

Processing Emotions - Happiness

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Processing emotions

The Scherer model of emotion processing includes five basic components, coordinated and synchronized. (Scherer 2016) The inclusion of cognitive assessment is challenged by theorists who regard emotion and cognition as separate systems:

- Cognitive evaluation of events and objects
- Physical, physiological symptoms
- The tendencies of action, motivational
- Facial and vocal expressions
- Feelings (the subjective experience of the emotional state).

Tripathy describes this process: the emotional center of the brain gives birth to feelings and emotions, while the neocortex is responsible for thinking and reasoning. In the process of emotion development, a visual signal first goes from the retina to the thalamus, where it is translated into the language of the brain. The messages then reach the visual cortex, where they are analyzed and evaluated for meaning and appropriate response. If the response is emotional, a signal goes to the tonsil to activate the emotional centers. But a smaller portion of the initial signal goes directly from the thalamus to the amygdala in a faster transmission allowing faster response. Therefore, the amygdala can trigger an emotional response before the cortical centers fully understand what is going on. (Tripathy 2018)

According to Antonio Damasio, the emotional process begins with conscious considerations about the object in the form of mental images. These images correspond to a neural substrate (topographic representations) influenced by the dispositional representations. At the unconscious level, the networks in the prefrontal cortex respond automatically and involuntarily to the signals derived from the processing of the above images, according to the dispositional representations, acquired based on personal experience rather than innate. The response is signaled to the tonsil and the anterior cingulate, by activating the nuclei of the autonomic nervous system and signaling to the body through the peripheral nerves; sending signals to the motor system; activation of endocrine and peptide systems, and by the activation, with particular pattern, of the non-specific neurotransmitter nuclei in the brain and basal brain stem. The first three modes of responses provoke an "emotional body state" and are subsequently signaled to the limbic and somatosensory systems. The last type of response "do not arise in the body proper but rather in a group of brain stem structures in charge of body regulation, have a major impact in the style and

efficiency of cognitive processes, and constitute a parallel route for the emotional response. (Damasio 2005)

A common view is that there are primary, innate emotions that occur naturally when certain characteristics are perceived of internal stimuli or such as size, movement, sounds, certain body states, etc. These characteristics are processed and detected by a component of the limbic system of the brain, the amygdala, which triggers the adoption of a characteristic bodily state and modifies cognitive processing in an appropriate manner. The emotional response may meet some useful goals through bodily changes, but the process continues by triggering the emotion towards the exciting and realizing the connection between the exciting and the emotional bodily state. The primary emotions (inborn, preorganized, Jamesian) depend on the circuits of the limbic system, the amygdala and the anterior cingulate being the primary factors. But the mechanism of the primary emotions is followed by the mechanisms of the secondary emotions, which appear after forcing connections between the experienced feelings, the categories of objects and situations, and the primary emotions. The process of secondary emotions is supported by an extensive network, which includes the prefrontal cortex and somatosensory agents.

It turns out that emotion is the combination of a mental evaluation process and responses to that process. But not all emotions generate feelings, and not all feelings originate in emotions. The emotion and the feeling are thus based on two basic processes, the visualization of a certain bodily state juxtaposed when collecting the signals of triggering and stimulating the muscles, and a cognitive process that accompanies the respective events but that working in parallel.

Happiness

” Nothing can possibly be conceived in the world, or even out of it, which can be called good, without qualification, except a good will. Intelligence, wit, judgment, and the other talents of the mind, however they may be named, or courage, resolution, perseverance, as qualities of temperament, are undoubtedly good and desirable in many respects; but these gifts of

nature may also become extremely bad and mischievous if the will which is to make use of them, and which, therefore, constitutes what is called character, is not good. It is the same with the gifts of fortune. Power, riches, honor, even health, and the general well-being and contentment with one's condition which is called happiness, inspire pride, and often presumption, if there is not a good will to correct the influence of these on the mind, and with this also to rectify the whole principle of acting and adapt it to its end. The sight of a being who is not adorned with a single feature of a pure and good will, enjoying unbroken prosperity, can never give pleasure to an impartial rational spectator. Thus, a good will appears to constitute the indispensable condition even of being worthy of happiness.” (Kant, Walker, și Meredith 2008)

In philosophy, happiness translates the Greek concept of *eudaimonia*. (Kashdan, Biswas-Diener, și King 2008) Utilitarianists, such as John Stuart Mill and Jeremy Bentham, have advocated the principle of maximum happiness as a guide to ethical behavior. Happiness, in the broad psychological sense, is the label of a family of pleasant emotional states. In the last decades, the field of positive psychology has generated many different opinions on the causes of happiness and on the factors that correlate with happiness. Seligman summarizes five factors related to well-being: (Seligman și Csikszentmihalyi 2000)

1. (Bodily) pleasure
2. Commitment (coaching activities)
3. (Social) relationships
4. Meaning (purpose, ideal) and
5. Achievements (achievement of goals).

Several scales have been developed to measure happiness, such as Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS), Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS), and Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS).

Ānanda from Hindu Vedas, Upanishads and Bhagavad gita, signifies eternal happiness, which accompanies the end of the rebirth cycle. According to the Vedanta school of Hindu philosophy, *ānanda* appears when the *jiva* (the individual soul) becomes free from all common

sins, doubts, desires, actions, pains, sufferings and all physical and mental pleasures. Dvaita vedanta interprets *ānanda* as happiness which can be achieved through good thoughts and good deeds which depend on the state and control of the mind. Ramana Maharshi proposes that *ānanda* can be reached through introspection, using the thought "Who am I?" (Maharshi și Godman 1988)

Ataraxia is a Greek term used by Pyrrho and then by Epicurus for a lucid state of robust balance, characterized by the continuous release of negative emotions. Achieving *ataraxia* is an objective for Pyrrhonism, Epicureanism and Stoicism. In Stoicism as opposed to *ataraxia*, *apatheia* is the absence of unhealthy passions, the release of the disorder of emotions, not the silence of the mind, being an intermediate state through which one can reach the stage of mental tranquility (*ataraxia*).

According to Al-Ghazali, a Muslim theologian, jurist, philosopher and mystic of Persian descent, there are four main constituents of happiness: self-knowledge, knowledge of God, knowledge of this world as it really is, and knowledge of the next world. (Griffel 2019)

Emotions are conceptualized in sociology usually in terms of multidimensional characteristics, such as cultural or emotional labels, physiological changes, expressive movements of the face and body, and appreciation of situational cues. (Thoits 1989) Jonathan Turner analyzed a wide range of emotion theories, identifying four primary emotions based on human neurology (Turner 2009) that, when combined, produce more elaborate and more complex (first order) emotional experiences. In the 1990s, sociologists focused on different aspects of specific emotions and how these emotions were socially relevant. (Cooley 1992) (Retzinger 1991) Scheff developed a micro-sociological theory of social connection according to which the formation or interruption of social bonds depends on the emotions that people experience during interactions. (Scheff 1990)

Randall Collins formulated the theory of interaction ritual, according to which we experience different intensities of emotional energy during direct interactions. (Collins 2004)

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