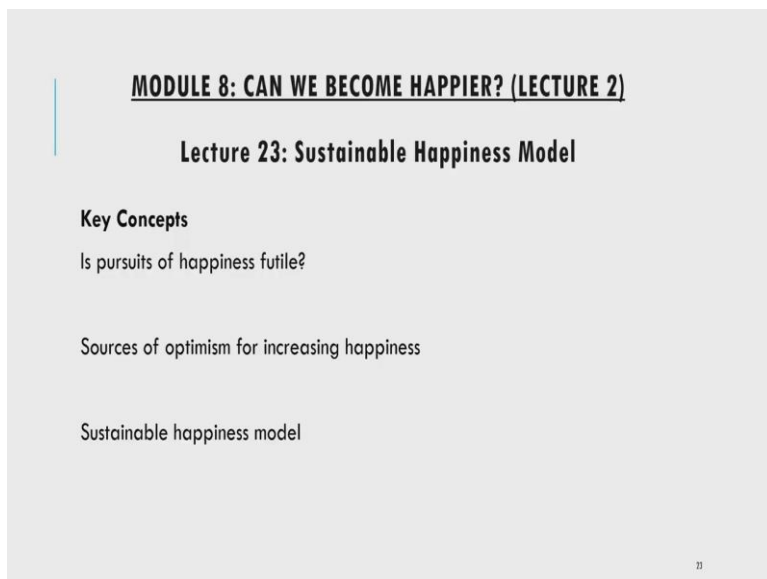


**Psychology of Stress, Health and Well-being**  
**Professor Doctor Dilwar Hussain**  
**Department of Humanities and Social Sciences**  
**Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati**  
**Lecture 23**  
**Sustainable happiness model**

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**MODULE 8: CAN WE BECOME HAPPIER? (LECTURE 2)**

**Lecture 23: Sustainable Happiness Model**

**Key Concepts**

- Is pursuits of happiness futile?
- Sources of optimism for increasing happiness
- Sustainable happiness model

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Hello friends, I welcome you to the lecture number 23 of the course title Psychology of Stress, Health and Well-being. So, this is the second lecture of the module 8 and overall it is twenty-third lecture. So, before we discuss about today's lecture, let us have a brief recap of the last lecture that is lecture number 22.

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## RECAP: LECTURE 22

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 discussed how we can become happier. Can we boost our happiness in a sustainable way? So, in that framework, we've explored various hurdles or barriers to enhancing our happiness, as well as some potential sources of optimism. So, in the previous lecture, we specifically highlighted two distinct hurdles that constitute an impediment to enhancing our pleasure level or subjective well-being.

We've talked about two factors in relation to these two. One is known as the genetic set point, while the other is known as hedonic adaptation. As a result, we examined how our genetic composition or genetics limits our experiences, including happiness, happiness experiences, and emotions in the framework of genetic set point. As a result, our genes influence a variety of characteristics, including physical traits and psychological traits and emotional experiences.

So, we've established that our genetics impose certain limitations and also establishes a type of baseline level of happiness experiences. So, even if we experience short fluctuations in happiness or become extremely unhappy, we eventually return to our baseline level of happiness, which varies from person to person.

Some people, who are generally, express happiness in their lives, have a baseline level of happiness, perhaps a little greater. As a result, for some people, it may be lower, because they express their unhappiness most of the time. So, our genetic set point or genetics, at least in part, determines our baseline level of happiness, and proof for this genetic set point was provided by twin studies. Identical twins have been observed to report similar levels of happiness or emotional experiences, while being reared in different family backgrounds or

environments. In the framework of genetic set point, we've also examined how genetics may impact our personality trait, and how personality trait appears to influence our subjective well-being, happiness, or emotional level, at least according to study.

We've talked about two personality qualities in particular: extraversion and neuroticism. Extraversion was found to be favorably related to a person's well-being or happiness, whereas neuroticism was found to be adversely related to happiness or well-being. As a result, our genetics may have an impact on our personality traits, which in turn may have an impact on our happiness or emotional experiences.

So, in the context of genetic set point, these are some of the topics we studied in the last lesson. Hedonic adaptation is the second significant topic we've examined, and it's a kind of barrier to improving our degree of happiness. As a result, hedonic adaptation is more of a psychological process through which individuals return to their baseline level of happiness following a sudden change in their life circumstances, whether positive or negative.

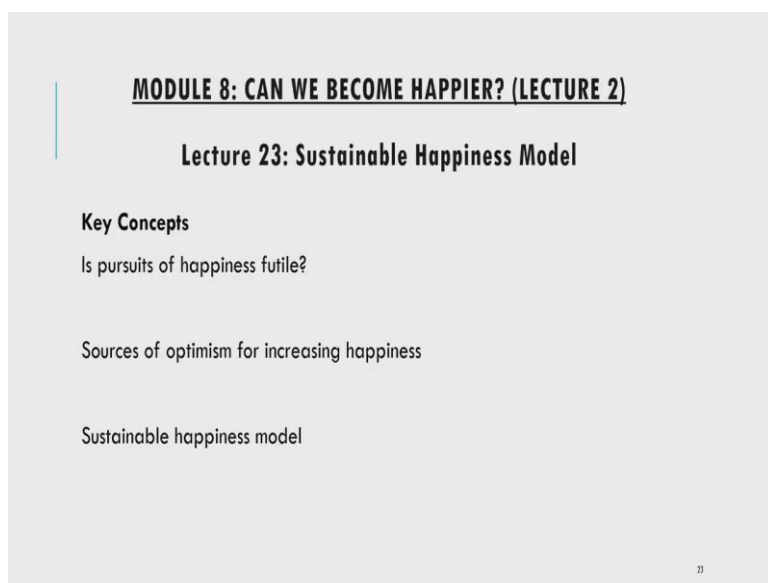
So, hedonic adaptation is the theory that people adapt to changes in their life circumstances and that emotional experiences may transform as a result of positive or negative occurrences in their lives. However, we tend to return to our baseline level of happiness as we become accustomed to it, which may be more of a psychological adaptation. Hedonic adaptation is the name given to this process, which can be influenced by genetics.

And we've talked about how this hedonic adaptation protects us from long-term emotional consequences, or how if we have either positive or negative emotional experiences for a long time, especially negative emotional experiences, it can be harmful to our body and mind, and we've talked about the specific functions of this hedonic adaptation.

As a result, hedonic adaptation helps us in disengaging from past goals. As a result, as our emotional consequences decrease, we are able to withdraw from goals that are no longer profitable and focus on newer stimuli and goals. In the context of hedonic adaptation, we've also examined the AREA model, which was presented by Wilson and Gilbert to describe how hedonic adaptation occurs. And basically, this is about the process of hedonic adaptation, and they say there are a few sequential processes that happen in the hedonic adaptation, one of which is that we first pay attention, A, and then we react emotionally, R, and then we try to explain or make sense of the experience. And if we can make sense of or explain an incident, the emotional implications are less, and we are better prepared to adapt. So far, we've gone over the specifics of these procedures.

Finally, we addressed how hedonic adaptation differs for both positive and negative situations. People may not totally adjust to negative events, such as severe disability, unemployment, or divorce, according to research. People may not completely adapt to negative events, especially negative occurrences, which can have a significant impact on us. Positive events, on the other hand, people generally adapt to all types of positive experiences. We also adjust to favorable occurrences more quickly. We've also talked about some of the possible causes. So we'll just pick up where we left off today.

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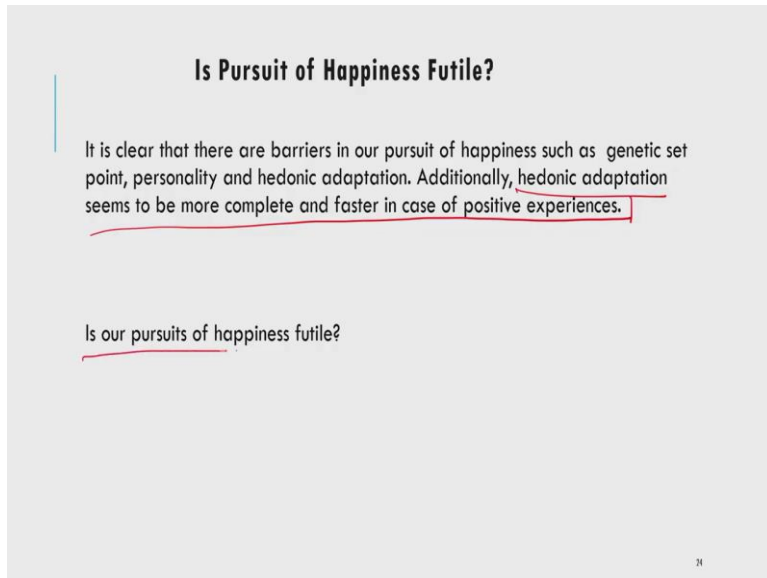
And we'll talk about how there may be some significant barriers to raising our happiness, such as our genetics determining a particular amount of happiness, and how hedonic adaptation pulls us back to our baseline levels of happiness. So we are, even if there are transitory shifts, but we are unable to enhance our degree of happiness on a long-term basis. So, is it true that pursuing happiness is a futile effort?

I mean, if we are destined to return to our baseline level of happiness no matter what we do, is it even worth chasing happiness in our lives? So, in today's class, we'll try to explain or address this subject. Particularly by discussing one model of happiness presented by Sonja and her colleagues, referred to as a sustainable happiness model.

So, we'll try to figure out what the other aspects are. So, in today's lecture, we'll discuss whether or not pursuing happiness is futile. We will examine a sustainable happiness model

and some sources of optimism for boosting happiness. So, let's have a look at some of the most crucial parts of it.

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As a result of the previous lecture, it is evident that certain substantial barriers exist, such as genetic set point, personality variables, and hedonic adaptation, that prevent us from growing our happiness levels sustainably. Furthermore, it was discovered, or we stated in the last lecture, that hedonic adaptation is more complete and faster when positive events occur.

As a result, when we become happier as a result of positive changes, we quickly adapt to them and entirely adapt to them. So, because we quickly adapt to our happiness level or positive emotional state, it is more difficult to maintain our happiness level or positive emotional state. Is it then fruitless to pursue happiness?

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## Sources Of Optimism

Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, and Schkade (2005) suggested following sources of optimism for our pursuit of happiness-

- Some interventions for increasing happiness seems to work such as practicing virtues such as gratitude, forgiveness etc.
- Many motivational and attitudinal factors have been found to facilitate happiness and well-being such as pursuing intrinsically motivated goals and optimism.
- Many research (both cross-sectional and longitudinal) indicate that older people tend to be happier than younger ones. This at least indirectly indicate that people can enhance their happiness using their attitudinal and volitional factors.

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It is not futile, according to research, because there is evidence that we can raise our sense of happiness level, or at least, that there can be a long-term rise in happiness level, by pursuing certain interventions or activities. So, based on existing study literature, Sonja Lyubomirsky and her colleague offered some plausible sources of optimism in the pursuit of happiness.

They explained that some interventions for enhancing happiness, such as practicing virtues such as gratitude, forgiveness, and so on, appear to work. Many research evidences suggest that various intervention tactics to raise our happiness level, such as practicing certain virtuous acts like appreciation, forgiveness, and so on, actually increase our sense of happiness to a significant level.

As a result, this is one sign or proof that we can seek pleasure or raise our level of happiness. Many motivational and attitude aspects, such as pursuing intrinsically motivated goals and cultivating positive thinking, have also been shown to increase happiness and well-being in studies. So, research also reveals that some sorts of goals, if perceived to increase our level of happiness in a sustainable fashion, as well as adopting positive thinking, can be a valid intervention in terms of improving happiness level.

Many studies, both cross-sectional and longitudinal, show that elderly individuals are happier than younger people. At least recently, some research suggests that as people advance through life, especially as they get older, their subjective well-being or happiness appears to rise, say in their 50s and 60s, 60 years of life. As a result, that indirectly implies that

happiness might grow depending on our numerous attitudinal and volitional elements, which may change later in life.

So, these are some of the important indicators or some evidences or sources of optimism that shows that Pursuit of happiness is not futile. There are some possible intervention or activities that can be done to increase our sense of happiness or at least positive emotional experiences.

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One set of research indicate that we are doomed in our pursuit of happiness because of some strong barriers in the path. However, another set of research indicate otherwise. Why this paradox?

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So, in the previous lecture, we spoke about several very strong obstacles to happiness, such as genetics, personality traits, and hedonic adaptation, which all seem to generate substantial barriers to happiness. We've also found some evidence that some activities can genuinely improve people's feelings of happiness. So there appears to be a contradiction here.

So we'll see that it's not a contradiction after all, and we'll try to answer this question: can we become happy using a particular model of happiness known as the sustainable happiness model?

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### Sustainable Happiness Model

Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, and Schkade (2005) proposed a sustainable model of happiness.

They proposed three major determinants or causal factors of happiness: Genetic set-point, life circumstances, and intentional activities.

Based on the past research, they proposed approximate percentages of contribution each factor makes in our life. Existing evidence indicate that approximate 50% of variance in happiness is accounted by genetic set-point, about 10% by life circumstances (Diener et al., 1999) and they proposed remaining 40% can be accounted by intentional activities.

They used a pie chart to show that.

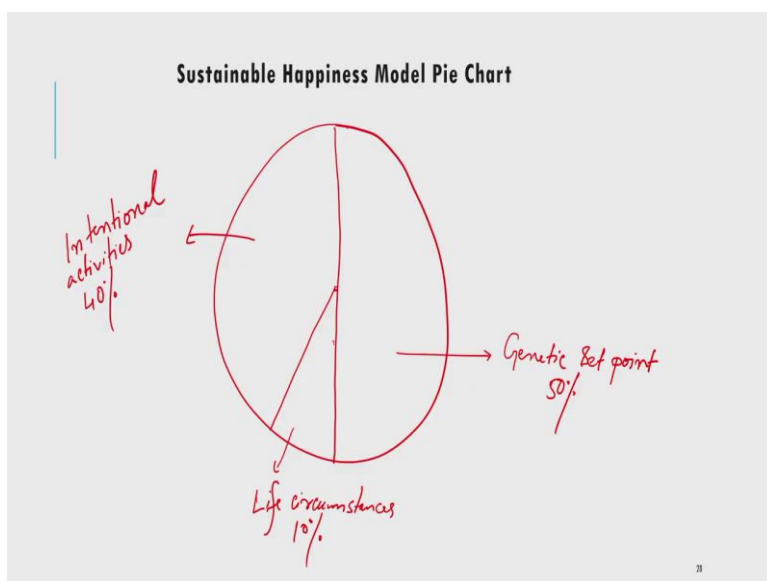
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So, the sustainable happiness model was proposed in 2005 by Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, and Schkade. So, they provided their model, and it is one of the most widely cited papers in which they proposed a happiness model called the sustainable happiness model. As a result, they identified three primary determinants or causal elements of happiness, the three major things that impact our level of satisfaction in life. One is the genetic set point, which we covered earlier. Another factor is our personal circumstances. The third factor is intentional activities. As a result, they proposed that these three critical aspects determine our happiness. As a result, these are significant causal elements that can influence our level of happiness in life. As a result, they provided some approximate percentages contributed by these three aspects, each of these factors in our lives, based on previous study into diverse populations.

As a result, they propose that genetic set point accounts for around 50% of variable in happiness, based on current evidence in the population. So, approximately 50% of the variance in happiness levels can be explained by our genetic composition, approximately 10% by our life circumstances, some evidence suggests that approximately 10% to 15% can be explained by our life circumstances, and the proposed remaining 40% can be accounted for by intentional activities. So they say there are three significant components, and they depict these three factors and their percentages on a pie chart.

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So, this is how the pie chart looks. As a result, the genetic set point is roughly 50%. So, this one is around 10% life circumstances, and the rest, they say, can be explained by intentional activities we perform in our lives. So this was the pie chart that they used to try to illustrate these three important aspects and their potential contributions to our happiness levels.

Many academics have disputed these percentages, claiming that it is not acceptable to precisely quantify the percentages that make up our overall happiness level. And they kind of admit that these are only estimates, that it might not be exactly 50, 10 or 40. However, these are just a few instances of percentages recorded by researchers in various populations.

So, there are some critiques, and we will explore what those criticisms are later, but the concept is that they are essentially talking about three major components and their likely contributions; it may not be exactly these percentages, but that is what their model suggested. So, let's take a look at each of these factors and how they connect to our level of happiness.

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**Set-point**

Set-point "is genetically determined and assumed to be fixed, stable over time, and immune to the influence of control" (Lyubomirsky et al. 2005).

Evidences from twin studies and personality traits provide support for this stable component of happiness.

Although studies have found varying heritability coefficients, approximately 50% variance can be attributed to genetics.

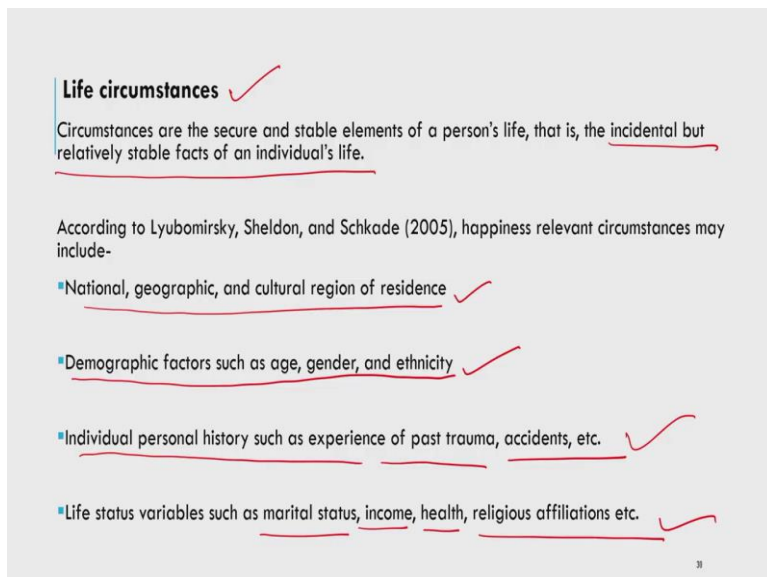
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So, as we covered in the previous lesson, genetic set point is one of the obstacles since it sets some limits beyond which we cannot jump very far. So, a set point is essentially a genetically determined and fixed value. It is often fixed since you cannot modify your genetics, at least not easily, and it is so stable over time and impervious to control impacts.

So, in general, whatever genetic contribution there is, you can't really change it and you don't have much control over it. So, there is a fixed point that determines a specific baseline level of happiness, and as we've already mentioned, many twin studies and data from many research reveal that genetics studies play a significant role in defining our degree of happiness or subjective well-being. As a result, evidence from twin studies and personality attributes backs up this, this, or a stable component of happiness. So, while studies have revealed varied heritability, we reviewed the concept of heritability in the last class, where the idea is that heritability refers to the proportion of or variance of a specific feature in a population that can be explained by genetics.

So, different studies show different results on heritability coefficients or percentages, so they sort of explain it by claiming that genetic makeup accounts for about half of the variance. So, at least half of the variance in subjective well-being or happiness can be explained by genetic factors. So, one part is genetic set point, which is normally fixed and stable, and over which we have little control. Because genetics is mostly out of our hands.

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**Life circumstances** ✓

Circumstances are the secure and stable elements of a person's life, that is, the incidental but relatively stable facts of an individual's life.

According to Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, and Schkade (2005), happiness relevant circumstances may include-

- National, geographic, and cultural region of residence ✓
- Demographic factors such as age, gender, and ethnicity ✓
- Individual personal history such as experience of past trauma, accidents, etc. ✓
- Life status variables such as marital status, income, health, religious affiliations etc. ✓

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Our life circumstances are the next aspect in the sustainable happiness model that adds to our happiness. Now, life circumstances are largely incidental, yet constant elements of our life. So, we are born into various life circumstances, and we find ourselves in a variety of

situations once we are born. For instance, the location of your birth, the types of amenities available, the type of environmental circumstances in which you were born, the culture, and the cultural and geographic region in which you were born. Furthermore, many of these life conditions are given to us, the majority of them, and we find ourselves in specific life situations. So, life circumstances are essentially incidental, and you don't choose them most of the time. They are coincidental, but reasonably stable life circumstances do not change as frequently; we can change certain aspects of them, but they do not change as frequently.

As a result, life circumstances essentially imply that. As a result, these are some constants in our lives. However, most of these are unintentional; we do not choose the majority of them. So, according to Lyubomirsky, her colleague's happiness relevant circumstances, such as the national, geographic, and cultural region of residence, so what is your national, geographic, or cultural location, where you were born, or where you are residing? As a result, this is another facet of your situation. Age, gender, and ethnicity are all demographic elements that affect your living situations; what is your gender? What ethnicity do you belong to? What is the age range of the participants? Which may vary gradually, but these are some of the factors that influence your life situation. Individual personal histories, such as past trauma experiences, accidents, and traumatic events that occur, are also part of our life circumstances. And accidents, some traumatic events that occur, are also part of our life circumstances. Then there are the life circumstances variables, such as your marital status, income, health, and religious affiliation, which are all part of your life circumstances. As you can see, the most of them are kind of coincidental, yet they are generally stable facts of our lives.

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The circumstances that most consistently predict high SWB are-

- Being married (Diener et al. 2000; Lucas et al. 2003; Myers 2000),
- Religious (Lazar and Bjorck 2008; Myers 2000),
- Employed (Haring et al. 1984; Lucas et al. 2003),
- Healthy (Diener and Seligman 2004; Lyubomirsky et al. 2006)
- Sufficiently wealthy to meet basic needs (Diener and Biswas-Diener 2002; Diener et al. 1993, 1995, 2010).

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So, in general, research shows that being married is most consistently related to high subjective well-being or happiness; at least some research shows that being married also predicts high subjective well-being in Western countries. Being religious could also increase your subjective well-being because many people seek happiness from religion.

As a result, people are certain to adhere to specific moral ideals and live a certain lifestyle in order to increase their degree of happiness. Being employed is clearly a significant factor that predicts high subjective well-being. Being healthy is also highly important; both your physical and mental health are significant predictors of subjective well-being.

Then there's enough money to meet basic demands. So, if your income is sufficient to meet your basic living necessities, it is a strong predictor of your subjective well-being; it predicts high subjective well-being. These are some of the most critical elements that could be affecting your life. They also indicate a high level of subjective well-being or happiness.

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All circumstances combined account for a very small percentage of variance in happiness levels (only 8% to 15%) (Diener et al., 1999).

This is a counterintuitive and paradoxical findings as we presume happiness depends largely on our life circumstances.

The reason could be hedonic adaptation and people seems to adapt rapidly to life circumstances and events (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, and Schkade, 2005).

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On general, a large body of research indicates that our life circumstances play a significant effect in our happiness or subjective well-being. However, the majority of research indicates that their contribution is not very high, that they are not very strongly associated, and that their contribution to happiness level is not very high, at least according to a lot of research. As a result, all life circumstances together account for only a small fraction of happiness levels ranging from 8 to 15%, according to some research.

As a result, different researchers in different populations have found that life circumstances do influence happiness levels, but the effect is small. It could range from 8% to 15%, which is a counterintuitive thought given that many of us believe our life circumstances are the most essential factor in determining our level of happiness.

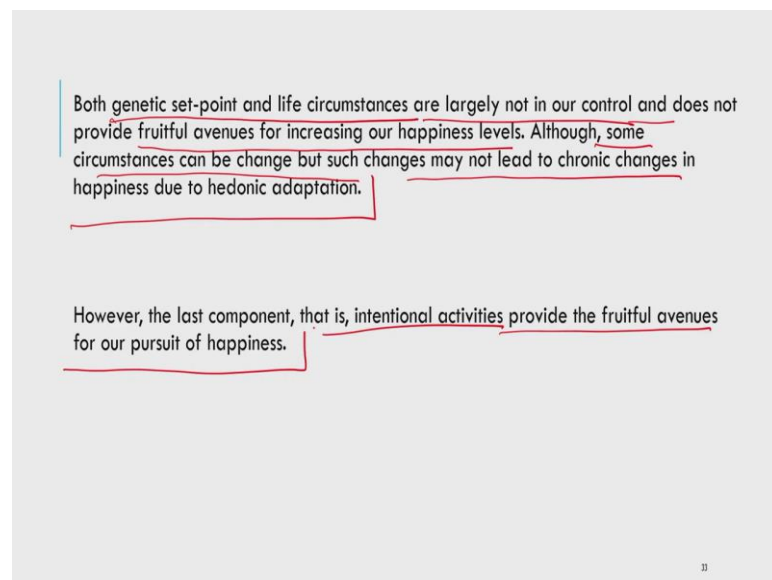
Many individuals are continuously looking for ways to improve their circumstances, which is fine. But, at least according to study, they don't make a big difference in our happiness levels. One of the reasons why life circumstances do not contribute much to our happiness level could be hedonic adaptation to life circumstances, which is one of the reasons why this could be one of the probable causes for finding.

People appear to adapt to life situations quickly, whether they are positive or negative, because these are generally constant facts of life over which you have little control.

Obviously, some life circumstances can be changed with time, but some life circumstances are handed to you while you are unable to change them.

So, if some things become a constant background, we tend to adapt to them, depending on how long you can be worried about it or how happy you are about it. So, after a while, we become accustomed to it and it no longer matters us as much. As a result, we become adapted to them. As a result of hedonic adaptation to life circumstances, it don't contribute too much. Although life circumstances have the ability to make a significant impact to our happiness level, hedonic adaptation may limit this influence.

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So, both genetic disposition and life circumstances are largely not in our control, we can not do much about them. So, in order to increase our happiness level, we can't really do much in these two areas: genetic set point, and life circumstances. Although certain situations cannot be changed, certain life circumstances, such as income, can be altered and one may even relocate his/her house.

So, certain things, without a doubt, we can do, but the problem is that many of these life situations, even if we change, have the potential for hedonic adaptation. As a result, we may need to re-acclimate to newer life conditions. As a result, it may cease to contribute

significantly to our experience of happiness or well-being after a given period of time. So, in terms of these two components, genetic set point and life conditions, we can't do much. But, certainly, certain changes in life conditions can be altered, and while this can have a positive impact, it may not be very strong or long-lasting.

But, certainly, certain changes in life conditions can be altered, and while this can have a positive impact, it may not be very strong or long-lasting. Intentional activities are the final component of the sustainable happiness model. According to them, this intentional activity is one feature that provides fruitful paths for our search of happiness, according to Sonja and her colleagues who proposed the model.

This is an area where we have more control and can do a lot to change our happiness level or pursue happiness. So, let's have a look at what these intentional activities are.

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**Intentional activities**

Intentional activities are effortful actions or practices that include the variety of things people think and do (Lyubomirsky et al. 2011; Lyubomirsky et al. 2005). Intentional means effortful or people choose to engage.

Intentional activities does not happen by itself. It needs conscious efforts. Lyubomirsky et al. (2005) posited that life circumstances happen to people, and intentional activities are ways that people act on their circumstances.

Activities are more controllable than genetic factors, personality and most circumstances and offer the greatest potential to sustainably increase happiness (Lyubomirsky et al. 2011; Sheldon and Lyubomirsky 2007).

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So, intentional activities are activities that we undertake, either at the action level or at the thinking level, and that are intentional in the sense that we do them with our own decision and effort. As a result, it is deliberate, and you must take action; it will not happen on its own. Intentional activities, then, are deliberate behaviors or practices that encompass a wide range of things that individuals think and do.

As a result, many cognitive processes and acts that we conduct in our lives that are consciously effortful activities or practices can all be grouped together as intentional



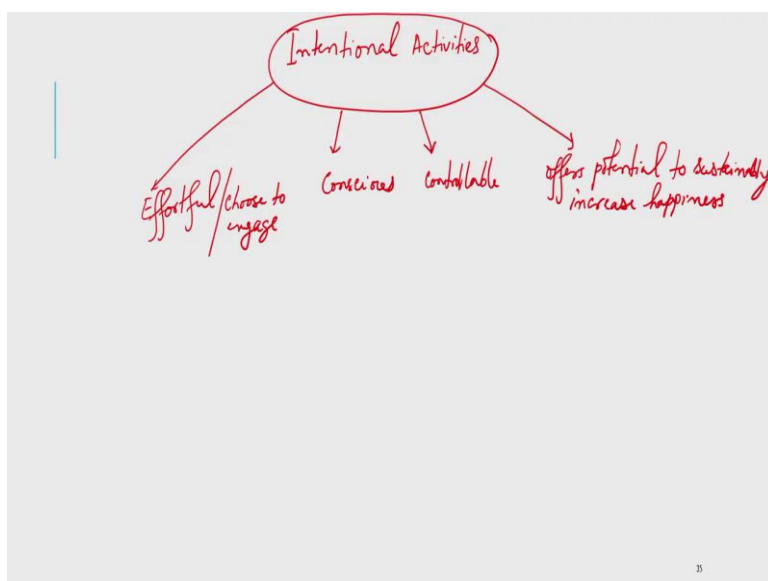
activities. As a result, intentional implies that individuals choose to engage with them. As a result, we choose to participate in them; it is not something that happens to us automatically, as it is with most life conditions.

So, intentional activities don't happen by themselves, and they won't happen unless you do and engage in them. It takes deliberate effort. In their concept, Lyubomirsky and her colleagues proposed that life circumstances happen to people, but intentional activities are how people respond to those circumstances.

So, how do we behave and think about those intentional activities in our lives? As a result, we must make more deliberate and conscious attempts; it is not something that comes naturally. As a result, we must take action. So, by definition, intentional activities are intentional; we perform them of our own free will and control. As a result, these are more under your control than genetic factors, personality traits, and life circumstances.

We have little control over genetics, personality, and life circumstances. But intentional activity is something over which we have a lot of control because we are doing it, and it has the greatest potential for increasing our happiness in the long run. And this is one area where we can truly make a difference in terms of our degree of happiness.

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So, to recap, intentional activities, features of intentional activities are, one thing is that they are effortful, we choose to engage, they are conscious, they are controllable, and they have the ability to boost happiness sustainably. So, these are some of the features of intentional activities that we've discussed. As a result, we engage in a variety of intentional tasks throughout the day.

As a result, there are many various types and sorts of intentional activities that humans might engage in. So, keep in mind that not all intentional actions will lead to an increase in happiness; we should also keep in mind that intentional activities can lead to both misery and happiness, depending on the type of activities you engage in.

In terms of specifics, research suggests that some sorts of intentional activities are excellent for improving our subjective well-being or overall well-being. So, we'll look at them. We're talking about intentional activities here, and we're usually talking about boosting happiness levels. So we're concentrating on those kinds of intentional activities.

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**TYPES OF INTENTIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Lyubomirsky et al. (2005) describe three types of intentional activity-behavioral, cognitive and volitional.

**Behavioral activity** reflects a person's actions such as physical activities, meditation and mindfulness and social activities such as deliberate acts of kindness and gratitude. All these activities have been found to increase happiness or SWB.

**Cognitive activity** includes a person's attitudes such as cultivating gratitude, forgiveness, and cognitive approaches to coping with adversity. They have been found to increase SWB.

**Volitional Activity** includes motivation towards achieving goals such as pursuing goals that are concordant with one's values and interests, maintaining hope and meaning in life etc. They have been found to increase SWB.

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As I previously stated, intentional activities can take many forms. Intentional activities can be classified into three categories. One is a behavioral activity, which refers to the acts or actions that we engage in on a regular basis. So behavioral activities reflect a person's actions, which can include physical activities, meditation, mindfulness, social activities, acts of kindness, and gratitude, among others.

As a result, the types of acts we take may have an impact on our happiness. So, all of these different physical activities that we have here, such as exercises, meditation, mindfulness, social activities, acts of kindness, gratitude, all of this at the behavioral level, research shows that all of these activities can lead to increased happiness or subjective well-being.

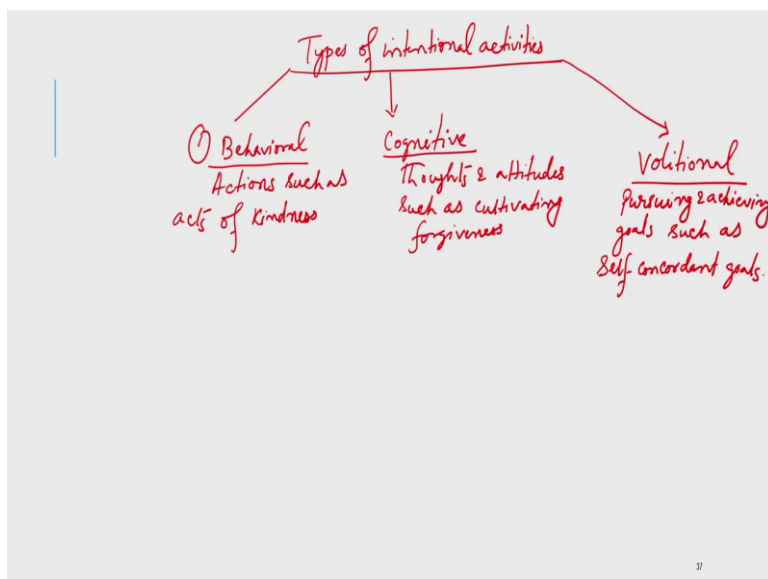
Now, intentional activities can also be cognitive, which means that different kinds of thoughts and attitudes that we have in our lives influence our happiness level. It could include cultivating gratitude and forgiveness at the thought level, where one can cultivate a sense of gratitude and forgiveness. Then there are various mental processes which can contribute to coping with various adversities and life crises, all of which can be categorized as cognitive activities.

So, many activities that we undertake at the thought level, and we have talked in depth how ideas may influence our emotions and how thoughts can be used to cope with adversities and stressful lives in one of the previous lectures. As a result, some of this cognitive activity has been proven to boost subjective happiness. Volitional activity refers to the third level of intentional activity.

So, volitional activity refers to several sorts of motivation for pursuing and accomplishing goals. Goals that are intrinsic to us, that are in line with our intrinsic motivation, intrinsic values, and the pursuit of such goals always seems to boost our sense of subjective well-being or happiness, can also influence our happiness level. So, for example, if you are very interested or intrinsically motivated to pursue creative activities such as painting or writing, this could be a volitional activity that aligns with our intrinsic motivation.

So, if you set certain goals in the direction of creative activities, such as painting or writing a book or something, and you pursue those goals because you are intrinsically interested in those kinds of goals and not just because they are given to you from an outside order or something, then pursuing such goals increases our sense of happiness. As a result, volitional action could encompass activities aimed at achieving certain goals.

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So, in a nutshell, we may say that there are three categories of intentional activities. So, behavioral, which simply means actions, such as acts of kindness, are examples of intentional activities. I'll go through some of these intentional activities in greater detail, such as acts of kindness and gratitude. I'm not going to go through each of these now because we'll have separate lectures on them.

As a result, behavioral may comprise behaviors such as acts of kindness, cognitive intentional activities, may include thoughts and attitudes, such as fostering forgiveness at a thought level

or positive thinking, and so on. Last but not least, there is volitional action. The term "volitional" refers to the act of seeking and accomplishing self-concordant goals. Self-concordant goals are goals that are in line with your intrinsic values and motivation, goals that you genuinely want to achieve rather than goals that you are motivated to pursue for some external reason. Simply put, you like or value them intrinsically. As a result, pursuing such goals has been found to be critical in terms of improving our subjective well-being. As a result, there are many various types and categories of intentional activities.

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**Some Criticism Of Happiness Pie Chart**

Brown and Rohrer (2019) in a critical evaluation of happiness pie model suggested following-

**Between subject variance vs within subject variance**

Happiness pie model mixed up between subject variance with the within subject variance. Variation within a population can not be translated into individual level variation. For example, 10% of the between-subject variance in happiness can be explained by life circumstances is not same as "10% of a person's variance in happiness can be explained by that person's life circumstances" unless established by within subject level of analysis.

**Considering all the three factors as independent**

Conceptualization of all the three factors of happiness pie as independent additive factors is not accurate. In real life all the three factors will interact and covary to influence happiness. For example, genetic factors may interact with circumstantial and volitional activities to influence our happiness.

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There are certain drawbacks to the happiness pie chart concept we've explored. So, I'll just quickly go through some of the objections that have been leveled at this pie chart model that we've shown: 50% genetic set point, 10% life circumstances, 40% intentional activities, according to some researchers, talking in terms of numerical percentages may not be appropriate. So, there are a few criticisms that I'll just touch on briefly.

In 2019, Brown and Rohrer conducted a comprehensive assessment of the problem, highlighting the following key points. One is that two factors were mixed up together in that model in a between subject variance vs within subject variance. So, in a nutshell, the happy pie model is a mix of between-subject variance and within-subject variance. Basically, it indicates that the majority of these percentages, such as 50%, are given by genetics, and that

these percentages are often shown at the population level or between subjects. So, it's largely a between-subjects issue, and when it was shown in the model, it was shown as if, if you take one individual, 50% will be decided by genetics and 10% by life circumstances, so it was more of a within-subjects thing. As a result, combining the two may not be appropriate. As a result, this was one of the criticisms leveled at it. As a result, the majority of this percentage is derived from population variance, which cannot be translated to the individual level. For example, whereas 10% of the variance in happiness amongst subjects may be explained by life circumstances at the population level, 10% of a person's variance in happiness can be accounted by one person's life circumstances.

So, while this proportion may be accurate at the population level, it may not be accurate at the individual level, where life circumstances may not exactly contribute to 10%. As a result, this was mixed into the model. As a result, this was one of the points of contention. Second, the model treated each of the three variables as an independent variable. As a result, they think of all three components in the happy pie chart as independent and additive. As a result, they are regarded as independent elements that contribute to happiness, and when put together, they yield a 100% percentage. That may not be the case, because they stated that in real life, all three factors may interact and covary in order to influence happiness. In actual life, all three of these factors may or may not act on us separately, but they do interact and impact each other.

So, asserting that this is causing this much %, or that this is producing this much percentage, may not be accurate in our real-life circumstance. To influence our happiness level, genetic elements, for example, may combine with circumstantial and volitional activities. So, rather of influencing happiness independently, all three factors may interact with one another to determine happiness.

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### Estimates from different sources

Happiness pie model took the estimates of the variance explained by genetic factors and life circumstances from different sources, and different populations. Therefore, combining estimates from different sources and adding them to 100% may be erroneous.

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The third criticism is that the estimations are based on several sources. As a result, the happiness pie model combined estimates of multiple genetic components and life circumstances from various sources. It is not from a single sample or a single individual, but from a variety of populations. As a result, merging them and labeling them as 100 percent men may be inaccurate or inappropriate. So, these are some of the criticisms, which are directed at demonstrating specific percentages in terms of contributory percentages to happiness levels, rather than the model itself.

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### **What Can We Learn From the Sustainable Happiness Model?**

Sheldon and Lyubomirsky (2019) suggested that they accept these criticisms and cautioned in their original article that the percentages are only approximate and indicative. They are not exact. However, the basic idea of the model (determinants of happiness) is correct and is supported by ample evidences.

The basic idea is that-It is possible for people to influence their own happiness by their intentional activities.

As it is clear that our happiness is not completely determined by our genetics and/or life circumstances and it fluctuates from time to time. Our volitional activities are one such logical source of influence in the fluctuations of our happiness levels.

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So, the original researcher, Sonja Lyubomirsky, and Sheldon and others have previously stated in their model that they are not claiming that these percentages are exact percentages that should be taken literally, but rather that they are more indicative percentages.

As a result, they accept this critique and have stated in their model that these are indicative and approximate rather than exact. As a result, they've already stated that they may not be exact. So, the core idea of a sustainable happiness model can still be highly relevant and vital in terms of providing insight into understanding and raising our level of happiness.

So, as many research reveals, the three main components or aspects that contribute to our happiness level are highly important and are our major factors in determining our happiness level. So, the factors are quite essential, there is no mistake about that, and there is plenty of data to back it up. So, the main notion is that their model is correct, and that we can improve our happiness levels by engaging in intentional activity is something that a lot of studies has previously demonstrated.

So, the basic premise that people can impact their own happiness by intentional activity is valid, and it has been demonstrated in several research. As it is evident that our happiness is not entirely controlled by our genetics and life circumstances, this is also true, and will be true for every individual and even the entire community.

So, at the very least, our intentional activities can explain these oscillations in our happiness levels. So, if your happiness level fluctuates from time to time, it's possible that there are a number of intentional factors at play. As a result, intentional factors can influence our level of happiness. So, while the percentage may not be exact, it is a significant factor that can reveal a key location or intervention area.

So, at the very least, the percentage aspect is debatable, but the sustainable happiness model does at least point to crucial factors influencing our happiness. And it is intentional activities that contribute to those fluctuations, and we can intervene by engaging in intentional activities, which is one of the most essential components of intervention for boosting our happiness or well-being. At least, that's what a lot of studies suggests.

So, we'll dig deeper into the intentional activity part because it has a lot of practical implications in our lives. We'll also discuss the importance of intentional activities in the upcoming lecture. Furthermore, in forthcoming lectures, we will discuss specific, intentional activities that have been demonstrated to be helpful in fostering subjective well-being and



happiness in study. So, for example, we'll talk explicitly about practicing gratitude, acts of kindness, developing our signature strengths, and so on. We'll look at specific areas where we may improve our happiness level. With that, I'll conclude today's lecture. Thank you very much.