



The Happiness Industry

Year of publication: 2016

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320 pages

Link for purchase: <https://amzn.to/2Lcdys8>

In "The Happiness Industry" author William Davies tells us how marketers, economists and their leaders do to measure their happiness and how they take advantage of it.

The book is an in-depth analysis of how well-being is becoming a product and what the consequences will be.

Main ideias of the book

The highlights of the book are:

- Score**
- 9**
- 8 Aplicability
 - 9 Inspiration
 - 8 Innovation
 - 9 Impact on results
 - 9 Structure
- The rates of psychological diseases are correlated with social problems, such as inequality;
 - An effective approach to well-being is to focus on institutional reform.
- Global economic policy views the happiness and involvement of workers as central concerns;
 - Companies see happiness as a resource, not an objective;
 - Science can measure happiness;
 - Social networks have gained a lot of influence because they are tools that show data on the well-being of the population;

This summary contains the seven major aspects related to the happiness industry: "The Regime of Happiness ," "The History of the Meters of Happiness," "Behaviorism," "Return of Meters," "Unhappy Workers," "The Influence of Technology "And" Consequences ".

For whom is this book suitable?

The content of this book is intended for people interested in the role of happiness in modern society and for all those who care about invasions of privacy in the age of the Internet.

Overview of the book

Aspect I - The Regime of Happiness

In this first part, we will contextualize with the current worrying scenario of psychological illnesses and apathy around the world.

Lack of worker engagement undermines productivity, and widespread psychological illnesses overburden government resources.

Increasing rates of depression and disengagement of workers may explain why those in power in corporations and in government now prioritize the cultivation of happiness.

Business leaders and policymakers are intensely dedicated to the techniques and technologies they can use to measure and mitigate stress, apathy, and depression.

Corporations now create positions as "chief director of happiness."

They rely on neuroscience to track employee moods and hire behavioral consultants to create programs that encourage members of their workforce.

Governments maintain statistics on national welfare and offer optimistic guidance to the unemployed.

Part II - The History of the Meters of Happiness

In the second part, we will learn where the idea came from to monitor and measure people's happiness.

The concept of happiness as a tool of business and government manipulation goes back to the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century.

In his doctrine of economic utilitarianism, the philosopher Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) argued that government policies should bring the greatest happiness to the greatest number of people.

But how could someone measure the levels of happiness that certain actions could produce? Bentham suggested measuring people's heartbeats to reveal their inner feelings.

This foreshadowed today's efforts to quantify emotions by monitoring heart rate, brain waves, and eye movements.

Part III - "Behaviorism"

In this overview we will be introduced to the concept of Behaviorism and the consequences of its implementation.

During the twentieth century, psychologists in America distanced themselves from abstract and metaphysical questions. The behaviorist tradition has pushed this trend to the extreme.

Defended by the president of the American Psychological Association, John B. Watson (1878-1958), behaviorism taught psychologists that they did not need to investigate patients' feelings.



The mood-tracking technologies, sentiment analysis algorithms and stress-busting meditation techniques are put to work in the service of certain political and economic interests

They could learn everything they needed to know by observing people's responses to various stimuli.

Watson eliminated the roles of internal drives, desires, and perceptions, stating that he could account for all human behavior as a result of conditioning.

His claims aroused the interest of the propaganda field.

In 1920, Watson joined the advertising agency J. Walter Thompson where he pursued the idea that the function of an effective ad was not to exalt the product but to "trigger" emotions through stimuli.

Watson did not care what customers wanted.

He believed that he would say what the customers wanted, triggering the appropriate emotions.

As a hedge against Watson's arrogance, Thompson's agency supplemented its behavioral approach with consumer attitudes research.

With solid research methods, marketers could learn what people wanted and sell back to them through powered behavioral advertising.

Part IV - Return of the Meters

In part V, we will understand how the happiness meters are used again.

In the second half of the twentieth century, economists and policymakers used market parameters to calculate people's attitudes on other miscellaneous issues.

By establishing a monetary value for everything - including nature - they sought to use the economy to solve even public legal disputes.

Such expansion of metrics has aroused interest in measuring levels of happiness.

If economists were able to make such an assessment, they could compare people's levels of happiness with different incomes and calculate a correlation between pleasure and money.

With this correlation as a reference, they could establish the monetary value of non-market commodities - such as clean air or a library - by measuring the pleasure they provide.

British authorities used this technique to determine the value of cultural institutions.

Part V - Unhappy Workers

In this overview, we'll cover the financial impact that depressed or disengaged workers bring to organizations and governments.

The demotivation of the worker is a great threat to productivity.

The Gallup organization believes that the frequent absences of unhappy workers and apathetic performance cost the US economy more than \$ 500 billion a year in lost tax revenue, lost productivity, and health care costs.

This worries governments, as lower productivity leads to swing economies and lower tax revenues.



Positive psychology, which repeats the mantra that happiness is a personal 'choice', is as a result largely unable to provide the exit from consumerism and egocentricity that its gurus sense many people are seeking



There is indeed some evidence to suggest that individuals who use social media compulsively are more egocentric, prone to 'exhibitionism' and 'grandiose behaviour'

If unhappy workers lose their jobs, benefits expenses increase.

In addition, countries with public health care may face higher costs because many unhappy workers also have mental health problems that can intensify amid the uncertainty of unemployment.

The fight against mental disorders consumes 3% to 4% of GDP in the US and Europe.

An expanding business of happiness consulting has emerged to help businesses and government agencies achieve this goal. "Happiness gurus" now offer motivational psychology and meditation practices for disengaged workers and managers to the brink of exhaustion.

Some companies consider happiness as a "resource". Well-being becomes merely a means of gaining profits, status, or power.

Managers see experiences as friendship in the office as valuable only because they can extract the happiness that friendship brings as fuel to the next business challenge.

Part VI - The Influence of Technology

Let's deal in this section about how technology is used to measure workers' happiness. Many experts are optimistic about the ability to manipulate humor because modern technology opens up opportunities to monitor and interpret the behavior of the population. Experts can access a wide range of granular data, thanks to technological innovations and social changes, such as:

Increasing the generated and stored data

Daily transactions of people with business, government and intelligent network infrastructure produce behavioral records that institutions can use to analyze.

Social networks

People often do not have the patience to respond to surveys sent by email or by phone. However, they offer their thoughts, likes, dislikes and opinions on Facebook, which preserves their information in their databases.

So social networks are a great source of information.

Emotionally Intelligent Computers

Researchers can now program or teach computers to deduce mood and attitudes, based on people's behavior. Analysts have designed algorithms to discover underlying emotions in posts on Twitter and Facebook.

Programs can also read emotions in facial expressions captured on surveillance cameras. Tesco supermarkets have experimented with surveillance systems that interpret customers' moods and display graphic ads that fit the mood of each customer.

Part VII - Consequences

Here we can see the clear concern of the author William Davies about this commercialization of well-being.

The drive to cultivate happiness focuses on seeing people as damaged entities, in need of redress.

However, it ignores the context in which individual unhappiness arose, disregarding whether emotion is a reasonable response to a condition of people's lives. The medicalized view of the mind can contribute to this problem.

In addition, many psychologists describe the connection between mental illness and feelings of disempowerment.

Perhaps the view of the mind as a broken thing to fix with behavioral treatment or pharmaceutical intervention encourages the passivity associated with lack of power.

To deal with this feeling of powerlessness, society must confront the social, political, and economic institutions that cause it.



The spirit of this agenda originates with the Enlightenment. But those who have exploited it best are those with an interest in social control, very often for private profit

Okay, but how can I apply this in my life?

To address the happiness deficit effectively, people need to feel empowered to speak for themselves, affirm what they like or dislike in their jobs, and stop depending on the measurements of the experts to explain their feelings.

For this to happen, powerful people would have to listen to criticism without labeling them a symptom of unhappiness, lacking in healing.

Society must redirect some spending from the happiness budget and use those resources to restructure political and economic institutions.

For example, you could reshape the structure of your business, dismissing the hierarchy in favor of "cooperative control.

When employees participate in the work, they do not need happiness exercises to know their own worth.



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