

How Can We Constantly Be Happy?

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o. The Question

Being constantly happy is not a state you can hold still in; it needs an algorithm — a repeatable procedure that keeps producing the feeling instead of a single condition you satisfy once.

The reason a procedure is needed is that happiness is never evenly distributed over a life, at any timescale:

- some feel happy when they are young but miserable when they are old,
 - some feel hopeless when they are young but satisfied when they are old,
 - some are happy this moment but regretful at the next hour.
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i. Happiness and Sadness Define Each Other

Claim

The essence of happiness is sadness, and the essence of sadness is happiness. We can only feel happy because we can feel sad, and we can only feel sad because we can be happy.

Neither feeling has content on its own; each is measured against the other. A person who never registered sadness would have no baseline from which happiness is a departure, so there would be nothing left to call happiness.

Through this mental model, somehow, happiness and sadness substitute to each other.

2. Sadness Is Not Only the Cost But Also the Curse of Happiness

(i) How to deal with the sadness?

If the two define each other, then sadness is the **price paid** for joy rather than a failure to avoid. That reframing removes the reason to resist it or to feel defeated by it: once you have collected enough sadness, you are ready for the next delightful experience. Therefore, at the moment we receive sad emotion, we should somehow be "happy" as we still have the ability to feel happy.

(ii) How to deal with the happiness?

When happiness arrives, we should first ask ourselves: which sadness will be used to substitute the current happiness, past or future.

If it's the substitution for the past sadness experience, cherish it, feel deeply into it, and extract the maximum experience from it — otherwise you pay the sadness without collecting what it bought. Otherwise, we should also be alert that after feeling happy, feeling goes away, leading to some extent of lost emotion and sadness. Therefore, **spending your happiness wisely** is also important. In this case, sadness is the curse of happiness.

3. Unexpected Sadness

(i) The model

We can think of happiness showing up like a **geometric distribution**. Say we feel happy with chance p and sad with chance $1 - p$. Then the chance that happiness only shows up after $n - 1$ sad times is $(1 - p)^{n-1}p$.

(ii) What it tells us

If we think this way, then when we feel sad we can tell ourselves: "this is just chance, do not make too much of it" — the more sad times we have already been through, the closer we are to the one where happiness shows up. Being sad many times in a row also gets less and less likely the longer it goes, because every extra sad time cuts the chance by another $1 - p$. The same is true when we are happy: being happy many times in a row is just as unlikely, so we should not expect the good stretch to last forever.

4. The Algorithm

Example (The Loop)

- 1. Go deep into the happiness you currently have and take the maximum experience from it.*
- 2. Accept the sadness that follows as the cost already agreed to, and let it accumulate.*
- 3. When enough has accumulated, you are ready for the next delightful experience — return to step 1.*

Remark

So the answer to the original question is deliberately counterintuitive: to be constantly happy we need to **constantly receive the sadness experience**. Refusing the second stage does not keep you in the first one; it only stops the loop from ever coming back around.