

Humanist Community in Silicon Valley

The Happiness Hypothesis

Discussion of Jonathan Haidt's Book

February 10, 2019

Carl Angotti

carl@angotti.com

More Stuff?

Cartoon See:

<https://www.glasbergen.com/cartoons-about-happiness/>

Agenda

- Introduction
- Videos (2) Short
- Multiple in depth discussions of Book with Q and A
- Close

Introduction

- About Jonathan Haidt
- Title of the Book: The Happiness Hypothesis: Finding Modern Truth in ancient wisdom
- 245 Pages with 11 Chapters

Another Reference Book

- “Authentic Happiness: Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize Your Potential for Lasting Fulfillment” by Martin Seligman

Introduction (Cont'd)

“The right to “the pursuit of happiness” affirmed in the Declaration of Independence is taken these days to affirm a right to chase after whatever makes one subjectively happy. Further, the Declaration doesn’t guarantee the right to happiness, the thought usually goes, but only the right to pursue what makes you happy. But this reading of the Declaration’s “pursuit of happiness” is wrong on both scores.

Introduction (Cont'd)

“Happiness” in the public discourse of the time often did not simply refer to a subjective emotional state. It meant prosperity or, perhaps better, well-being in the broader sense. It included the right to meet physical needs, but it also included a significant moral and religious dimension. In correspondence between James Madison and James Monroe in 1786, Madison notes that “happiness” cannot simply be identified with meeting people’s interests, but includes a higher reference. ”

From "The Meaning of "the Pursuit of Happiness", by James R. Rogers, 6 . 19 . 12

Short Video #1

- Goes quickly and doesn't cover all of the ideas in the book
- About six minutes long
- We will breakdown ideas, and discuss them
- See Video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ChQyGnfPm4>

Short Video #2

- Covers a missing idea, “The Elephant and the Rider”
- About two minutes long
- Video – See: <https://vimeo.com/100349352>
- We will discuss this first

First Discussion

- Discuss “The Elephant and the Rider”
- Is this idea understandable?
- References “Thinking Fast and Slow” by Daniel Kahneman and “Authentic Happiness” by Martin Seligman

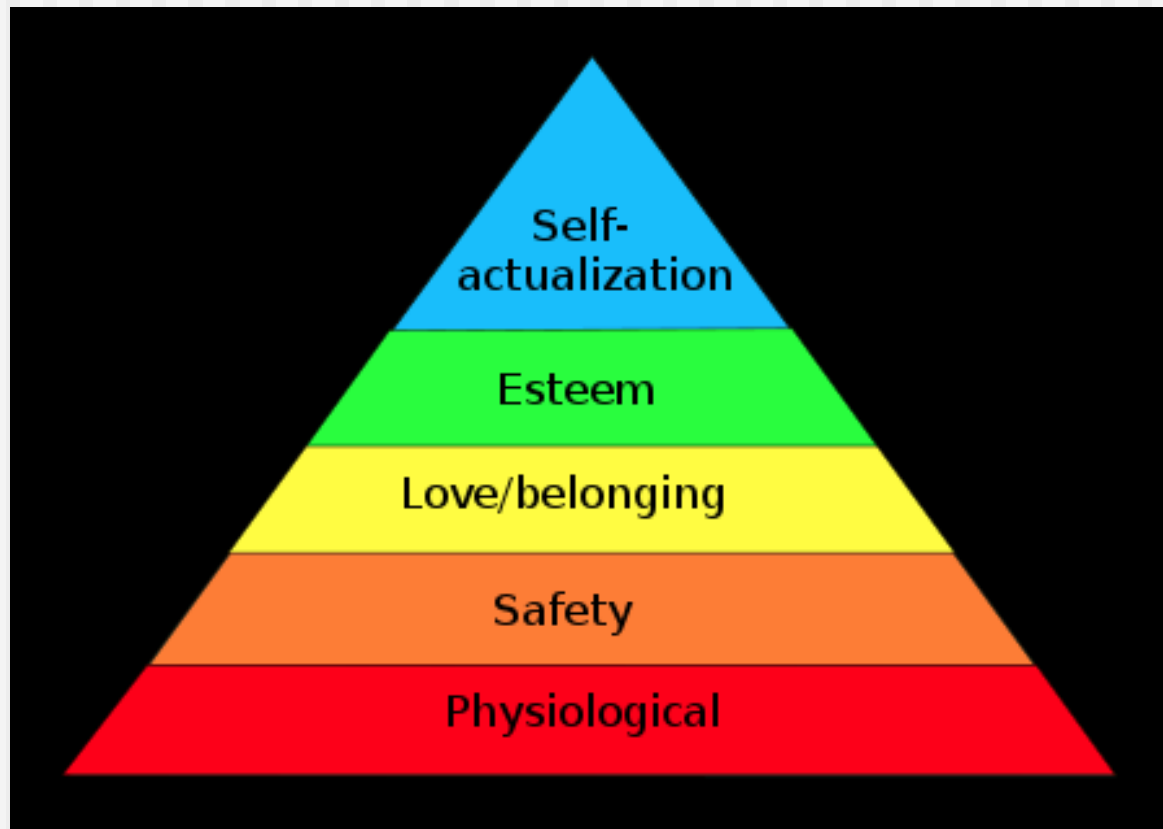
Second Discussion

- Discuss “The Happiness Equation”
Happiness = Happiness Set point +
Living Conditions + Voluntary Activities
- Why “Train the Elephant”? Increase
Happiness Set Point
- Meditation, Cognitive Therapy and
Prozac

Third Discussion

- Living Conditions – External Forces
- Meet the lower needs on Maslow's Hierarchy of Values
- At a point, only incremental increases in happiness can temporarily increase happiness – Adaptation Principle

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Forth Discussion

- Voluntary Activities – Internal Forces
- Meet the higher needs on Maslow's Hierarchy of Values
- Happiness is making progress towards a goal, not reaching it. Journey not destination with feedback along the way

Fifth Discussion

- Humans are by nature Social Beings
- Strong Community Connections
- Relationships with Family, Religion(?) and Family

Further Discussion

- If there is more time remaining
- Based on other Chapters in the book
- Does Philosophical or Religious Wisdom Help?

Questions?

Any further questions or comments to wrap up the discussion?

Contact Me

For further discussion contact me on the meetup comments section for this meeting or:

- Carl Angotti
- carl@angotti.com