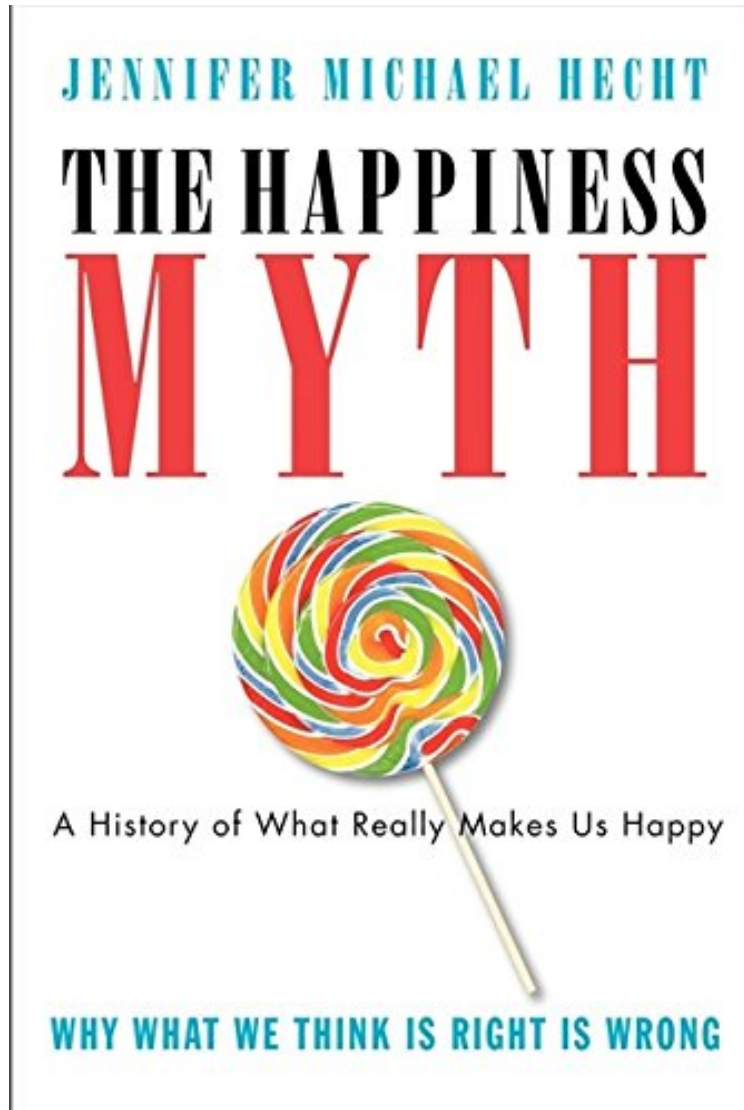


[Download ebook] The Happiness Myth: The Historical Antidote to What Isn't Working Today

The Happiness Myth: The Historical Antidote to What Isn't Working Today

Jennifer Hecht

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#566200 in Books Hecht, Jennifer Michael 2008-02-05 2008-02-05Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.00 x .83 x 5.311, .59 #File Name: 0060859504368 pagesHarperOne | File size: 24.Mb

Jennifer Hecht : The Happiness Myth: The Historical Antidote to What Isn't Working Today before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Happiness Myth: The Historical Antidote to What Isn't Working Today:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A contrarian examines our common knowledge on happinessBy cassdogA refreshing, contrarian look at some of our well-worn notions of what is good for us and what makes us

happy. Utilizing a historical perspective the author elucidates that many of today's certainties and common knowledge are merely the result of historical accident and aren't necessarily based on the weight of evidence. It is fascinating when she shows that our current phobias and pre-conceived notions were not present in the past. I particularly enjoyed her writings on drugs. She gives us the horrific example of a high school football player who gets hit by a bus and loses his leg. After a long battle he learns how to run with a new high-tech leg. He then gets hit by a van while riding on a closed track and is paralyzed in a wheelchair. He is severely depressed, moves to Hawaii and takes up a cocaine habit. When he quits his cocaine addiction and rejoins society it is painted as a man disowning his fall from grace to live a 'respectable life'. The author's explanation is that he was 'hit so hard by life that he might not have ever recovered (and who) found out he was able to use drugs to attain a period of rest, unreality, and euphoria'. I can strongly relate to this perception and I agree with the author wholeheartedly. I recently suffered from a horrific accident that left me temporarily in a wheelchair and suffering obvious depression. I was in a great deal of pain so the doctors prescribed me opiate medication. I quickly realized that the opiate medication was important not only for pain relief but for coping with a difficult situation that we aren't equipped to handle through our day to day experiences. Of course I became mildly addicted but once I had recovered and returned to work, I no longer needed the medication and found it inhibited my normal life and so I quickly dropped it. Most of my doctors acknowledged the importance of these drugs as 'Happiness Drugs' as well. I urge people in similar experiences to respect the dangers and addictive properties of these medications but not to be ashamed of using these drugs to deal with difficult situations and promote happiness. How contrary is that opinion to our common phobias about drugs. This is the type of unconventional, skeptical and clearheaded information that this book contains about a variety of topics ranging from diet, money to exercise and religion. I highly recommend it.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Indispensable book for coaches and coaching clients

By Scott "The Happiness Myth" takes us back to our history and the myths that are no longer. Can you believe that we used to think that "chores" were the main source to our unhappiness?, or sports were bad for women? How about eating coca plants instead of drinking Red Bull? Times have definitely changed. In this book you will explore the myths and the facts of our history and today. It provides an in-depth look into many different theories that we thought were good for us which today's modern science proved them not-so. It shows us the differences between what happiness is today and what people expected happiness to be in times past. Jennifer Michael Hecht keeps you stimulated and interested while reading this book, kind of like the coca plants did for the Colombians working in the fields. Hechts' conclusions are quite interesting and many times practical, making it easy to get the message to care for ourselves. Washington Post says "Hechts' curiosity ranges widely, and the breadth of her learning is impressive....Fresh and daring analysis." This book will keep you informed and laughing all throughout the book. Through its' amazing research into the cultural history, it will certainly rethink your assumptions about happiness.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Reading this book made me happy!

By bookman99 Jennifer Michael-Hecht's book is a pleasure to read and is a great stimulus for discussion. Her research is far-ranging and expertly synthesized giving the reader insights into different eras and varied cultures without the usual wordiness and ponderousness of so much modern scholarship. She reaches some surprising conclusions that are nothing short of fascinating. For example, money can (to some degree) buy happiness. Intuitively we all know this to be true. If put to its proper use, money can make our lives easier, and money can allow us to spend more time doing the things we treasure. Of course, money isn't a requirement for happiness, but it can be a tool for contentment. Also, letting one's hair down on occasion is liberating and exciting. Hecht mysteriously avoids drawing too many conclusions with this insight. I suspect she sees some forms of deviancy as good fun and harmless as long as the significant other is comfortable with the situation. I would have loved more of her analysis on this topic. Hecht's treatment of drugs and alcohol is intriguing. She seems to advocate narcotics as a means to an end, and she doesn't make any value judgments on those who wish to partake. Is this a blanket approval of engaging in such illicit activities? Ah...once again the clever professor decided not to reveal her own personal conclusions. Rather, she lays out the case and leaves it for the reader to decide. Hecht's writing is witty and engaging. I'd love to see her on C-Span's Book TV talking about her writings.

Jennifer Michael Hecht explodes the myths about happiness, liberating us from the message that there's only one way to care for our hearts, minds, and bodies.

From Publishers Weekly History teaches us, contrary to popular belief, that money can buy happiness, drugs are mostly good, low-fat diets may not prevent cancer or heart disease. For Hecht, the assumptions about happiness that guide our actions are distorted by myths, fantasies and "nonsensical" cultural biases. Taking a tour of historical and contemporary ideas of happiness, Hecht (*Doubt: A History*) demonstrates that women's clothes shopping is a celebratory act of freedom from the long nights their ancestors spent spinning, and that the shopping mall gives us back some of the social intimacy of group activity that consumerism wiped out of our lives. In the 1830s, Sylvester Graham encouraged Americans to identify whole-grain, home-baked bread with happiness, a notion still embodied today in myriad message-carrying birthday and anniversary cakes. Our love of sports and exercise stems from

Southern slaveholders' need to distance themselves from heavy labor and its connotation of slavery, and from the Protestant equation of happiness with aggressive self-control and self-denial. American ambivalence about drugs reflects our fears about unproductive happiness and palliatives that numb us into complacency. Although the erudite Hecht (*Doubt: A History*) sometimes loses her audience in verbose, philosophical dissections, her energetic romp through the arbitrariness of history's ideas about happiness is eclectic and entertaining, providing ample perspective on the rituals that make us human. (Apr.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist Adding to the recent spate of happiness books, Hecht, author of *Doubt: A History* (2003), proves a beguiling writer blessed with a most agile mind. She skillfully confronts modern assumptions about what it means to be happy, investigating four factors frequently involved in happiness--drugs, money, bodies, and celebration--historically in sections on the wisdom of happiness through the ages, "good" and "bad" drugs and telling the difference, the relationship of money and happiness, the physicality of the body, and the ritual of celebration. There are three kinds of happiness, she maintains, those roused by a good day, by euphoria, and by a happy life. Not only different, they are often at odds. Her conclusions are often blunt (surprise! Money can buy happiness) and also practical. She offers suggestions that can conceivably help make a happier life, but her good judgment, common sense, and insightful commentary make the book a pleasure not only to read but also to ponder. June Sawyers Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved Hechts curiosity ranges widely, and the breadth of her learning is impressive Fresh and daring analysis. (Washington Post) Deep and thoughtful. (Michael Shermer, *Scientific American*) Among the raft of happiness books published lately, this one is the obvious standout. I suggest climbing aboard. (Cleveland Plain Dealer)