

Viewpoint: Happiness isn't all it's cracked up to be

Over the past 10 years, numerous studies have shown that our obsession with happiness and high personal confidence may be making us less content with our lives, and less effective at reaching our actual goals. Indeed, we may often be happier when we stop focusing on happiness altogether.

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As well as reducing everyday contentment, the constant desire to feel happier [can make people feel more lonely](#). We become so absorbed in our own wellbeing, we forget the people around us – and may even resent them for inadvertently bringing down our mood or distracting us from more “important” goals.

The pursuit of happiness can even have strange effects on our perceptions of time, as the constant “fear of missing out” reminds us just how short our lives are and how much time we must spend on less than thrilling activities.

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These lessons may be especially important in the pandemic. The peaks in our mood may be few and far between, but a simple appreciation of the small pleasures amid the stress could help ease us through the day-to-day anxieties, Mahmoodi Kahriz says. That will be much harder for people who are constantly thinking about their happiness, since they’ll always be lamenting the loss of the many more exciting activities that they could have been doing.

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