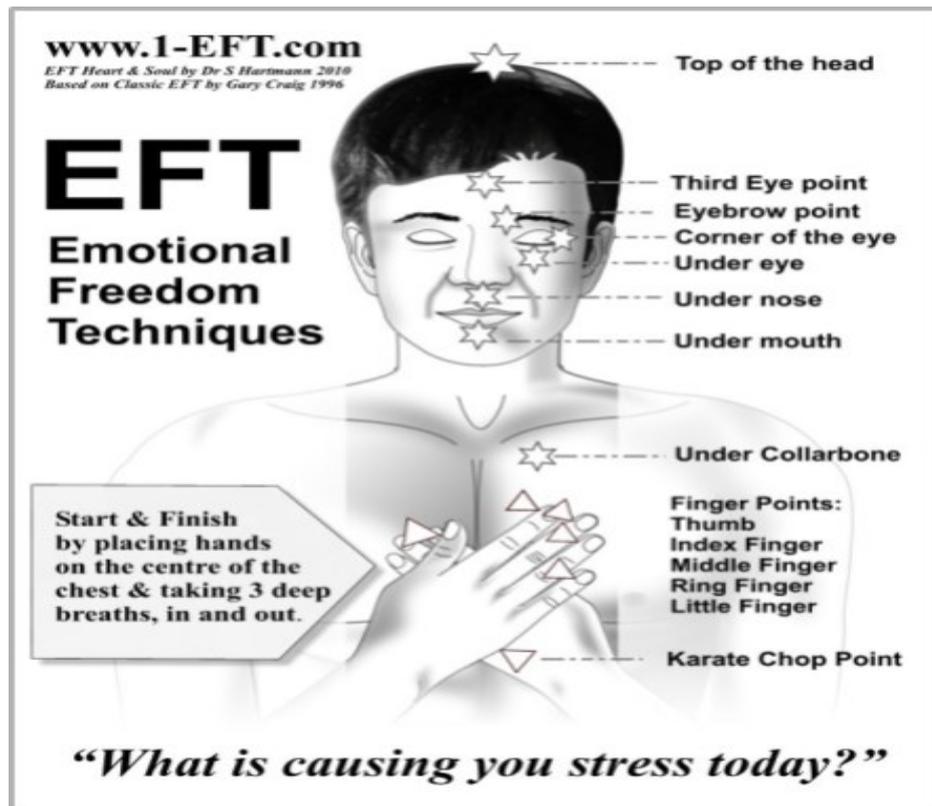


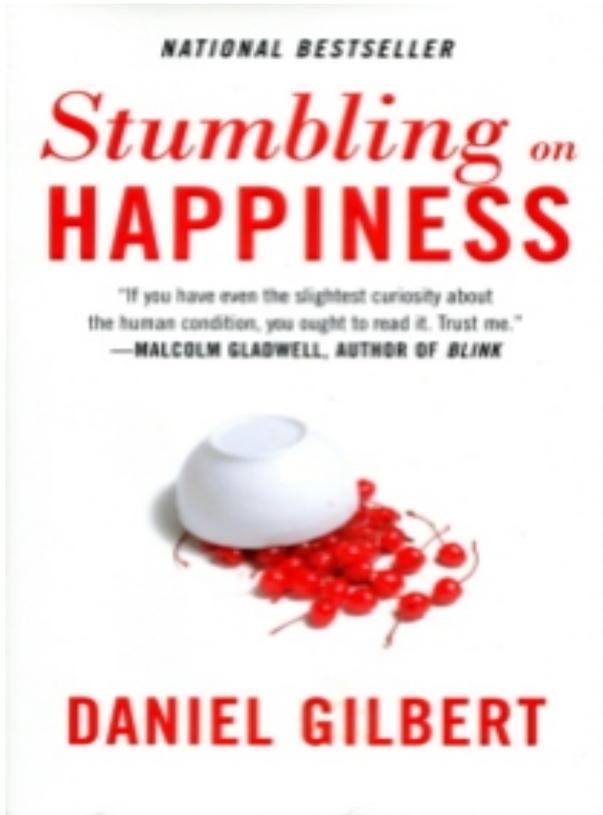
How Do You Stumble On Happiness?

Red Pill Theory | 14 February, 2016 | by Avery

Every philosopher, prophet, and cult-leader has published a book about happiness. At this point there are literally thousands of these books, many of which promise to act as a cure-all for your woes through some spiritual insight or new scientific breakthrough (for example, ‘the scientific’ strategy of tapping your face with your index and middle finger to gain happiness from the emotional freedom technique). Daniel Gilbert’s entry for the suspiciously flourishing happiness genre (it’s odd that there are so many books that reveal ‘the secret’ of happiness), does the opposite.



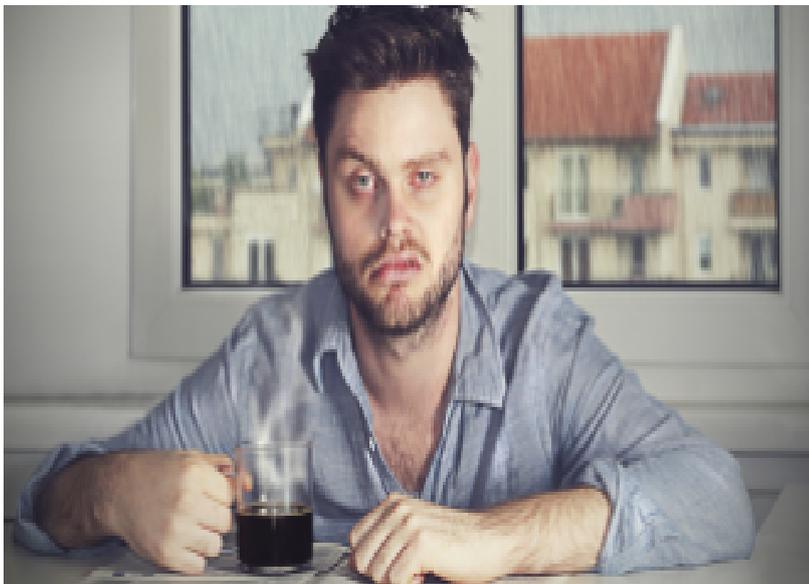
Stumbling on Happiness’ existence is an insult to most books about happiness. Instead of helping you seek happiness, Daniel Gilbert illuminates the reasons our attempts at earning happiness tend not to end in success. In fact, he suggests that our ability to predict what will make ourselves happy in the future is questionable at best. As a result, all those happiness books might be resting on a faulty premise.



We feel like we know what will make us happy, we have an idea of the X that marks the spot for our future well-being, but oftentimes in our quest for happiness, instead of treasure, we find fool's gold.

We have distorted opinions about how future events will affect our happiness. In *Stumbling On Happiness*, Daniel Gilbert mentions a study whose participants were students at the University of Virginia. They were asked to imagine how happy they would be several days after their team won or lost a game of football. The students claimed the game would have a notable impact on their well-being even several days after the victory or defeat. But they were wrong, it didn't.

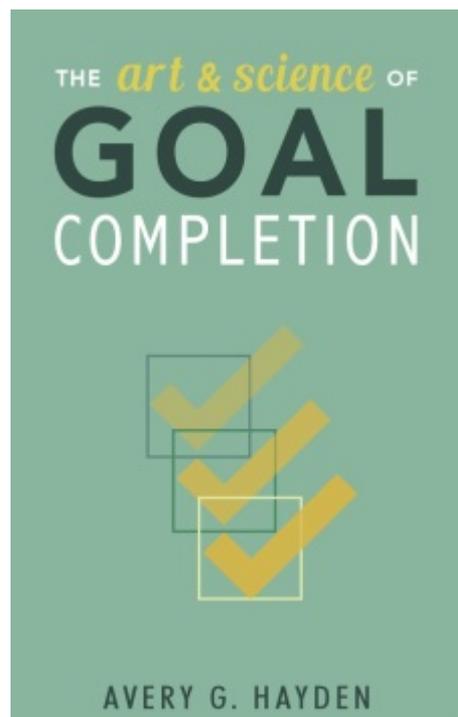
Yes, you might be ecstatic when your team wins a football game, but that ecstasy will vanish when you wake up with a hangover the next morning. If your team loses, you might be right to think this will be upsetting, but after the loss you might go to the local pub, and five drinks in, the feeling of loss will fade away.



Although we like to think our major decisions, where to live, what career to study for, or who to marry,

are based on sound logical decision making, several years later you may find yourself fed up with the traffic in your city, tired of your career's long hours, or sick of being forced to sleep on the couch because of another argument about who is supposed to do the dishes. Our plans for future happiness are formed by a mind that can manufacture a satisfying image, but is unable to look at the many details that determine if that satisfying image is going to correlate with an equally satisfying life.

We feel like we know what will make us happy, our goals are exciting, and we pursue them in hopes of a brighter future. But for the most part, we ignore the staggering differences between our imagination and reality. Maybe we can't make our future selves happy, but maybe that isn't such a bad thing. If we realize that nothing in the future is going to fix how we feel, we might learn to accept our current circumstances. If you stop chasing happiness, maybe you'll finally be able to stumble on it.



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