an ontological ideal, a sense of the fullness of being and of psychosomatic integrity, an awareness and consciousness of one’s connection to something beyond daily life, love for another person, the pursuit of truth, and creativity, all of which liberate the individual (Bakhtin, 2006).

If one were to integrate, summarize, and expand upon scientific perspectives on happiness with an emphasis on its **potential** to create a powerful force for life (Znakov, 2021; Epstein, 2001), happiness could be defined as follows:

Happiness is a potential life that harmoniously combines an innate ability “to be happy”; physical health and control over one’s body; existence in sociocultural conditions conducive to high quality of life and individual flourishing; achieved subjective well-being and satisfaction with one’s life; a shared sense of well-being with others and a distribution of life’s benefits among them; an internal discovery of sources of pleasure, optimism, successful overcoming of life’s hardships and crises; moving beyond adaptation through creative and productive activities; embracing higher, spiritual values; transcending meanings and expectations acquired throughout life; transcending toward happiness as an absolute; experiencing impressions of happiness; viewing a happy life as a gift; and realizing the fullness of “self” and the completeness of one’s being.

The unity of many happiness-related components can be experienced by an individual as an encompassing sense of joyful belonging to the world and an enjoyment of an inner fullness of life:

*“...The window’s open. A bird on  
Windowsill is perched. My weary  
Eyes I raise from books anon.  
The sky is empty; eventide gone bleary.*

*The sound of threshing in a distant barn...  
I see and hear, I'm happy; all's within me warm.*

I. Bunin. "Evening" (Translated by Robert Bowie, 2023)

We are constructing a personological **model** of happiness, raising conceptual questions about it and offering answers based on discoveries within fundamental knowledge and phenomenological cultural experience. These answers take the form of multiple definitions, which create a foundation for developing new diagnostic methods of individual happiness. The conceptual questions on happiness are arranged in a continuum that reflects the logic of the author's modeling process. This demonstrates how a conceptual model of happiness can be translated into a model of self-inquiry (Starovoytenko, 2022), or the **Reflective Practice**: "What Does Happiness Mean to Me?"

### **What Meanings and Connotations Has the Word "Happiness" Acquired in Culture?**

In Russian culture, the **semantics** of "happiness" include meanings such as "luck," "fate," "fortune," "prosperity," "a good share," "the best destiny," "the fortunate part of the common good," "communal well-being," "a share in the common good," "one's destiny," "one's lot," "complete contentment" (Dal', 2020; Bakhtin, 2006; Vorkachev, 2002; Mikhailovsky, 2012; Vinogradov, 2000; Tatarkiewicz, 1981). The word "happiness" also signifies "participation in eternal human happiness, in the human embodiment of the absolute idea of happiness, an experience saturated with the divine energy of love that grants people the strength to build their lives" (Bakhtin, 2006).

In various European cultures, "happiness" conveys an innate force that guides a person's life until death, a sudden chance or luck, the granting of blessings from above, salvation, a favorable turn of events, material abundance, the pleasure of possessing goods, the excess of blessings, personal well-being, and the attainment of life's balance and order. The leading meanings of "happiness" involve fulfillment of being, bliss in achieving spiritual aspirations, and a person's satisfaction with their own life (Mikhailovsky, 2012).

In various languages, opposites of the word "happiness" include "unhappiness," "misfortune," "ill-fate," "hardship," "grief," "disaster," "failure," "affliction," "fate," "sorrow," "harm," and "death." When operating in oppositions, happiness acquires "negative definitions": happiness as the absence of unhappiness, happiness as a relief from suffering, happiness as the overcoming of ill fate, etc.

### **What Is Revealed in Happiness When It Is Understood within the "Life" Paradigm?**

In pursuing the goal of personological modeling, we place the phenomenon of happiness within the context of an individual's life and the concept of happiness within the categorical system of **life personology** (Starovoytenko, 2023). From

these perspectives, happiness appears as a true and beautiful, harmonious and complete, pleasurable and prosperous, virtuous and eternal **life**. Happiness has the potential to enrich all “facets” of one’s existence, including the vital and transcendent, cultural and social, as well as the interpersonal—shaped by relationships with significant others—and the personally unique, defined by one’s relationship to oneself. Thus, happiness is understood as a characteristic of a healthy, ideal, culturally enriched, socially oriented life, lovingly shared with the Other and constructed as an I-in-itself-for-itself existence.

An individual’s happiness originates and is re-created in various **forms**. It arises and endures as an emotional state of *life-awareness* or transformative *life activity*, as a *dream* or *ideal* of possible life, and as a preserved and “amplified” *life impression* of the individual. In a long-term retrospective, a person’s happiness can become a stable subjective *way of life*, as well as an ascent to the *highest level* of individual being. Happiness may present itself to a person as *objective conditions* that foster and directly create a happy image of their life. Happiness may also become a lasting *capability* to “be happy” due, for instance, to a sustained life in creativity that bears fruit for society and brings the subject joy from their achievements. Happiness can act as a positive *emotional background* for one’s activities and relationships, promoting the involvement of many others. Happiness, in its various forms of attainment (achieving, receiving, dwelling in it, and discovering it within oneself), can become a dominant *quality* in an individual’s *life path*.

Life-as-happiness has its own **chronotope**, or its unique time-space, reflecting the specific way in which a happy life unfolds within time and space. The **topography** of happiness includes countless “topoi” of its experience, symbolically and metaphorically articulated by culture: the homeland of happiness, the world of happiness, the realm of happiness, the land of happiness, the city of happiness, the house of happiness, the place of happiness, my inner happiness.

The topos of happiness is a concrete or intuitively sensed image of the space where it is born and where the desire to comprehend and recreate it intensifies.

*“Groves, where in the hush of freedom  
I met happiness each day,  
I step again beneath your arches,  
Into your friendly shade.”*

A.S. Pushkin: “Groves, where in the hush of freedom” (translated by John Fuller, “Russian Poetry: The Modern Period”, 1976)

The **chronology** of happiness, or its temporal aspect, reflects both the objective and subjective duration of happiness, its location in the retrospective view of life, and the sequence of happy events and impressions over a lifetime. Objectively and subjectively, it may appear to a person as a moment of happiness, as minutes or hours of happiness, as years or periods of happiness, or as an entire life of happiness. Within the time of an individual’s existence, it is perceived as a past experience that became a cherished memory, as a present reality, and as the best possible future. In terms of intensity, actuality, tangibility, and clear awareness, happiness-here-and-now surpasses both happiness-in-the-past and happiness-in-the-future.

*"...Here happiness flutters  
A wing pressed to the flower,  
But in a moment, it will soar upward  
Irretrievably and brightly."*

I. Annensky. "What is Happiness?" (translated by John Fuller, "Russian Poetry: The Modern Period", 1976)

The prolongation of happiness in the present, its "arrest" in time, its "entry into eternity," is described in cultural phenomenology as a state of savoring, intensified pleasure, inspired immersion, creative reflection, and transcendence.

*"If to the moment I should say:  
'Linger awhile! You are so fair!'  
Then may you fetter me straightway,  
Then to the abyss I will go without care."*

J. W. Goethe "Faust," Part II, Act V, Scene 7 (translated by Bayard Taylor, 1870)

Reflexively, a person can create a unified temporal trajectory of happiness in the form of a sequence of happy situations and impressions, creating a "life narrative of happiness."

### **What Is the Psychological "Fabric" and Expression of Happiness, or What Constitutes Its Architectonics?**

Like every complex state of personality, happiness possesses a differentiated, holistic, dynamic **structure**, comprising both conscious and unconscious, psychological and behavioral elements. The full realization of happiness presupposes a sense of the possibility of happiness, a desire and motivation for happiness, recollections and activation of sensory, imagistic, and cognitive knowledge about happiness, an external and internal search for happiness, the emotional experience of happiness, the bodily expression of this experience, the cognition and comprehension of happiness, the articulation of a happiness impression, and purposeful actions in the world that extend and materially preserve happiness.

In the experience of happiness, **mutually supportive links** are formed between its elements, determining the place of happiness within the life context. The unity of the emotional and cognitive components of happiness is given to a person as a feeling of life satisfaction (Argyle, 2003). The connection between bright motivational-emotional, subconscious cognitive, and practical elements of happiness gives rise to a sense of spontaneity and involvement in various flow states (Csikszentmihalyi, 2011). The connection between powerful motivational and absorbing emotional aspects of happiness relates it to peak experiences (Maslow, 1997). The combination of happiness motivation and successful actions to achieve it in one's favorite activities creates an overall state of life well-being for the individual (Argyle, 2003).

Happiness involves a broad range of phenomena functioning on different psychological levels: the unconscious, for instance, the sense of vitality; the subconscious,

such as an unarticulated memory of enchantment; the conscious, particularly the recognized enjoyment of beauty; the reflective—knowledge that “I am truly happy”; and the transcendent, or the realization that happiness is a mystery, the unknown Self (Petrovsky, 2023; Starovoytenko, 2018).

It is hard to find a better expression of one’s knowledge of happiness than Vladimir Nabokov’s words:

*I know: the path of parting and of anguish  
Is over now; and heavens drown in blue,  
The day dissolves in rays, the heart in happiness,  
I know: I’m in love, and glad to roam with you.*

Vladimir Nabokov, “Happiness”, “Poems and Problems”, 1970.

Awareness and reflection create the potential for an individual’s **relationship** with happiness to develop. To enter into a relationship with happiness means to value it highly, to know it, and to understand one’s ignorance of it, to recognize one’s ownership of happiness and the merging of the Self with it, to know the sources of one’s happiness, to create conditions for it, to speak about happiness, to depict it in Self-narratives and works of art, to consider happiness as an inexhaustible potential and a reality for oneself and others, and to unlock the meaning of happiness through the achievement of a fully realized, happy life. An individual’s relationship with happiness may not only multiply moments of happiness in life but also enhance the creative force of those moments. In dealing with their own happiness, an individual may renew and extend it, take it for granted without appreciating it, squander the resource of their “happiness,” or come to understand human happiness without actually achieving it and without being truly happy.

In relation to happiness, in addition to conscious and reflective elements, there are deeper aspects, such as bodily and sensory pleasure derived simply from the act of living itself. This pleasure holds particular intensity and purity in early childhood. As Alexander Pushkin reflects:

*“My whole life is a mournful gloom of storm.  
Two or three springs, in childhood’s fleeting charm,  
I once was happy, unaware of joy;  
Those days are gone—yet, can they ever die?”*

A. Pushkin, “To Prince A.M. Gorchakov”, 1817, translated by Julian Henry Lowenfeld

In the architectonics of experiencing happiness, its **emotional** components hold particular importance, as frequent scholarly associations of happiness with affective states suggest. The types of emotions and feelings linked to happiness, as identified in personality research and presented in cultural phenomenology, surpass the definitions of its other components. Here, we propose a **classification** of the emotional correlates of happiness, each associated with its various sources: spiritual practice, activity, preferred engagements, and relationships.

*Religious, mystical, and metaphysical practice:* faith, bliss, grace, awe, catharsis, enlightenment, spiritual uplift, consolation, solace, prosperity, tranquility, serenity, blessing, reverence.

*Highly significant activity:* elevation, absorption, fascination, inspiration, wonder, amazement, elation, excitement, enthusiasm, optimism.

*Preferred engagements:* joy, fun, pleasure, humor, lightheartedness, carefree ease.

*Attitude towards success and achievements:* elation, fulfillment, pride, triumph, self-respect.

*Attitude of love:* longing, yearning, delight, sensuality, ecstasy, rapture, bliss, elation, abandonment, self-forgetfulness, intoxication, the sense of attaining a cherished ideal, a surge of energy, flight, allure, tenderness, charm, fascination, enchantment.

*Attitude toward others:* hope, gratitude, forgiveness, nobility, respect, admiration, sympathy, empathy, trust.

*Attitude toward oneself:* a feeling of life's authenticity, harmony with oneself, alignment with oneself, transcendence of oneself, the sensation of being here and everywhere, and the disappearance of time.

The emotional aspects of happiness vary in intensity, from strong positive affects to moods that encourage the actions generating happiness. Using the metaphors of M.K. Mamardashvili, we may view happiness as a "flash of lightning" or as a "calm, steady sun."

### **Is the Architectonics of Happiness Purely Positive, or Does It Include Oppositional Elements?**

This question touches on a characteristic of happiness well-known in cultural phenomenology and personal experiences—the paradox of being-in-happiness. This paradox lies in the interrelation of opposing elements of happiness (motivational, emotional, cognitive, practical, and meaningful), where oppositions, in their interaction, lend the happy moment in life a particularly sensual, profound, and reflective quality.

Poetic experiences richly present the paradoxes of happiness, highlighting their ability to sharpen its edge and enhance its intensity and duration.

*"The breath of the evening wind dies away.*

*The full moon's face is ever-shifting.*

*Madness of joy. Unfathomable sorrow.*

*The impossible moment. The moment of happiness."*

K. Balmont, "Song Without Words", 1894, translated by Peter Tempest

*"Understand... I try to discern*

*The outlines of paradise in the haze,*

*But toward the cherished blooms I turn,*

*Like a bee at a windowpane."*

V. Nabokov, "The Bee", 1923, translated by V. Nabokov

*"All that threatens mortal life*

*With death's dread imminence*

*Holds for the heart a wondrous charm —*

*Perhaps a pledge of immortality.”*

A. Pushkin, “A Pledge of Immortality”, 1836, translated by Walter Arndt

Upon cultural-phenomenological materials and implicit knowledge, we propose a series of binary elements of happiness, which may be essential to one another in generating happiness. These include:

a sense of connection to eternity	⇐ ⇒	a sense of life’s transience
ecstasy	⇐ ⇒	emotional pain
pleasure	⇐ ⇒	tranquility
a sense of fullness	⇐ ⇒	a sense of emptiness
reverence	⇐ ⇒	fear
bliss	⇐ ⇒	melancholy, despair
frenzied passion	⇐ ⇒	unbearable excitement
enjoyment	⇐ ⇒	suffering
awareness of complete well-being	⇐ ⇒	awareness of the possibility of misfortune
inspiration	⇐ ⇒	exhaustion
overwhelming intoxication	⇐ ⇒	calm awareness
an explosion of desires and feelings	⇐ ⇒	a melancholic mood
a sense of abundance	⇐ ⇒	a sense of insufficiency
a feeling of spiritual elevation	⇐ ⇒	bodily sensuality
awareness of enlightenment	⇐ ⇒	intuition of mystery
enchantment	⇐ ⇒	disillusionment
a sense of limitless possibilities	⇐ ⇒	a sense of helplessness
illumination by truth	⇐ ⇒	doubt
extreme experiences	⇐ ⇒	the need for peace
blissful solitude	⇐ ⇒	the need for the Other
the joy of possession	⇐ ⇒	the fear of loss
flights of fantasy	⇐ ⇒	a sense of reality
the experience of the impossible	⇐ ⇒	awareness of the limits of possibility
the real experience of happiness	⇐ ⇒	knowing what happiness is

The presence and conflicts of these oppositional elements of happiness can sometimes diminish its intensity. However, this can be overcome through reflection on the duality of happiness and the acceptance of happiness paradoxes as a resource for refined understanding and experience.

## **Does Happiness Have a Value Dimension? What Human Values are Embodied in Happiness?**

Experienced by an individual in the world (nature, culture, society), happiness reflects the world's attitude toward the person. In particular, the qualities of happiness point to the alignment of the world with human nature and the existence of conditions for the comprehensive development of individuals. They also indicate the orientation of the world toward humanity in the sense of care for the life of each individual and support for individuality, including creating conditions for creativity and productive coexistence with others.

The organic connection between an individual's happiness and the humanistic values of the surrounding world is achieved through **values**—desires, ideas, and meanings that have bound humanity together for millennia in pursuit of a prosperous, creative, and rewarding life. By uniting people, values are realized in the form of mutual and personal “value relations,” which transcend toward the **spiritual** foundations of human existence: the Absolute, truth, beauty, compassion, and self-knowledge. Individual happiness is experienced through the religious, cognitive, aesthetic, moral, and creative relationships of a person to the world, to themselves, and to others.

Cultural phenomenology reveals happiness in the search for God and faith in immortality, in love and the appreciation of beauty, in gaining freedom and serving others, in understanding and creating the new, in forgiveness and gratitude, in achievements for the benefit of others, and in caring for oneself. Modern researchers emphasize the spirituality of happiness, linked to faith in God. They highlight the unparalleled role of divine feeling in daily life, the vastness of God's love, the encounter with the perfection of creation, the intuition of an omnipotent force that protects each individual, and the embodiment of blissful life in actions carried out with noble purpose, bringing good, compassion, and help to others (Bakhtin, 2006; Lyubomirsky, 2014; Seligman, 2006; Csikszentmihalyi, 2011; Irvine, 2008).

The spiritual origins of happiness elevate its experience to the highest levels, perceived as “nothing higher exists,” “it doesn't get better,” “this is beyond all,” “an incredible excess,” and “it exceeds all possible expectations,” described as an “ecstasy of extraordinary sharpness.”

### **What Can Be Considered a Unit of Experiencing Happiness in Its Value Dimension?**

In happiness, taken in its spiritual-value dimension, a phenomenological “unit” can be conditionally distinguished—a happiness **impression**, characterized by the ultimate life state of an individual. These characteristics include: the presence in the impression of a highly significant object—a “figure of cherished desire”; the emergence of the impression as a “point of life sensitization” in the field of the individual's highest sensitivity; the rooting of the impression in the depth of the best qualities of human nature; the actualization within the impression of “great”

thoughts, feelings, and ideals from the world of spiritual values; the individual's awareness of the complete authenticity of the experienced impression and its fullness of the Self; experiencing the impression as one of the best moments in life, captivating, enchanting, and "engaging" the individual; the presence within the impression of much that is unknown as mystery that prompts creativity; the breaking of self-consciousness boundaries and the discovery of the unknown Self; the individual's intention to "be capable of being," "dare to exist," "experience life," and "realize the possible Self"; awakening within the impression the ability to "invest" in one's life, actively unleashing it; the expression of the impression in the individual's inner text endowed with significant "cultural volume"; the emotional immersion, comprehension, and reflection of the impression so that it becomes an experience-foundation for new happy events (Mamardashvili, 1997; Starovoytenko, 2015b).

### **What Activities Favor Happiness?**

Happiness, regardless of its individual architectonics or spiritual-value level, is often an effect of an individual's engagement in specific activities, whether external or internal.

Scientific-theoretical and phenomenological studies highlight a variety of spiritual practices conducive to happiness: prayer, asceticism, solitude, contemplation of beauty, and diverse forms of cultural creation.

In addition, numerous everyday activities evoke happiness: carrying and caring for children, parenting, meeting loved ones, friendly communication, shared projects, meaningful conversations, spending time in nature, gardening, traveling, singing, music, dancing, reading, handicrafts, cooking, games, sports, amusements, romantic pleasures, body care, home-making, and building close-knit circles.

Happiness is also experienced by those engaged in activities that are both personally meaningful and socially significant. Such activities often involve individual initiative, high productivity, and societal impact, resulting in breakthrough discoveries that transform the modern world (Buyakas, 1995). According to happiness researchers, these activities are now concentrated in fields such as natural sciences, innovative technological development, artificial intelligence, medicine, pharmaceuticals, and the art of design.

### **What Qualities Define a Person Capable of Experiencing Happiness?**

The possibility of happiness, its genesis, the nuances of its experience, its subjective chronotope, and one's attitude toward it are profoundly influenced by personal qualities. By striving for happiness, recognizing its reality, and extending it to others, a person becomes the **subject** of their own happy life and the development of their **best traits**. These qualities can be divided into "strengths," "virtues," and "distinctions" of personality.

The baseline potential for happiness lies in its **fundamental level**— "innate happiness" (Lyubomirsky, 2014). This includes genetically determined vitality, a predisposition for a positive perception of the world, and high physical and cognitive

activity. These traits should be supported in early childhood by a nurturing environment, the fulfillment of the child's basic needs, and their own intentions to explore the world.

Throughout life, under the influence of circumstances, natural potential, psychological activity, and experiences of self-knowledge and transcendence, individuals acquire and refine their strengths, which determine their worthiness of happiness (Bakhtin, 2006). Such qualities include physical and mental health, a will to live, external attractiveness, receptivity, awareness, optimism, mature thinking, talents, resourcefulness, diligence, courage, a fine sense of humor, cheerfulness, internal autonomy, personal growth, and life purpose (Argyle, 2003; Peterson & Seligman, 2002; Ryff, 1989).

The **virtues** of a happy individual, possessing universal and humanistic significance, include spirituality, wisdom, knowledge, love, kindness, compassion, justice, and moderation (Seligman, 2006).

The **distinctions** that contribute to happiness include qualities determined by personal development and self-improvement: self-awareness, self-acceptance, self-confidence, self-respect, self-control, dedication to one's purpose, Self's orientation toward others, Self's internal connection to the Other, and valuing one's individuality.

### **Is Personal Happiness Dialogical in a Life among Others?**

Many moments of happiness are born in significant, close relationships between the individual and specific others, or in the "I-Other" relationship. In a mature, reflective-dialogical form of such a relationship, the individual understands how their happiness is perceived in the inner world of the Other, whether the Other feels happiness in their relationship, and how happiness can be sustained and recreated. They also grasp the meaning and significance of their own and the Other's happiness for their lives and understand how their shared happiness appears in the eyes of others. The deepest and most challenging form of dialogical happiness is **love**. Based on the concepts of love by French thinkers (Barthes, 1999; Bruckner, 2007; Sartre, 2002), we can describe the dialogical form of love-happiness in the "I-Other" relationship (Starovoytenko, 2007).

The loving Self internalizes the beloved Other while simultaneously granting them the freedom to remain themselves. Identifying with the one they love and overcoming inner loneliness, the loving Self respects both the Other and their own self-sufficiency through a dual negation: the Other is not me, and I am not the Other. In an expanded awareness of unity with the beloved, the loving Self unfolds an infinite vision of a "possible world" before the Other, thereby modeling new possibilities that will evoke reciprocal feelings.

Essentially, love is a project of making Oneself lovable. In this, the loving Self is akin to a sage and a sovereign, striving to be so fully integrated into the Other's subjective world that they become an indispensable part of their desires, thoughts, and feelings, a vital value in their life. Language and words play a critical role in the transgression of the Self into the inner world of the beloved Other. The words of

the loving Self magnetically draw the Other, infuse them, and leave profound effects in the realm of their drives, fantasies, and imagination. In the reciprocal awakening of love, dialogue with the acquired “inner Other” becomes sacred for the beloved Self. Dialogical “Selves” of the loving individuals require a constant flow of impressions about their relationships, which shape the life of both partners in the external world. The inevitable conflicts of this life return each to personal responsibility for the Other, to the solitude of choices and decisions made in favor of the beloved. In the mutual love relationship, the Self excludes the possibility that the Other, while caring for them, might overpower them, and understands that even with complete devotion to the beloved, they cannot deny the autonomy of the Other. The dialogue of love is built on a distance that allows each to subjectively elevate the other. The relationship of love shapes a persistent image and reflective concept of the “loving Self,” fostering a heightened ability to love and to experience enduring love-happiness. The dialogical foundation of love ensures that its interpersonal existence, with its potential to be “co-happiness,” remains vibrant, where the good of one loving person is an inseparable part of the good of the other.

### **What Are the Ways of Attaining Happiness in Individual Life?**

Happiness, as inherent to the lives of individuals, has various **origins** depending on its primary source: external circumstances (luck, chance), personal effort, an innate capacity for living happily, or the discovery of happiness within oneself. The following phenomena, corresponding to different types of happiness **genesis**, were identified through hermeneutic analysis of over 80 folk tales from around the world (Brook, 2024).

**1. Achieving Happiness** (happiness as the result of a person’s actions and relationships in the world):

- reward for hard work and efforts with abundance;
- earned prosperity and well-being;
- recognition from those in power for demonstrated virtues;
- winning the love of another;
- selfless care for the well-being of others and their reciprocal kindness;
- rescuing others and receiving their gratitude;
- enduring, trial-tested love leading to mutuality;
- mastery of a craft or art;
- successful collaboration with others;
- rewards from powerful forces for diligence and kindness;
- earning the love of many through feats and achievements;
- overcoming great adversities for the sake of fraternal love;
- healing or extending the life of a loved one;
- just rewards for a virtuous life;
- love gained through compassion and devoted service;
- recognition of outstanding talent for persistence and hard work;
- heroic fulfillment of filial duty;
- grateful acknowledgment of dutiful and loving care from a daughter;

- discovering the secrets of creativity and crafting unprecedented things;
- fulfilling another's dream through extraordinary effort;
- attaining immortality through a life filled with love and compassion.

**2. Receiving Happiness** (happiness comes to the individual externally):

- gifts and assistance from higher powers;
- the occurrence of miracles, magic, or the supernatural;
- discovery of hidden treasure;
- receiving a substantial inheritance;
- sudden good fortune or a favor of chance;
- a fortunate destiny or happy fate;
- the fruit of an extraordinary encounter;
- patronage and gifts from the gods;
- support from a magical friend;
- fulfillment of cherished desires by another;
- wealth obtained through others' naivety or simplicity;
- love bestowed by someone else;
- a mysterious release from a cursed fate;
- favorable divine intervention;
- mysterious blessings and positive life changes;
- unexpected riches;
- wise counsel during life's difficulties;
- the gift of appreciating beauty;
- immortality granted from above.

**3. Dwelling in Happiness** (happiness as life itself, a state of being):

- serving others with patience and kindness;
- long years of fruitful labor;
- wise and generous use of life's gifts;
- asceticism and liberation from worldly burdens;
- unity with nature, immersion in the animal world, and friendships with creatures;
- active love for close ones;
- contemplation and creation of beauty;
- virtuous deeds and acts;
- living harmoniously with others;
- upholding the power of truth and the strength of justice;
- a cheerful and resilient disposition in work and relationships;
- flourishing in one's endeavors, multiplying wealth and well-being;
- harmony and mutual understanding within the family;
- raising children with love and trust;
- careful preservation of acquired prosperity;
- skillful use of gifts received through magical means.

**4. Discovering Happiness Within Oneself** (happiness as Oneself, intrinsic to one's being):

- embracing the blessings found within Oneself;
- confidence in One's capacity for happiness;

- One's awareness of qualities that enable a happy life;
- understanding the paths to realizing One's potential for happiness;
- One's finding happiness in imagination, creativity, and art;
- following One's destiny;
- One's discovering happiness in solitude and internal dialogues with others;
- One's heeding a call from destiny revealed in a dream;
- choosing One's unique happiness after long searching.

An individual can experience happiness with varied genesis, duration, intensity, and complexity. The journey toward happiness, involving significant effort, conscious presence, and self-reflection as the subject of happiness, can extend across the chronotope of life, filled with challenges and contradictions. Life itself, as a complex and contradictory "path to happiness" and "path of happiness," belongs to real individuals, societies, and cultures. Folk tales, in particular, offer numerous descriptions of the lives of heroes as quests, possessions, losses, and rediscoveries of happiness (Zinkevich-Evstigneeva, 2012; Trubetskoy, 1990).

### **What Conflicts Are Inherent in the "Path of Happiness"?**

The universal model of a fairy tale hero's life hermeneutics was masterfully developed by V. Ya. Propp and presented in *Morphology of the Folktale* (Propp, 1998). Building on its content, we emphasize the moments of the hero's journey that characterize the contradictions and dynamics of happiness. Propp's model, rooted in the archetype of the Hero, offers depth, integrity, and detail, making it widely applicable in psychological studies and individual self-discovery.

By explicating the conflicts of happiness using the morphology model of the folktale, we applied the method of highlighting "patterns of opposition," developed for the hermeneutic analysis of reflective texts by outstanding individuals (Starovoytenko, 2015a).

Stages of the Hero's Happiness Conflicts:

Stability and well-being ↔

↔ Violation of family or societal prohibitions ↔

↔ Departure from home and lonely wandering ↔

↔ Encounter with the antagonist (adversary, enemy, or harm-doer) ↔

↔ Harm inflicted by the antagonist ↔

↔ Inability to resist, enduring deprivation, loss, suffering, imprisonment, captivity, sleep, or exile ↔

↔ Awareness of a deep need for something valuable and recognition of unhappiness ↔

↔ Decision to pursue desired happiness and set a goal to achieve it ↔

↔ Embarking on a difficult journey, meeting helpers and benefactors, from whom they receive a means to counter the antagonist and acquire the desired treasure ↔

↔ Confronting the antagonist in open combat and attaining victory, joyfully returning home with the treasure ↔

↔ Upon returning to familiar surroundings, the hero is deceived, harmed, or has their treasure stolen ↔

↔ Transformative and unrecognizable returning home

↔ Opposing thieves, punishing or forgiving them and reclaiming the treasure ↔

↔ Restoration of true identity and the enjoyment of happiness: love, wealth, and just leaders.

Theories and phenomenologies of happiness offer a wealth of knowledge that, within the context of personology, is enriched by sociocultural ideas and contemporary practices, transforming knowledge into “happiness practices.”

### **What Practices for Enhancing Happiness Does Contemporary Culture Offer?**

Professional activity, which requires mature abilities and advanced skills, holds great potential for happiness. It is in this realm that professionals have opportunities to “practice happiness.”

Happiness practices relevant, for instance, to business, science, the IT sector, and higher education include: treating work as a beloved activity; continuous professional growth; progressing from project to project; emphasizing foundational knowledge; engaging in “soft,” dialogic competition as a pathway to success; forming agile alliances for specific projects; attracting extraordinary individuals; creating and transforming through creative work; enthusiastically participating in the realization of shared goals; joyfully celebrating individual and collective achievements; guiding efforts with ideas and aspirations for perfection; actively employing imagination, fantasy, dreams, and “bold” ideas; taking pride in one’s talents, accomplishments, and personal contributions; continuously exploring new opportunities; thriving in uncertainty and solving problems with elegant solutions; fostering a culture of mastery and innovation; developing “methods,” “rules,” “models,” and “impressions”; building productive collaboration relationships; focusing on results and their quality, evaluated as “knowledge-intensive,” “beautiful,” or “elegant”; creating memorable, dream-fulfilling, and narrative-rich products; gaining authority in one’s professional reference group; demonstrating creativity in all pursuits; stimulating and maintaining optimism, enthusiasm, and inspiration; following ethical standards with conviction; developing diverse types of intelligence; encouraging awareness of one’s own ignorance; cultivating a love for paradoxes and a sense of humor; viewing leadership as a responsibility; promoting talent; displaying artistry, charm, and impeccable etiquette in the professional environment (Peters, 2004; Starovoytenko, 2023).

Concluding the presentation of the personological model of happiness we present a reflective questionnaire that embodies the logic of the conceptual problematization undertaken in this work. Before applying the questionnaire, the content of this article may be used by researchers or consulting psychologists to enhance their respondents’ or clients’ awareness of the fundamental aspects of the psychological understanding of happiness.

### The Reflective Practice “What Is Happiness to Me?”

- Am I ever happy?*
- What does the word “happiness” mean to me?*
- Can the definition of “happy” be applied to my current, past, or future life?*
- What constitutes my happiness?*
- What primarily fills the moments of my happiness—desires, emotions, sensations, images, thoughts? What do I know about them?*
- Do I recognize that there is something opposite to happiness in my experience? What oppositions to happiness do I know?*
- Do I consider that, in living happiness, I find myself in a world of higher values and meanings: love, faith in God, knowledge, beauty?*
- Do I have experiences of “happy impressions”? Which one is the most vivid and meaningful?*
- In which of my activities do I most often feel happy? What specifically brings me happiness in those activities?*
- What personal qualities help me be happy, and which ones hinder me?*
- What is my attitude toward my own happiness?*
- Do I share my happiness with others? What role do other people play in my experience of happiness?*
- What is more characteristic of my approach to happiness: achieving it through significant effort, receiving it from external sources, dwelling in it, or finding it within myself?*
- When I experience happy moments or periods of happiness, do I notice the difficulties and problems that accompany them?*
- Am I aware of any practices for achieving happiness? What are they, and do I apply them?*
- What do I feel and think now, having answered questions about my happiness?*

To conclude, the personological format of studying happiness, which formed the central problem of our research, was expressed through consistent hermeneutic, conceptual, and reflective modeling, based on the mutual interplay of models. In the long-term development of the personology of happiness, we envision the creation of technologies for individual counseling and psychotherapy that implement the Happiness-Centered Approach.

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