

[Home](#) > [Journal](#) > [Social Sciences & Humanities](#) > [PSYCH](#)
[Indexing](#) | [View Papers](#) | [Aims & Scope](#) | [Editorial Board](#) | [Guideline](#) | [Article Processing Charges](#)
[PSYCH](#) > Vol.3 No.12A, December 2012



Sustainable Happiness and Well-Being: Future Directions for Positive Psychology

PDF (Size: 62KB) PP. 1196-1201 DOI: 10.4236/psych.2012.312A177

Author(s)

Catherine O' Brien

ABSTRACT

Positive psychology has influenced many disciplines in a very short span of time. This paper argues that positive psychology will realize its most significant and far reaching impact when it is applied to sustainability efforts, locally, nationally and internationally. Such application may accelerate shifts in attitudes, policies, practice and behavior. Specifically, opportunities for integrating positive psychology with sustainability education are discussed including work in the area of sustainable happiness, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and positive education. Sustainable happiness underscores the interrelationship between human flourishing and ecological resilience. Thus sustainable happiness and well-being are integral to building sustainable futures, and positive psychology could be increasingly influential in leading research and education that heralds a new era of understanding and political will to embrace sustainability.

KEYWORDS

Sustainable Happiness; Well-Being; Sustainability; Education, Positive Psychology; Positive Education

Cite this paper

O' Brien, C. (2012). Sustainable Happiness and Well-Being: Future Directions for Positive Psychology. *Psychology*, 3, 1196-1201. doi: 10.4236/psych.2012.312A177.

References

- [1] Abdallah, S., Thompson, S., Michaelson, J., Marks, N., & Steuer, N. (2009). The (un)happy planet index: Why good lives don' t have to cost the earth. London: nef.
- [2] Abdallah, S., Michaelson, J., Shah, S., Stoll, L., & Marks, N. (2012). The happy planet index 2012: A global index of sustainable well being. London: nef.
- [3] Black, R. (2012) Little progress 20 years on. BBC News. URL (last checked 22 June 2012). <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-18560734>
- [4] Boniwell, I., & Ryan, L. (2012). Personal well-being: Lessons for secondary schools, positive psychology in action for 11 to 14 year olds. New York: Open University Press, McGraw-Hill Education.
- [5] Brown, K., & Kasser, T. (2005). Are psychological and ecological wellbeing compatible? The role of values, mindfulness and lifestyle. *Social Indicators Research*, 74, 349-368. doi: 10.1007/s11205-004-8207-8
- [6] Canadian Institute of Wellbeing (2009). How are Canadians REALLY doing? First report of the Institute of Wellbeing. <http://www.ciw.ca/en/ResourcesAndDiscussion/Reports.aspx>
- [7] Conoley, C., & Conoley, J. (2009). Positive psychology for educators. In R. Gilman, E. Huebner, & M. Furlong. (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology in schools* (pp. 463-476). New York: Routledge.
- [8] Diener, E., & Seligman, M. (2004). Beyond money: Toward an economy of well-being. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 5, 1-31. doi:10.1111/j.0963-7214.2004.00501001.x
- [9] Diener, E., Lucas, R., Schimmack, U., & Helliwell, J. (2009). Well being for public policy. New York:

[Open Special Issues](#)
[Published Special Issues](#)
[Special Issues Guideline](#)
[PSYCH Subscription](#)
[Most popular papers in PSYCH](#)
[About PSYCH News](#)
[Frequently Asked Questions](#)
[Recommend to Peers](#)
[Recommend to Library](#)
[Contact Us](#)

Downloads:	272,542
------------	---------

Visits:	601,300
---------	---------

[Sponsors, Associates, and Links >>](#)

- [10] Diener, E., & Chan, M. (2011). Happy people live longer: Subjective well-being contributes to health and longevity. *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being*, 3, 1-43. doi:10.1111/j.1758-0854.2010.01045.x
- [11] Gardner, H. (2006). *Five minds for the future*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- [12] Gilman, R., Huebner, E., & Furlong, M. (Eds.) (2009). *Handbook of positive psychology in schools*. New York: Routledge.
- [13] Harvard Business Review (2012). *Harvard Business Review*, 90 (1/2). Boston: Harvard Business Publishing.
- [14] Howard, P. (2011). Who will teach the teachers? In K. Bartels, & K. Parker (Eds.), *Teaching sustainability, teaching sustainably* (pp. 149-157). Virginia: Stylus Publishing.
- [15] Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC] (2007). *Climate change 2007: The physical science basis*. IPCC Secretariat. C.P.N. No. 2300. <http://www.ipcc.ch/ipccreports/ar4-wg1.htm>
- [16] Joint Consortium for School Health (2008). *Investigating positive psychology themes in school health*. <http://www.jcsh-cces.ca/index.php/resources>
- [17] Kasser, T. (2006). Materialism and its alternatives. In M. Csikszentmihalyi, & I. Csikszentmihalyi (Eds.), *A life worth living: Contributions to positive psychology* (pp. 200-214). Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- [18] Kelsey, E., & O' Brien, C. (2011). Sustainable happiness. *Green Teacher*, 93, 3-7.
- [19] Layard, R. (2005). *Happiness: Lessons from a new science*. New York: Penguin.
- [20] Leatherdale, S., & Ahmed, R. (2011). Screen-based sedentary behaviours among a nationally representative sample of youth: Are Canadian kids couch potatoes? *Chronic Diseases and Injuries in Canada*, 31. <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/cdic-mcbc/31-4/ar-01-eng.php>
- [21] Lyubomirsky, S. (2007). *Practicing gratitude and positive thinking. The how of happiness: A scientific approach to getting the life you want*. New York: Penguin Press.
- [22] MacConville, R., & Rae, T. (2012). *Building happiness, resilience and motivation in adolescents: A positive psychology curriculum for well-being*. Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- [23] Marks, N., Abdallah S., Simms, A., & Thompson, S. (2006). *The (un)happy planet index: An index of human well-being and ecological impact*. London: nef.
- [24] Moran, D., & Wackernagel, M. (2012). Measuring sustainability. In J. Murray, G. Cawthorne, C. Dey, & C. Andrew (Eds.), *Enough for all forever* (pp. 27-35). Illinois: Common Ground Publishing.
- [25] Morrison, W., & Morrison, P. (2010). Schools as a setting for promoting positive mental health: Better practices and perspectives. <http://www.jcsh-cces.ca/index.php/resources>.
- [26] New Brunswick Department of Wellness, Culture and Sport (2011). *Mental fitness: From evidence to action*. www.acdccamc.ca/en/docs/Presentations/Mental%20Fitness.pdf
- [27] O' Brien, C. (2010a). Sustainability, happiness and education. *Journal of Sustainability Education*, 1. <http://www.jsedimensions.org/wordpress/content/2010/04/>
- [28] O' Brien, C. (2010b). *Sustainable happiness and health education: Teacher's guide*. <http://www.sustainablehappiness.ca/for-educators/>
- [29] O' Brien, C. (2012). Teaching a university course in sustainable happiness. *Solutions*, 3. <http://www.thesolutionsjournal.com/node/1108>
- [30] Orr, D. W. (2012). Can we avoid the perfect storm? *Solutions*, 3. <http://www.thesolutionsjournal.com/node/1124>
- [31] Peterson, C., & Seligman, M. (Eds.), (2003). *Values in action (VIA): Classification of strengths and virtues*. Cincinnati, OH: Oxford University Press.
- [32] Ramanathan, S., O'Brien, C., Stone, M. R., Faulkner, G., & Cook, L. (2012). Canadian school travel planning: Well-being and the school journey. Canadian Public Health Association Annual Conference, Edmonton.

- [33] Rideout, V., Foehr, U., & Roberts, D. (2010). Generation M2: Media in the lives of 8 to 18-year-olds. Kaiser Family Foundation Study. <http://www.kff.org/entmedia/8010.cfm>
- [34] Royal Government of Bhutan (2012). The report of the high-level meeting on wellbeing and happiness: Defining a new economic paradigm. New York: The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Bhutan to the United Nations. Thimphu: Office of the Prime Minister. <http://www.2apr.gov.bt/>
- [35] Sachs, J. (2012). Chapter 1: Introduction. In J. F. Helliwell, R. Layard, & J. Sachs (Eds.), World happiness report (pp. 2-9). New York: The Earth Institute, Columbia University. <http://www.earth.columbia.edu/sitefiles/file/Sachs%20Writing/2012/World%20Happiness%20Report.pdf>
- [36] Seligman, M. (2011). Flourish. Toronto: Free Press.
- [37] Senge, P. (2012). Creating the schools of the future: Education for a sustainable society. Solutions, 3. <http://www.thesolutionsjournal.com/node/1116>
- [38] Solutions (2011). Teaching happiness: The Prime minister of Bhutan takes on education. <http://www.thesolutionsjournal.com/node/934>
- [39] Steptoe, A., Wardle, J., & Marmot, M. (2005). Positive affect and health-related neuroendocrine, cardiovascular, and inflammatory process. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 102, 6508-6512. doi:10.1073/pnas.0409174102
- [40] Stutz, J. (2006). The role of well-being in a great transition. GTI Paper Series No. 10, Tellus Institute. <https://www.gtinitiative.org/documents/PDFFINALS/10WellBeing.pdf>
- [41] Thinley, J. Y. (2012). Sustainability and happiness: A development philosophy for Bhutan and the world, Solutions, 3. <http://www.thesolutionsjournal.com/node/1121>
- [42] Turcotte, M. (2006). Like commuting? Workers' perceptions of their daily commute, Canadian Social Trends, Statistics Canada. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-008-x/2006004/9516-eng.htm>