



New Findings On Subjective Well-Being

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Five Findings

1. SWB is beneficial to health and fertility. Thus, it is not surprising that most people are happy.
2. There are universal and culture-specific predictors (e.g., religiosity) of SWB
3. Meaning/purpose and need fulfillment both contribute substantially to life satisfaction beyond pleasure
4. People do not need to fulfill Maslow's needs in order to gain benefits
5. There has been progress on national accounts of well-being

Happy People Have It All!

On Average:

- Better health
 - Longer lives
 - Greater fertility
 - More and healthier babies
 - More stable two-parent families
 - More resources such as nutrition for children
- Strong evolutionary selective advantages

Health Benefits:
Diener & Chan (2011)

High Subjective Well-Being CAUSES Health and Longevity -- over 150 studies reviewed

Animal experiments

Experimental

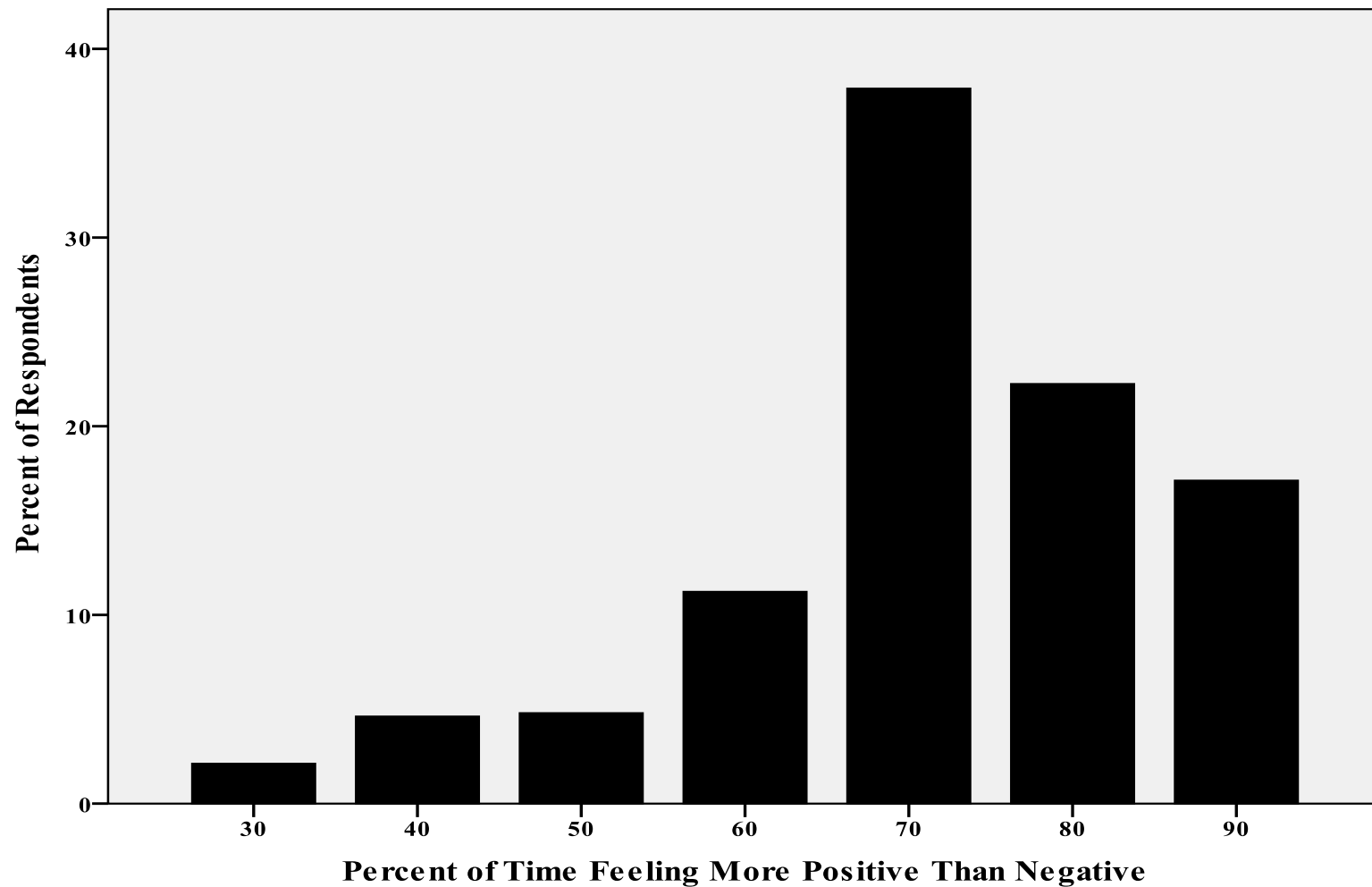
Longitudinal

Natural experiments

Experience-sampling

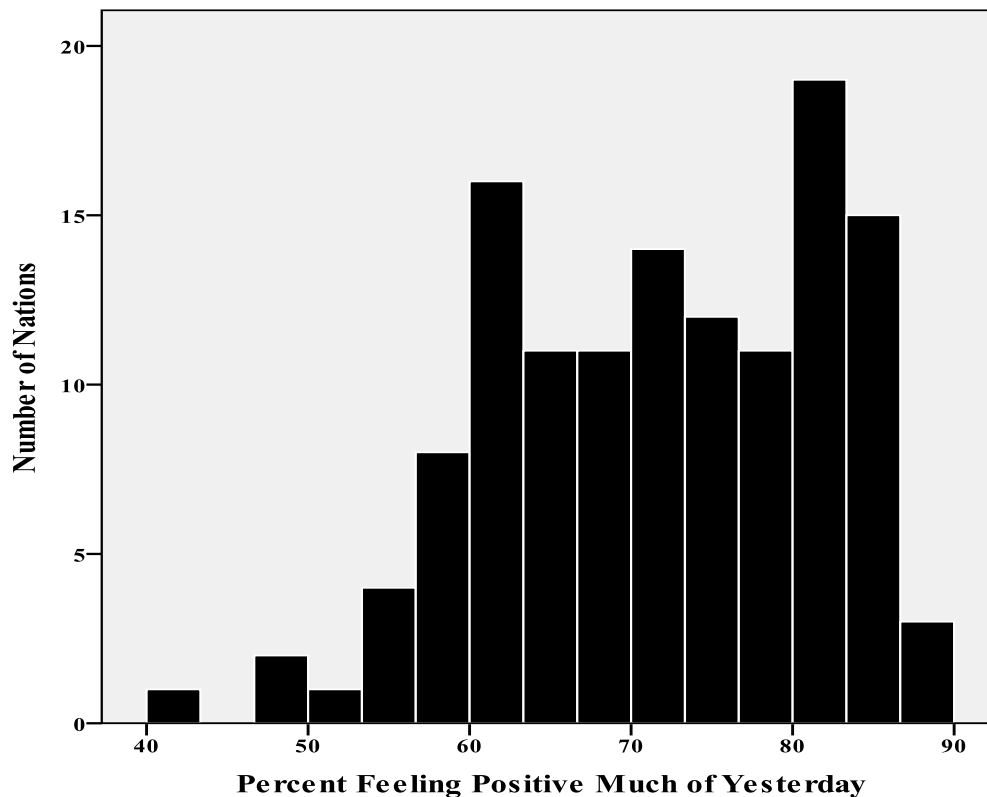
**If SWB is So
Advantageous,
Why Isn't Everyone
Happy?**

Most People Are Happy!
-- Most Students Happy
More than Half the Time



Most People Around the World Are Happy!

- In 125 of 128 nations, a majority of people felt positive “much of yesterday”



Even in Relatively Bad Circumstances
(People who have gone hungry, been assaulted, AND not enough money for food and housing)

57% enjoyed most of yesterday
62% smiled and laughed a lot

Implications

- **People are resilient, and usually bounce back to some extent**
- **Chronic unhappiness is harmful and not “normal”**

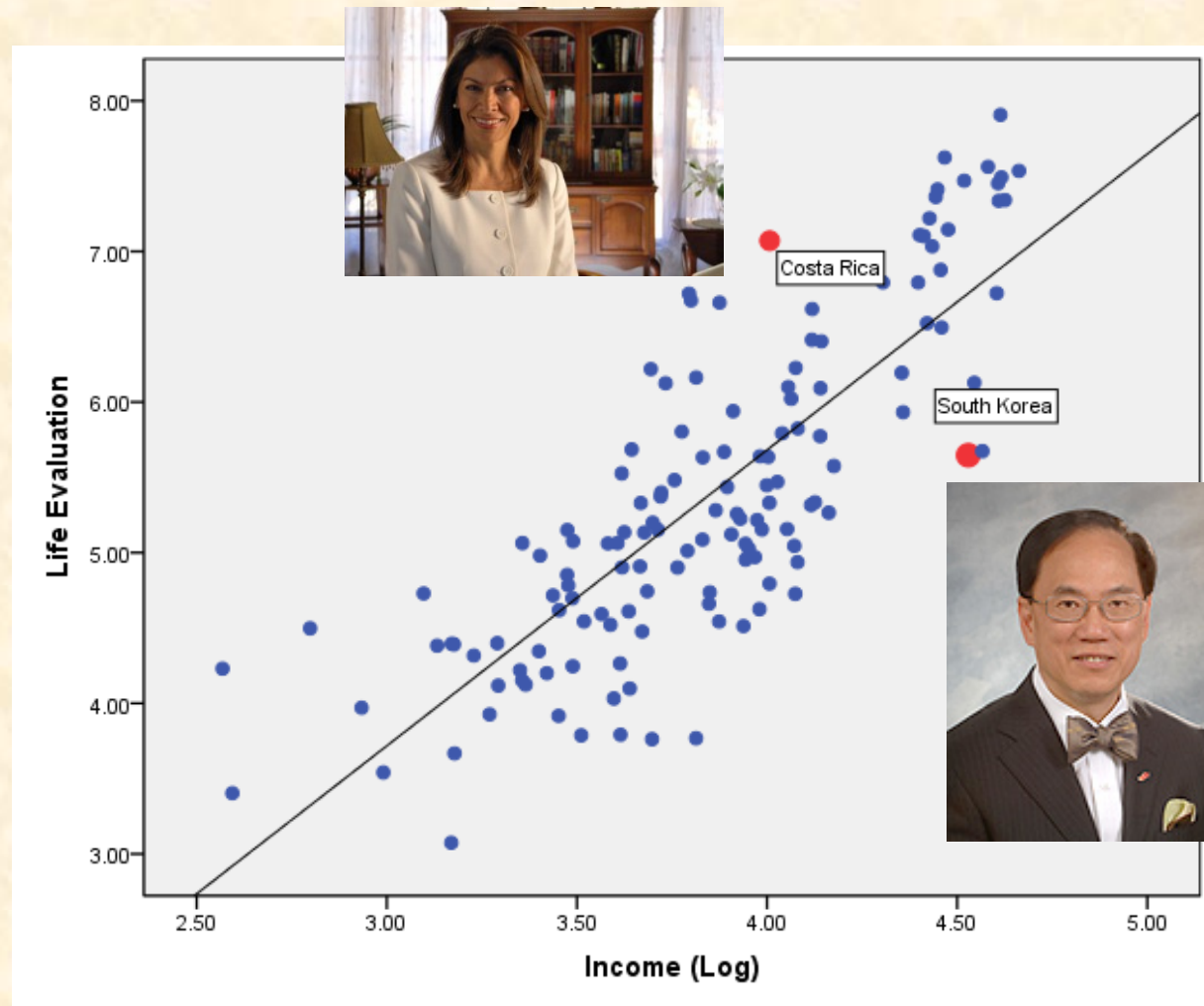
Beyond GDP

**GDP and income are
important to SWB, but
more than money matters!**

Universal Predictors – All Cultures of the World

- **Social support**
 - **Social trust**
 - **Mastery (learning, using abilities)**
 - **Control of one's own life**
-
- **These all predict enjoyment of life more than income!**

More Than Money Matters: Tale of Two Nations, and the Dangers of Unmitigated Economic Growth



Psychosocial “Wealth”
-- Percent of Respondents

	<u>South</u> <u>Korea</u>	<u>Costa</u> <u>Rica</u>
Am Not Respected	36	5
Without Social Support	20	8
Not Satisfied St. Living	33	19
Not Satisfied Job	27	9

Subjective Well-Being

	<u>South</u> <u>Korea</u>	<u>Costa</u> <u>Rica</u>
Life Satisfaction	5.65	7.25
Positive Feelings	.88	.67
Negative Feelings	.22	.20
GDP/Person	46,500	12,800

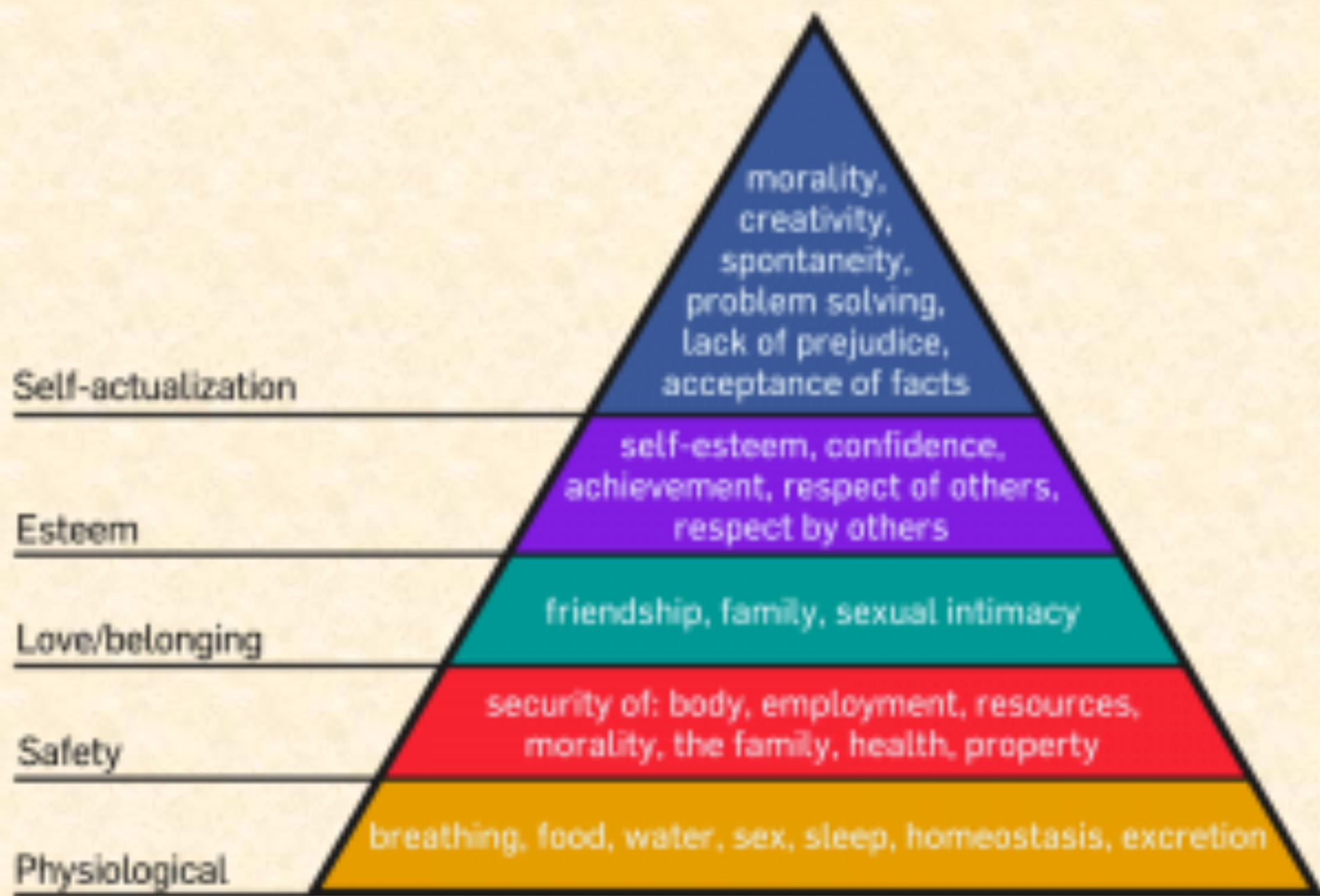
South Korea: High Income, BUT --

- **Constant competition**
- **Constant social comparison**
- **Concern about appearance
and luxury goods**
- **Materialism**

“Asian Tiger” of economic growth – \$ not sufficient to produce high SWB

Un-Maslow Finding
on Hierarchy: Economics
Not Only Priority

- **Fulfilling needs out of order still rewarding**



A butterfly with orange, black, and white wings is perched on a yellow flower. A large, semi-transparent pyramid is overlaid on the image, containing text. The pyramid is divided into two halves: the left half is purple and the right half is blue. The word 'HAPPINESS' is written in white at the top of the pyramid. Below it, various words are listed in white and blue, including 'money', 'security', 'convenience', 'satisfaction', 'wealth', 'possessions', 'TRUST', 'CREATIVITY', 'COMMUNITY', 'WELL-BEING', 'RESPECT', 'LEARNING', 'AUTONOMY', and 'TRUST'. The background is a blue sky with white clouds.

HAPPINESS

money security

RESPECT

convenience

LEARNING

satisfaction

AUTONOMY

wealth possessions

TRUST CREATIVITY

money security

COMMUNITY

convenience satisfaction

WELL-BEING

wealth possessions

RESPECT LEARNING

money **security**

AUTONOMY **TRUST**

convenience satisfaction wealth

CREATIVITY COMMUNITY

possessions money

WELL-BEING RESPECT

security convenience satisfaction

LEARNING AUTONOMY

wealth possessions money security

TRUST CREATIVITY COMMUNITY

convenience **satisfaction**

WELL-BEING **RESPECT**

wealth possessions money security

LEARNING AUTONOMY TRUST

convenience satisfaction wealth

CREATIVITY COMMUNITY WELL-

possessions money security convenience

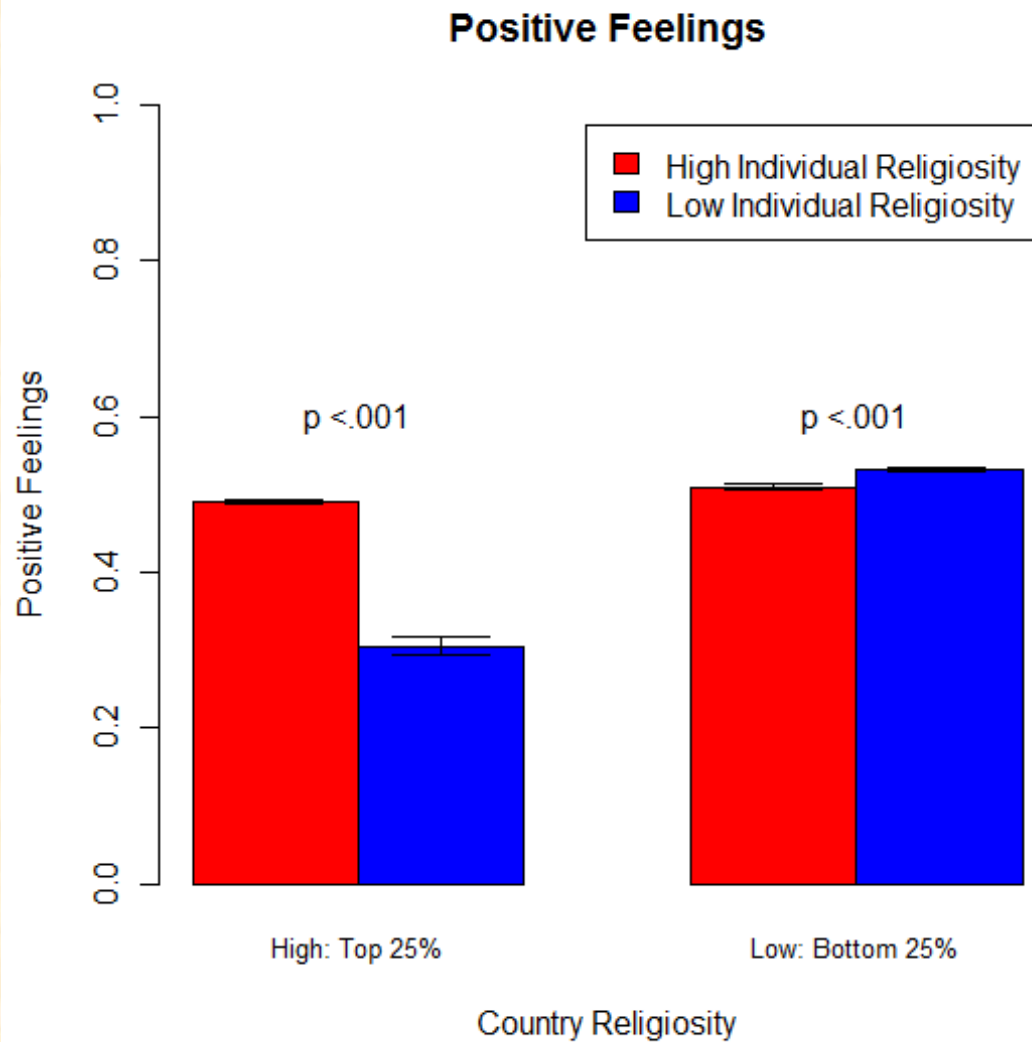
BEING RESPECT LEARNING AUTONOMY

Monoj: A Happy Man



**Besides Universals,
There Are
Culture-Specific Causes
of SWB**

Religion and SWB



To Advance Positive
Psychology
Institute National
Accounts of
Well-Being!

The UK's Well-Being Index

How satisfied are you with your life nowadays?'

How happy did you feel yesterday?

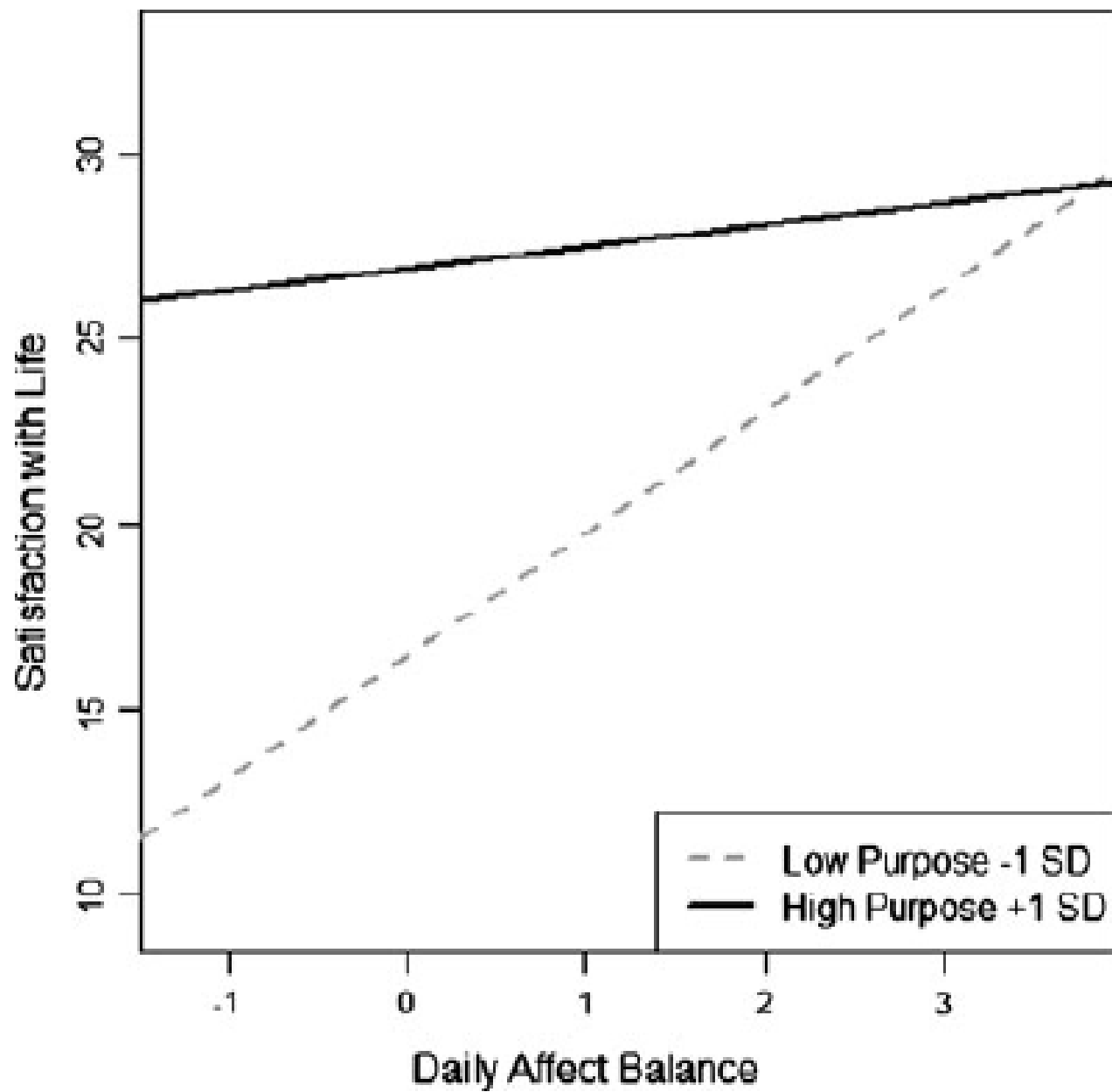
How anxious did you feel yesterday?

To what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?

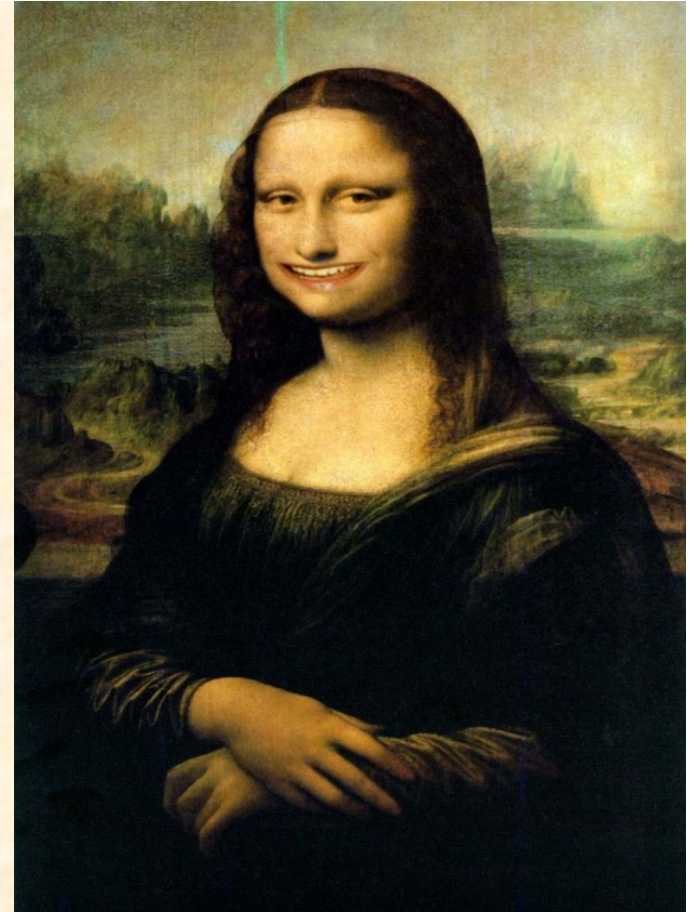
Meaning and Purpose

Predict

Life Satisfaction



**Life satisfaction is
not just pleasure.
It reflects people's
goals, need fulfillment,
and values too.**



Some Conclusions:

- **SWB provides a natural selective advantage, and therefore evolution has created most people to be moderately happy**
- **Meaning/purpose and satisfaction of needs raise life satisfaction**
- **Religion's effects depend on one's culture**
- **We are making progress on national accounts of SWB**

**If you would like a copy
of the talk, please give
me your business card or
email me:
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Thank You!

Some References

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