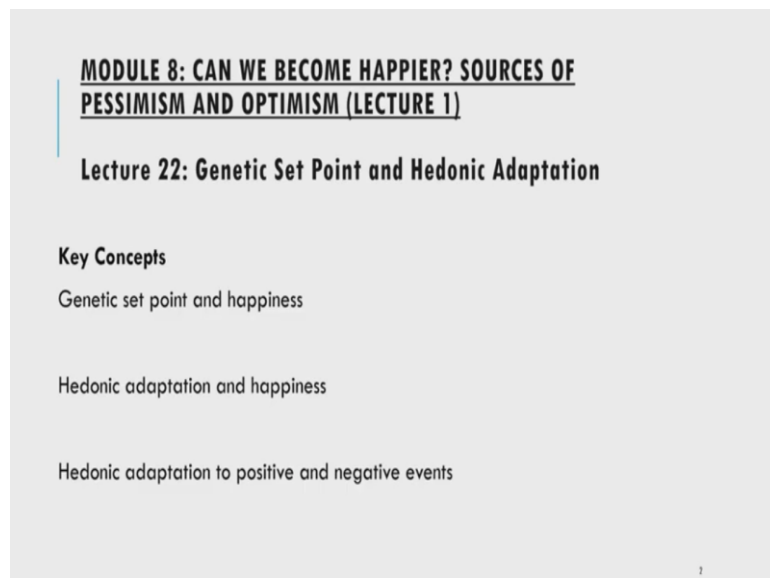


Psychology of Stress, Health and Well-being
Professor Dilwar Hussain
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Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati

Lecture – 22

Hello friends. I welcome you to the lecture number 22 of the course title psychology of stress health and well-being. So this is the first lecture of module 8. So before we talk about today's lecture, let me give you a brief recap of the last lecture that is lecture number 21.

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MODULE 8: CAN WE BECOME HAPPIER? SOURCES OF PESSIMISM AND OPTIMISM (LECTURE 1)

Lecture 22: Genetic Set Point and Hedonic Adaptation

Key Concepts

- Genetic set point and happiness
- Hedonic adaptation and happiness
- Hedonic adaptation to positive and negative events

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So, in the previous lesson, we addressed the concept of positive emotion and attempted to comprehend its many purposes and values. In that context, we examined how positive emotions are less studied emotions in the sense that they have received less attention in the field of psychology historically than negative emotions.

Positive emotions receive less research attention primarily because they are less distinct and in number, and negative emotions receive more research attention primarily because negative emotions have been linked to psychological disorders and are linked to human functioning, survival, and disorders. As a result, special attention was paid to it because of its historical significance.

We've also talked about ten frequent positive feelings, as described by Fredrickson, one of the researchers. Joy, gratitude, serenity, interest, hope, pride, amusement, inspiration, awe, and

love are the 10 most common positive emotions we experience. So far, we've only touched on all of these feelings.

Then we talked about the functions and values of positive emotion, focusing on one hypothesis provided by Barbara Fredrickson in particular. The broaden-and-build hypothesis of positive emotions is the name of the theory. Professor Fredrickson proposed in that notion that positive emotion serves a variety of vital roles, including broadening our thoughts and actions, and undoing negative emotion. Positive emotions cancel out the negative emotion's effect.

So, by activating positive emotions, we may counteract all of the detrimental effects of negative emotions in our minds and bodies. Our sense of resilience is also enhanced by positive emotion. Positive emotion helps to develop a variety of resources, including physical, intellectual, psychological, and social ones. Positive emotions can also generate an upward developmental spiral, meaning that one favorable consequence might lead to other positive consequences. Positive emotions, for example, might lead to positive thoughts, which in turn can lead to more positive feelings, resulting in an upward developing spiral.

Then we talked about how positive emotions can protect our health by acting as a protective source for both our bodily and mental well-being. Finally, we discussed the concept of positivity ratio, specifically how professor Barbara Fredrickson and her colleagues discovered that for psychological well-being and flourishing to occur, a ratio of three positive emotions to one negative emotion was found to be at least important or significant in terms of stimulating positive development in one of their studies. So these are some of the key principles that we covered in the previous class.

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MODULE 8: CAN WE BECOME HAPPIER? SOURCES OF PESSIMISM AND OPTIMISM (LECTURE 1)

Lecture 22: Genetic Set Point and Hedonic Adaptation

Key Concepts

Genetic set point and happiness

Hedonic adaptation and happiness

Hedonic adaptation to positive and negative events

1

Today, we'll examine or begin Module 8, in which we'll explore one specific question: can we become happier? Or, in this case, what are the roots of pessimism or optimism regarding becoming happier?

So we'll have three lectures on this in this module, and we'll go over the many facets of the question. Today's lecture is number 22, and we'll talk about some of the obstacles to increasing our happiness levels. And it is in this framework that we will explore two specific barriers, one of which is known as Genetic Set Point and the other as Hedonic Adaptation.

So, let's have a look at what these are. We'll begin with the Genetic Set Point. So, can we become happier? is a very important and fundamental question that we all seek to answer in our day-to-day lives, whether consciously or unconsciously, we are seeking to answer or at least pursuing this question that we are constantly trying to enhance our sense of happiness and well-being in our lives.

Thousands of self-help books appear to discuss various methods for increasing our happiness. But the most essential question is: can we improve our sense of happiness? Is it worthwhile to seek happiness? As a result, this is an important subject that we shall answer here. In general, research reveals that both optimism and pessimism are shown in answer to these queries. As a result, we'll look at a few of these elements.

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Sources Of Pessimism: Genetic Set-point and Hedonic Adaptation

Why is it difficult to become happier?

Research indicates some possible reasons such as-

Genetic set point and

hedonic adaptation.

There are two main causes of pessimism in this direction. In general, it demonstrates that being happier or increasing our current level of happiness is difficult. Genetic Set Point and Hedonic Adaptation are two probable explanations. So, let's take a look at these two major barriers to increasing our happiness levels.

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Genetic set-point

It means our genetics sets a limit on our experiences including emotions and happiness.

A growing literature has accumulated evidence that we all have a baseline level of happiness which is in part influenced by our genetics (Bartels and Boomsma, 2009; Lykken and Tellegen, 1996; Rietveld et al., 2013).

Our happiness level remains relatively stable because of this set point.

Let's begin with the concept of the Genetic Set Point. Now, Genetic Set Point essentially indicates that our genetic composition determines our physical and mental characteristics. As a result, genes have an impact on practically every area of our lives, both physical and mental. And our genetic makeup limits our experiences, as well as our physical qualities such as how

tall we can be and what color our skin will be. As a result, our genetic makeup determines these.

Similarly, our psychological qualities, such as emotions and happiness, might be limited by our Genetic material. As a result, we need to understand how genetics is always impacting and limiting it. You can't expand something indefinitely because heredity has a certain influence on such things, and the mix of human genetics influences those things.

As a result, a growing body of research suggests that we all have a baseline level of happiness. As a result, we all have a particular baseline level of feeling or happiness that we experience. You may have noticed that some people are generally happier most of the time, thus their baseline level of happiness is a little higher, while others are not so happy most of the time and are mostly melancholy. As a result, their baseline level may be slightly lower.

As a result, genetics may have an impact on the baseline level. And study reveals that our genetics, at least in part, determine that baseline level. As a result of this set point, our happiness level remains rather stable. As a result of the set point, it remains stable. It's not as if we have extreme highs and lows. This heredity sets a boundary, and we experience around this basic level.

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How do we know that there is a genetic set point for happiness?

several lines of research show a large heritability influence for happiness. Some are as follows-

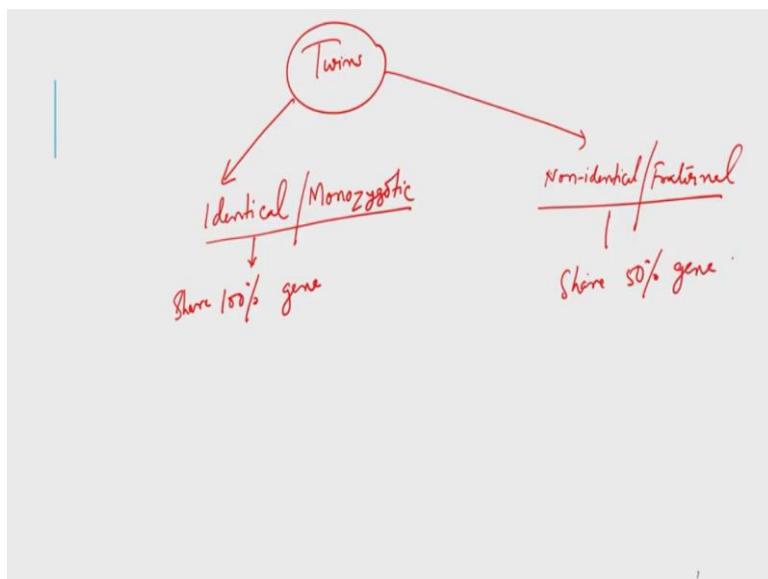
Twin studies: Identical twins have been found to report more similar levels of happiness than fraternal twins, even if they were raised in different households (Bartels and Boomsma, 2009; Lykkenand & Tellegen, 1996).

Although studies have found varying heritability coefficients (ranging from 0.25 to 0.55), the overwhelming conclusion of this research is that happiness has a large genetic component.

So, how do we know that happiness has a genetic set point? What evidence do you have for this? What methods did the researcher use to arrive at these conclusions?

In general, research reveals that happiness has a strong heredity component. In terms of happiness, there is a heritable component that determines a specific amount of happiness. So, when people perform research in the field of genetic influence, they look at the heritability of a given trait. Twin studies are one type of sample that is particularly useful in understanding the role of genes and the environment. As a result, the researcher is interested in twins. In general, there are two types of twins. So, let's have a look at these two sorts.

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As a result, twins can be divided into two groups. Identical or monozygotic twins are one type of twin. They share 100 percent same genetic composition . These are twins who are identical in appearance. You may have seen such people, such twins, who are difficult to identify among themselves since they have identical physical and mental characteristics. The reason for this is that they have the exact same gene. Non-identical or fraternal twins are a different type of twin. They share around half of their genes with their siblings. As a result, they only share 50% of the gene.

As a result, researching twins, particularly identical twins, can provide useful information on the influence of genes because they have the same genetic makeup. If identical twins are researched, especially identical twins who are reared separately, this refers to identical twins who were separated after birth for any reason and raised in different familial backgrounds and surroundings.

Because they were raised in two separate environments, the environmental influences are highly varied, we can understand the influence of genes by examining this type of sample. And,

despite environmental differences, if they share some qualities, we can conclude that the gene is playing a significant role, despite the fact that the environment is highly different. Even Nevertheless, they exhibit identical traits, implying that hereditary forces are to blame.

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Essentially, twin studies have shown that identical twins report a higher level of happiness than fraternal twins. Fraternal twins are not genetically identical, therefore identical twins' feeling of happiness and emotional experience are highly comparable, even if they were raised in different houses, different backgrounds, and different cultures. As a result, despite variations in the setting in which they were reared, they show certain commonalities in terms of their emotional and happiness experiences. Because they are genetically identical, the gene should have a significant influence.

So, different research indicate variable heritability coefficients, so what is the varying heritability of genetics in terms of happiness? It has a range of 0.25 to 0.55, which translates to 25% to 55%. Genetic influence can be used to explain heritability, as well as the variance in happiness and emotional experiences. So heritability simply refers to how much genetic influence may explain the variance of a certain characteristic in a population. The meaning of heritability is the variation of a trait in a population and how much of it is explained by genes.

As a result, a higher heritability indicates a greater influence of the gene. Varying studies reveal distinct strengths of coefficients or different coefficients for this coefficient. In terms of our emotional experiences, some studies show that up to 80% can be explained by genes, while most studies reveal a range of 0.25 to 0.55, or around 50%. This study's overarching conclusion is that happiness has a significant genetic component.

So, if heredity has a big influence on our degree of happiness, what does this mean? So we can't really do much in terms of genetic composition, so it sets a limit; you can't expand this limit indefinitely, so genetics will always pull you back to your baseline level of happiness, so it's considered a kind of barrier, one of the barriers, because genetics sets certain limits, and you can't really go too far beyond them. It will pull you to return to that level of happiness. As a result, it is seen as one of the impediments to increasing our degree of happiness. As a result, genetics plays a role. And because we can't modify our genetic makeup very much, we can't really change because it's predetermined for us.

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extraversion :- social, outgoing, assertive, gregarious
Neuroticism :- moody, feel anxiety, worry, fear, guilt etc

Personality traits and happiness

personality may underlie the genetic influence on happiness. Subjective well-being is highly positively correlated with extraversion and negatively correlated with neuroticism (Costa and McCrae, 1980; DeNeve, 1999; Furnham and Brewin, 1990; Hayes and Joseph, 2003).

Personality has a genetic component. Genetics may influence personality which in turn may influence our happiness.

Some research suggest that the genetic influence on extraversion, neuroticism, and conscientiousness entirely explains the heritability of SWB (Weiss et al., 2008).

Now, personality traits are another key idea that is linked to genetic influence. When we talk about personality traits, we're talking about certain enduring qualities of individuals, relatively consistent patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting that identify one person from another, as

we've examined in previous lectures. As a result, persistent characteristics of individuals are referred to as personality traits, by which we can describe and separate them from one another.

These are referred to as personality characteristics. These are qualities that are fairly consistent. So personality qualities influence our level of happiness, and personality traits are significantly influenced by our genetics, so genetics can also be linked to happiness through our personality traits.

According to the findings, subjective well-being or happiness is strongly correlated with one personality trait, extroversion, and negatively correlated with another personality trait, neuroticism. Extroversion is a trait in which people who are high on it are very social, outgoing, assertive, and gregarious.

So, those who are high in extroversion are people who are outgoing, lively, and always want to be around by others. They want to be in social situations. Introverts are those who have a low level of extroversion and like to be alone. They are more interested in their private lives. They aren't as extroverted or social as others. As a result, there exist several types of people. Being an extrovert or an introvert has no negative connotations. These are distinct qualities since people are different.

Extrovert persons, on the other hand, are more likely to be happy, according to study. One reason could be because they are more likely to have positive emotions, more meaningful relationships, and social relationships as a result of their personal qualities, which could lead to greater joyful experiences.

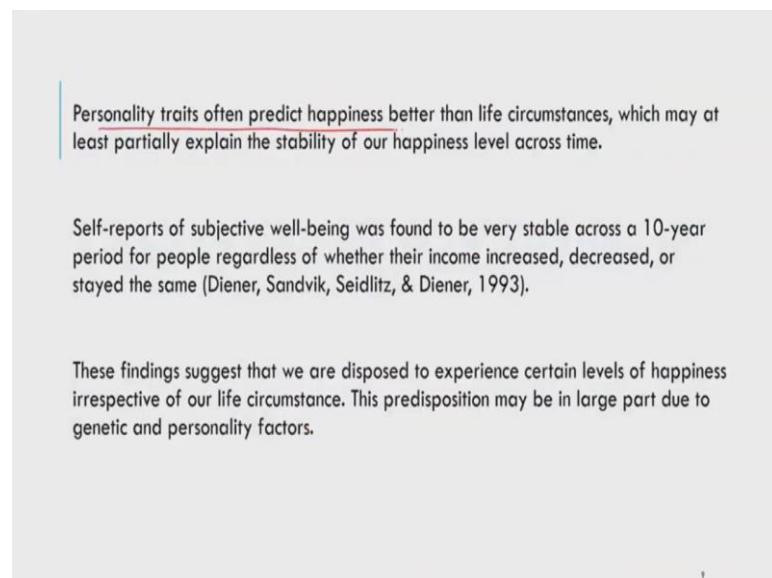
Neuroticism is another personality trait that is often associated with a lack of happiness. So neuroticism is a personality feature in which persons who have a high level of it are moody, anxious, worried, fearful, guilty, and so on. As a result, those who have a high level of neurotic tend to be emotionally unstable. This is a personality feature, not a disorder. Some people are more emotionally unstable in the sense that they are more moody and their moods change more frequently.

They experience more anxiety, worry, fear, and guilt. People who have a high level of neuroticism are more likely to experience these emotions. As a result of their strong proclivity for negative emotions, people are more likely to experience less happiness. This could be one or more of the causes.

Furthermore, because personality traits include a hereditary component, our genetics has an impact on our personality traits. In this way, genetics may have an impact on personality, which in turn may have an impact on our happiness. As a result, personality traits may act as a sort of mediator between genes and our perceptions of happiness. It explains the influence of genetics.

As a result, some research suggests that genetic influences on extroversion, neuroticism, and another trait known as conscientiousness may explain a significant portion of the heritability of subjective well-being. As a result, our genetic influence on personality traits may explain how genes influence our happiness or emotions.

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A slide with a light gray background and a vertical blue line on the left side. The text is centered and reads: "Personality traits often predict happiness better than life circumstances, which may at least partially explain the stability of our happiness level across time." Below this, it says: "Self-reports of subjective well-being was found to be very stable across a 10-year period for people regardless of whether their income increased, decreased, or stayed the same (Diener, Sandvik, Seidlitz, & Diener, 1993)." At the bottom, it concludes: "These findings suggest that we are disposed to experience certain levels of happiness irrespective of our life circumstance. This predisposition may be in large part due to genetic and personality factors." A small number '1' is visible in the bottom right corner of the slide.

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Self-reports of subjective well-being was found to be very stable across a 10-year period for people regardless of whether their income increased, decreased, or stayed the same (Diener, Sandvik, Seidlitz, & Diener, 1993).

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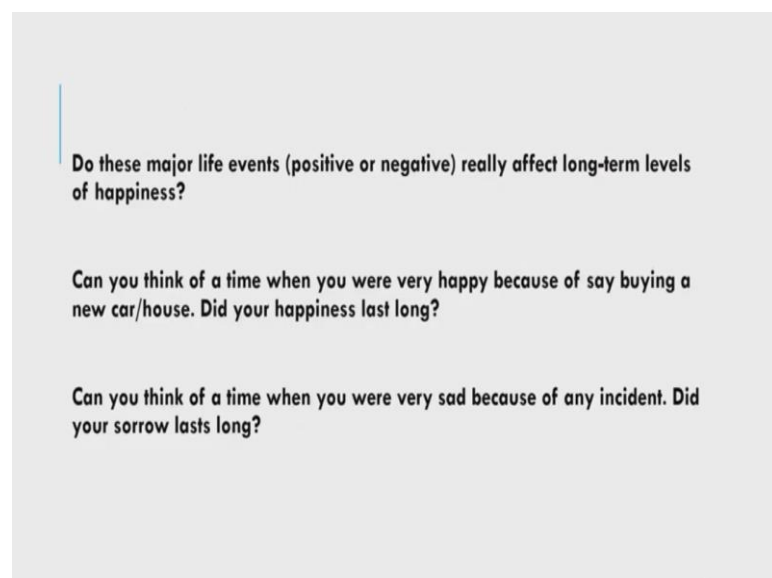
In general, personality qualities predict happiness better than life circumstances, according to study. We saw in a previous lecture that the social demographic element does not play a significant influence. Our life circumstances do not have a significant impact on our degree of happiness.

Personality qualities are a better predictor of happiness than life circumstances, which may help to explain why our happiness levels are largely consistent over time. We can explain the stability mostly through heredity and personality attributes. And if it's steady, our perception of can't be stretched too much because it's constrained by our genetic influences and personality qualities.

People's self-reports of subjective well-being remained remarkably consistent over 10-year intervals, regardless of whether their income increased, decreased, or remained constant. As a result, it demonstrates that subjective well-being or happiness is rather consistent throughout time, regardless of changes in life circumstances. This study also suggests that genetic and personality factors have a role.

So, regardless of our life experiences, we are predisposed to experience a specific amount of happiness, and this predisposition can be explained in large part by genetic and personality variables. This consistency can be explained by heredity and personality traits. So this is one of the hurdles in that we can't truly raise our sense of enjoyment since it's controlled by Genetic Set Point, which restricts the degree and intensity of experience as well as our personality traits, which can be influenced indirectly by our genetics.

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Let's have a look at the concept of Hedonic Adaptation now. So, before I go into detail on Hedonic Adaptation, I'd like to ask you a few things. Do important life events, whether positive or negative, have a long-term impact on one's level of happiness? So, if there are any changes in your life events, whether favorable or unpleasant, do they have a long-term impact on your happiness level? Do they have a long-term effect on your level of happiness?

Next, can you recall a time when you were extremely happy, such as when you were purchasing a new car or home, and how long did that happiness last? So, was that happiness a long-term kind of happiness?

Can you recall a period when you were particularly sad or, more specifically, when you were sad due to some reason or an unpleasant event? Did your sadness endure for a long time? Was it, in fact, that long?

So these are some of the questions we'll try to answer here utilizing the Hedonic Adaptation notion.

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Hedonic Adaptation

People experience increases in happiness following positive life events and declines after negative ones. However, these shifts in happiness do not last.

A growing literature has shown that individuals become habituated to changes in their lives via hedonic adaptation (Frederick and Loewenstein, 1999).

Hedonic adaptation is the psychological process by which people become accustomed or habituated to a positive or negative stimulus, such that the emotional effects of that stimulus are reduced over time (Frederick & Loewenstein, 1999).

Hedonic adaptation refers to the process by which individuals return to baseline levels of happiness following a change in life circumstances.

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Now, Hedonic Adaptation argues, in a manner similar to Genetic Set Point, that our experience of happiness can alter as a result of life events. As a result of a positive life event, we naturally get happier, and our sense of happiness grows. And when something bad happens in our lives, our happiness level drops. People's happiness levels rise after a positive occurrence and fall after a negative event. This transition, however, does not endure long. So, generally speaking, you may recall or recall that those changes in our emotional experiences following occurrences are that we experience happy after a positive event and that we become sad after a negative event. Happiness and despair, however, do not stay long.

Individuals become acclimated to changes in their life through hedonic adaptation, according to a growing body of literature. As a result, the phenomena of hedonic adaptation explains why changes in our emotional experiences, such as happiness or sadness, do not persist long. We return to our previous emotional state or degree of experience.

This is explained by the concept of hedonic adaptation. People grow acclimated or habituated to a pleasant or negative stimuli through hedonic adaptation, a psychological process. As a result, we become accustomed to or adapt to any changes that occur in our lives, whether favorable or unpleasant.

And once we've become accustomed to them, the emotional impact of the stimulus is decreased. As a result, the strength of our emotions decreases. So, at first, our emotional intensities are usually rather high, but over time, we become accustomed to them or habituated to them on a psychological level, and we no longer have those powerful emotional experiences after that particular occurrence. Hedonic adaptation is the term for this. As a result, we adapt. As a result, hedonic adaptation is the process by which people return to their baseline level of enjoyment after experiencing a change in their life circumstances. As a result, when our life circumstances change, our emotional experiences alter as well. However, it is not long-lasting, and we eventually return to our baseline level, which may be determined by genetics or other factors. Hedonic adaptation is the name given to this psychological process.

This is another reason why many experts believe that we cannot greatly enhance our sense of happiness because of two factors: one, genetic set point; and two, we adjust to new changes and return to our baseline level of happiness. Hedonic adaptation is the term for this.

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It is based on the concept of walking on a **hedonic treadmill** (Brickman & Campbell, 1971) where our feet moves but we remain stagnant.

It may be caused by genetic or personality factors.



So, consider what hedonic adaptation would be like if I just drew a graph. So that's how our lives are going. When a positive event occurs, our graph will look like this, and then it will look like this. Some negative event occurs, our happiness level drops, and we return. Some positive event occurs, our happiness level rises, and we return. It's possible that it'll drop following an unpleasant incident like this.

Hedonic adaptation compels us to return to our baseline level of functioning in this way. So there will be a momentary shift, and then we will return. It is based on the hedonic treadmill notion. As a result, it's more like to walking on a treadmill. Those of you who are familiar with treadmills may be walking or running on one. Your steps may appear to be counting in such a way that you have traveled many kilometers, but you are still in the same location.

So we're doing a lot, but it's all coming back to the same level in the end. So that's what hedonic treadmill means. Brickman and Campbell coined the phrase in 1971. Our feet move on the treadmill, but we remain stagnant. As a result, our happiness and emotional changes occur, but they are just transient. We revert to our previous state of functioning. Again, our personality and genetic set point may impact hedonic adaptation, but it is more of a psychological adaptation process.

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Functions of Hedonic Adaptation

Adaptation processes serve important functions (Frederick & Loewenstein, 1999)-

It protect people from potentially dangerous psychological and physiological consequences of prolonged emotional states.

It allow unchanging stimuli to fade into the attentional background, so that change in the environment receives extra attention.

It allows individuals to disengage from goals that are less likely to be successful by reducing emotional reactions associated with them.

Hedonic adaptation now serves a critical purpose. It is vital to human survival and performs a variety of crucial tasks. What exactly are these vital functions? So, it protects people against the potentially harmful psychological and physiological effects of extended emotional states. So, extended emotional states are extremely unsafe and detrimental to our bodies. We've seen how stressful experiences and unpleasant emotions can lead to a variety of physical and psychological problems in previous lectures. As a result, extended psychological states, both positive and negative emotions, especially negative emotions, can have potentially severe consequences on our system, particularly our body and mind.

As a result, hedonic adaptation aids in our protection. We return to our natural level of emotional experience when we don't experience for a long time, therefore it protects us from the negative impacts of protracted emotional repercussions.

Second, it permits unchanging stimuli to fade into the emotional background, allowing for increased attention to be paid to changes in the environment. As a result, if we become overly emotionally tied to some changes, we will be unable to see other new changes that may be more significant in your life. As a result, it assists us in paying attention to newer changes in the environment that may be more significant. As a result, after our emotional state has decreased or returned to normal, we are able to focus on other things. We will become stuck if we become overly emotional in response to certain life changes. As a result, hedonic adaptation also fulfills that purpose.

The third essential function of hedonic adaptation is that it helps people to disengage from goals that are likely to succeed by lowering their emotional reactions to them. So, in a nutshell, it's related to the previous issue I mentioned. It also assists us in disengaging from a specific aim. So, a certain emotional event occurs, and we become - we may become very stuck with that event as a result of the emotional reaction; however, through hedonic adaptation, this emotional reaction diminishes over time, and we are able to unstuck or disengage from it and focus on other important goals and events that are more important for our functioning in life. As a result, hedonic adaptation performs a variety of critical tasks.

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AREA Model Of Hedonic Adaptation (Wilson & Gilbert, 2008)

People engage in the sequential process of attending, reacting, explaining, and ultimately adapting to events.

When something emotionally-relevant happens, it draws our attention and we react with some emotions (happiness or sadness).

The next step is explaining where we try to understand and explain why and how of what happened.

This step determines the rate of adaptation. (e.g., "I didn't qualified in the job interview because I am less qualified and skilled than other applicants.")

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Wilson and Gilbert suggested a model in 2008 to describe the process of hedonic adaptation, specifically how it occurs. The A, R, E, A Model, or AREA Model of ionic adaptation is the name given to this model. People engage in the sequential processing of attending, which means A. reacting, R. explaining, E, and adapting, which means A. As a result, hedonic adaptation occurs in a series of steps that include attending, reacting, explaining, and adapting. Eventually, adaption takes place.

So, basically, this paradigm states that when something emotionally significant occurs, such as a significant event, our attention is drawn to it. Obviously, if an event occurs that has an

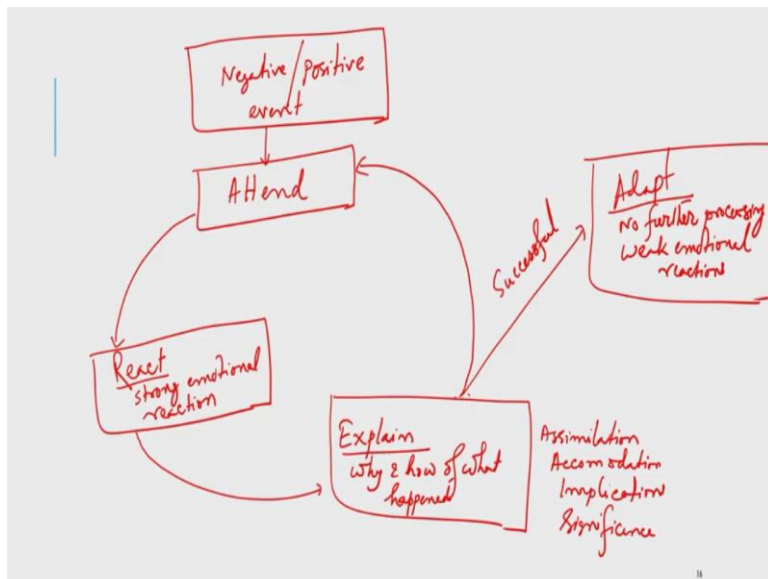
emotional impact, all of our attention is drawn to that event. As a result, it is linked to our attention. We pay attention to that, and if it's an emotional event, we naturally react emotionally. As a result, if the event is positive, we become happier. We become sad if the incident is negative. So we react with various feelings, either pleasant or negative emotions.

So the next stage is to try to explain or understand why and how something happened. So, whatever happy or unpleasant event occurs, we strive to explain, comprehend, and grasp why and how it occurred, so we try to explain it in our minds. That concludes the explanation. And in terms of adaptation, this explanation is crucial. As a result, our explanation will influence the rate of adaptation. As a result, the faster we make sense of what's going on, the faster we'll be able to adjust.

As a result, the rate of adaptation is determined by this phase of explaining. If you did not qualify in a certain interview, for example, you may be really disappointed and upset about it. Then you'll try to figure out why this happened, why I didn't pass the interview? You'll try to make sense of it, or perhaps others will try to assist you in doing so. So, as you can see, I was less qualified and skilled than the other interviewees, which is why I was not selected.

So you were able to make sense of the situation. You make an attempt to explain it. You've finally accepted it. Even though you may feel uncomfortable at first, you will gradually recover. As a result, you will adjust. After you've explained everything, it's time to adapt. Then the emotional effects will decrease, and your sadness will decrease since you now understand why this has occurred. Your emotional level will remain high if you are unable to explain it. Then comes adaptation.

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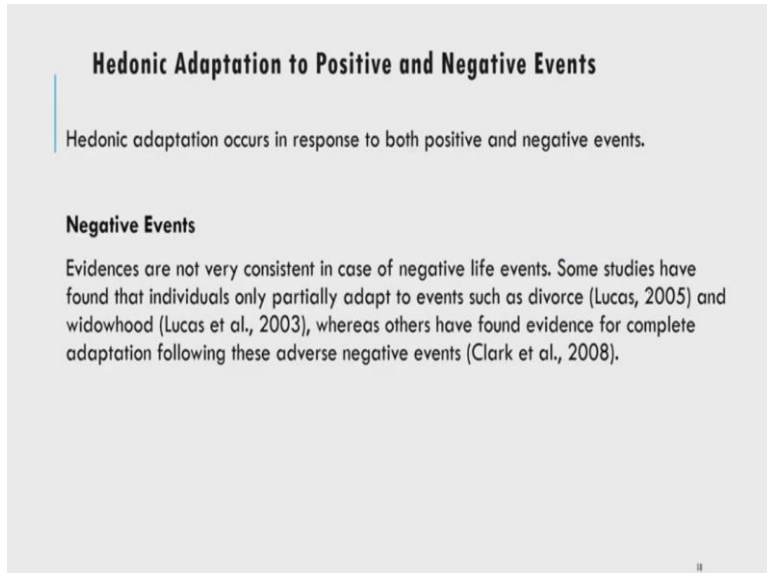
So, in a nutshell, we may depict this concept using diagrams. Assume that any incident, whether sad or positive, has occurred in your life; emotional occurrences will automatically draw your attention. You will pay attention and pay attention. It will, without a doubt, attract your attention. You will react once you have attended. Obviously, you will react after receiving attention. Emotionally intense ways. As a result, you will be affected by emotion for some time. There is no denying it.

Then, after the reaction, we will attempt to explain or comprehend. Basically, what happened and why it happened. Many psychological processes may be taking place during the explanation phase. It could be a case of assimilation or accommodation. You will strive to comprehend the consequences, relevance, and so on. As a result, all of these items will be part of your explanation. If you are unable to explain yourself correctly, the cycle will repeat itself. You will, however, adapt if you are successful in explaining. There will be no additional processing after adaptation. There are only a few weak emotional reactions. If it is typically unsuccessful, it will go through the same process again.

As a result, we can illustrate the adaptation process in a diagrammatic manner. As a result, we attend after the event. We react emotionally after paying attention. And, after experiencing emotional effects, we usually try to explain why and what happened utilizing assimilation and accommodation for a period of time. We'll look at the ramifications and try to comprehend the significance of the incident. We adjust if the explanation process is successful. Then we don't process as much as before, and the emotional impact is minimal. So that's what hedonic adaptation means.

However, if it fails, we can repeat the cycle until we achieve success in terms of adaptation.

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Hedonic Adaptation to Positive and Negative Events

Hedonic adaptation occurs in response to both positive and negative events.

Negative Events

Evidences are not very consistent in case of negative life events. Some studies have found that individuals only partially adapt to events such as divorce (Lucas, 2005) and widowhood (Lucas et al., 2003), whereas others have found evidence for complete adaptation following these adverse negative events (Clark et al., 2008).

Is hedonic adaptation the same for positive and negative life experiences? So, let's have a look at some of the research findings. Is it true that adaptation occurs at the same rate for both positive and negative events? Let's see what happens.

Hedonic adaptation now happens in response to both positive and negative stimuli. In general, we adapt to both positive and negative changes in our lives. That is a nice thing for us to do. However, depending on the nature of the event, the rate of adaptation may vary. In the case of negative events, for example, the evidence is not always consistent. According to some research, people only partially adapt to bad circumstances like divorce and widowhood. While some research have revealed that people adapt to all bad circumstances as well.

As a result, the results are inconsistent. Some research demonstrate that people do not entirely adapt to unpleasant circumstances, such as divorce or widowhood, and disability. As a result, people are sometimes unable to fully adjust to unpleasant circumstances, only partially adapting to them. It also takes longer to adjust to bad experiences. It takes a lot longer to adapt to a negative occurrence than it does to a happy event.

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Lucas and his colleagues (2007), conducted two panel studies, one with 40,000 people living in Germany and the other of 27,000 living in Great Britain, were assessed yearly for up to 14 to 21 years. They examined the extent to which people adapt to the life events such as marriage, widowhood, divorce, unemployment, disability, and severe disability.

They found that the level of adaptation is not same for all events. People who experienced marriage, widowhood, divorce adapted and returned to their baseline level of SWB.

However, people who experienced unemployment and disability did not adapt completely (adaptation was less).

Further, they observed most pronounced lack of hedonic adaptation for those with a severe disability. There was no rebound 7 years after their low point following their life-altering event.

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For instance, in 2007, Lucas and his colleagues published a large-scale study. They conducted two panel studies, one in Germany with 40,000 participants and the other in the United Kingdom with 27,000 people. So they did these two panel studies and evaluated them every year for up to 14 to 21 years. It's a set of data that they've gathered through time. They also looked at this group of persons.

The degree to which these individuals adapt to a variety of life situations, such as marriage, widowhood, divorce, unemployment, disability, and severe disability. So they try to notice various life changes that are occurring in their lives and how people adapt to these life changes, or is the rate of adaptation the same for all people, or is the pace of adaptation determined by all forms of events or types of events?

As a result, this is a large-scale, longitudinal study. It is a highly essential and noteworthy study that reveals some crucial information. They discovered, for example, that the level of adaptability varies depending on the incident. People who have gone through marriage, widowhood, or divorce have adapted and returned to their baseline level of subjective happiness. People generally adapted and returned to their baseline level after events like marriage, widowhood, and even divorce, they discovered. People were able to adapt to such

emotional effects in response to such alterations because they were not long-lasting. So that was not a major issue. People who had been unemployed or disabled, on the other hand, had not fully adapted. People were unable to fully adapt to situations such as unemployment and disability. As a result, this was a chronic issue. For a long period, they were unable to adapt and suffered unpleasant emotional consequences as a result. As a result, they were unable to fully adapt, and the impacts of such events lingered for a long time. As a result, the adaptation was only partial. They also discovered a lack of hedonic adaptation in people with severe disabilities. People with severe disabilities, on the other hand, did not have access to very strong adaptation evidence. So, even after seven years of being at rock bottom following their life-changing catastrophe, there was no recovery. It was still having a lot of bad psychological effects.

So, depending on the event, humans can adjust to most unfavorable emotional situations, which is beneficial since it helps them survive. However, some unpleasant occurrences may have extremely significant impacts, and people may not be able to fully adjust to them, and some may not be able to adapt at all. It's also feasible, such as in the case of severe incapacity.

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Positive Events

Hedonic adaptation is more likely to be complete and faster in case of positive experiences than negative experiences (Lyubomirsky, 2011).

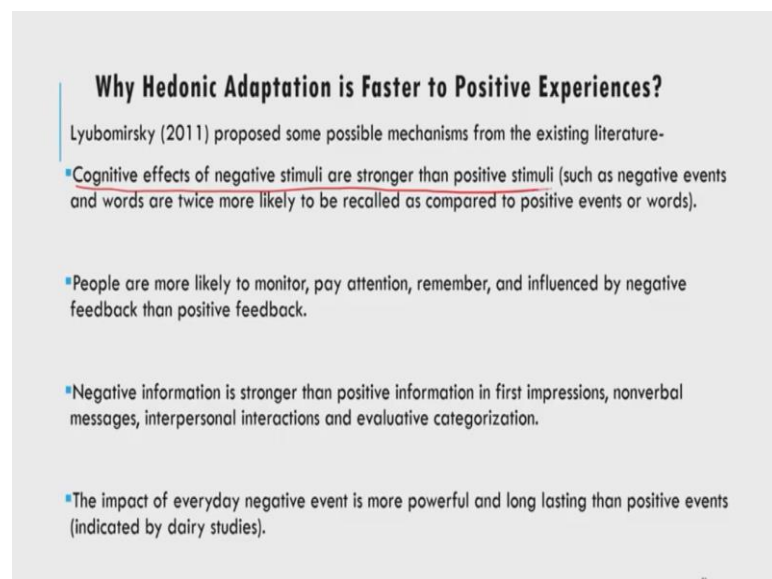
There is a consistent evidence that people, on average, adapt completely to major positive life changes such as getting married, acquiring a new job, and even winning the lottery (Boswell et al., 2005; Brickman et al., 1978; Clark and Georgellis, 2012).

This may be one of the obstacles in human pursuit of happiness.

Hedonic adaptation is more complete and faster for positive events, according to study. People adapt to all positive changes in their lives, according to studies. That joy, or rise in good mood, did not last. However, they virtually always return after any positive change in a person's life. And it's a lot faster; people adjust quickly to positive changes. Negative emotions, on the other hand, take far longer to adjust to, and in many situations, adaptation is incomplete. However, adaptation is far more complete and rapid in positive circumstances.

As a result, there is consistent evidence that people adapt completely to major positive life transitions such as marriage, a new career, or even winning the lottery. Within a few months or years, people have entirely adapted. As a result, this could be one of the barriers to human happiness. So, if people fully adjust to positive changes, happiness is only temporary, and people will return. As a result, positive emotional effects may not stay long, and people generally adjust to them. As a result, this could be yet another barrier to experiencing or increasing pleasant emotion or happiness.

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Why Hedonic Adaptation is Faster to Positive Experiences?

Lyubomirsky (2011) proposed some possible mechanisms from the existing literature-

- Cognitive effects of negative stimuli are stronger than positive stimuli (such as negative events and words are twice more likely to be recalled as compared to positive events or words).
- People are more likely to monitor, pay attention, remember, and influenced by negative feedback than positive feedback.
- Negative information is stronger than positive information in first impressions, nonverbal messages, interpersonal interactions and evaluative categorization.
- The impact of everyday negative event is more powerful and long lasting than positive events (indicated by diary studies).

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So, let's look at why adaptation is quicker in the case of positive changes and takes considerably longer in the case of negative feelings or events. As a result, one researcher, Lyubomirsky, hypothesized a probable explanation for why positive alterations speed up adaptation.

One reason is that negative stimuli have stronger cognitive consequences than positive stimuli. As a result, unpleasant experiences have a considerably greater psychological impact. The impact and effect are far more powerful. As a result, getting out of it and adapting to it becomes more difficult. Negative experiences and words, for example, are twice as likely to be

remembered as positive events and words, according to study. If someone says something bad to you and then says something wonderful, you are more likely to recall the negative things expressed to you. As a result, any negative word about oneself will be remembered for a longer period of time because it has a greater psychological impact.

The second reason is that negative input is more likely to be monitored, paid attention to, remembered, and influenced by individuals than positive feedback. So, if someone gives you bad feedback about anything, you are more likely to pay attention to it, remember it for a long period, and be impacted by it. As a result, negative stimuli and feedback have a considerably greater influence on you than good stimuli and feedback.

In the categories of initial impressions, nonverbal communications, interpersonal interaction, and evaluation, negative information outweighs positive information. Negative information has been demonstrated to have a far bigger influence in the case of, say, initial impressions in various research contexts. Any unpleasant item will be recalled much more firmly than some great things whenever you meet someone for the first time, for example.

Negative stimuli or impressions have a significantly greater impact on us when it comes to first impressions. Even in interpersonal contexts, some negative signs are more likely to have an impact on rating categories in nonverbal communication. As a result, different studies reveal that negative information has a significantly bigger influence on us than good stimuli or information.

Last but not least, the influence of daily negative events is far more intense and long-lasting than the impact of positive events. Even in the context of regular life events, different diary studies have shown that little, minor bad incidents in our day-to-day lives have a considerably greater influence on us than varied pleasant situations.

Overall, negative events or stimulus input have a lot greater impact on our mind and system than positive occurrences. So it's difficult to get out of it when things have a lot more impact, which may have evolved because we need to pay attention to unpleasant things for survival, and because it has a lot more impact. It takes a lot longer to get out of it and adjust to it. So this could be one of the reasons why humans get more accustomed to happy experiences than to bad ones, and why positive events adapt faster than negative events.

With that, I'll conclude today's lecture. And in the next lecture, we'll discuss how, despite these obstacles, we might increase our happiness levels. Is it possible to be happy permanently? This

is something we'll talk about in the following lecture. We'll discuss the sources of hope. Despite this pessimism, what interventions can we use to boost our happiness levels? So that's all we'll talk about in the next few courses. With that, I'll conclude today's lecture. Thank you very much.