

# THE PSYCHOLOGY OF WELLNESS:

**WHAT THE SCIENCE OF WELL-BEING OFFERS US IN THE COVID ERA**



PRESENTED BY AMY J. AHLFELD, PSY.D.  
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# Washington Post

Friday, September 24, 2021



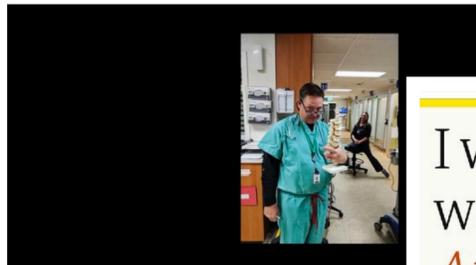
Doctor who has lost over 100 patients to covid says some deny virus from their deathb...  
washingtonpost.com

Vox

## The doctors are not all right

Doctors need mental health support, but the medical profession often punishes them for getting it.

By Julia Belluz | @juliaoftoronto | Jun 23, 2021, 5:00am EDT



Emergency room doctor Scott Jolley was repeatedly denied support from his employer in managing pandemic stress. | Courtesy of the Jolley family

Los Angeles Times

OPINION

### Op-Ed: Doctors like me have a lot of anger at this new COVID-19 surge



The vaccine remains our best weapon in the fight against COVID-19. (Irfan Khan / Los Angeles Times)

BY MARK MOROCCO

AUG. 12, 2021 3:20 AM PT

There was the muscled firef...

The Harvard Gazette

HEALTH & MEDICINE

### Soothing advice for mad America



Rose Lincoln/Harvard Staff Photographer

McLean's Rosmar perspective on the raging effects

healthleaders

## NEW SURVEY REPORT DETAILS CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC'S NEGATIVE IMPACT ON PHYSICIANS

ANALYSIS | BY CHRISTOPHER CHENEY

AUGUST 06, 2021

## I work in an NHS Covid ward - and I feel so angry

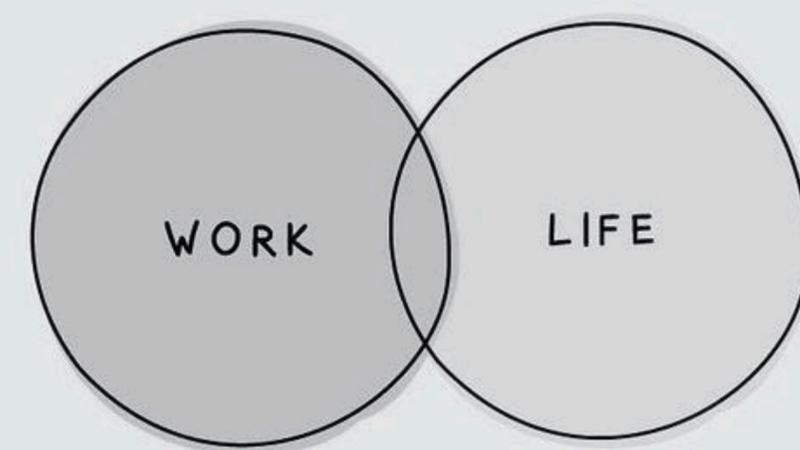
*Anonymous*

It is hard not to feel undermined by rising cases and the decision to relax restrictions, says this consultant

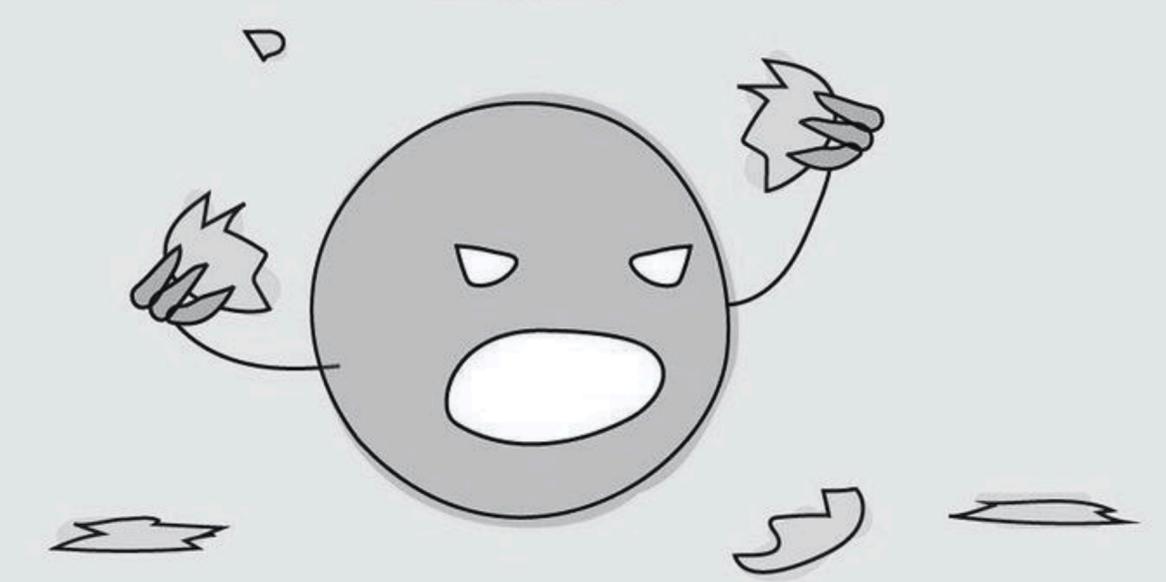
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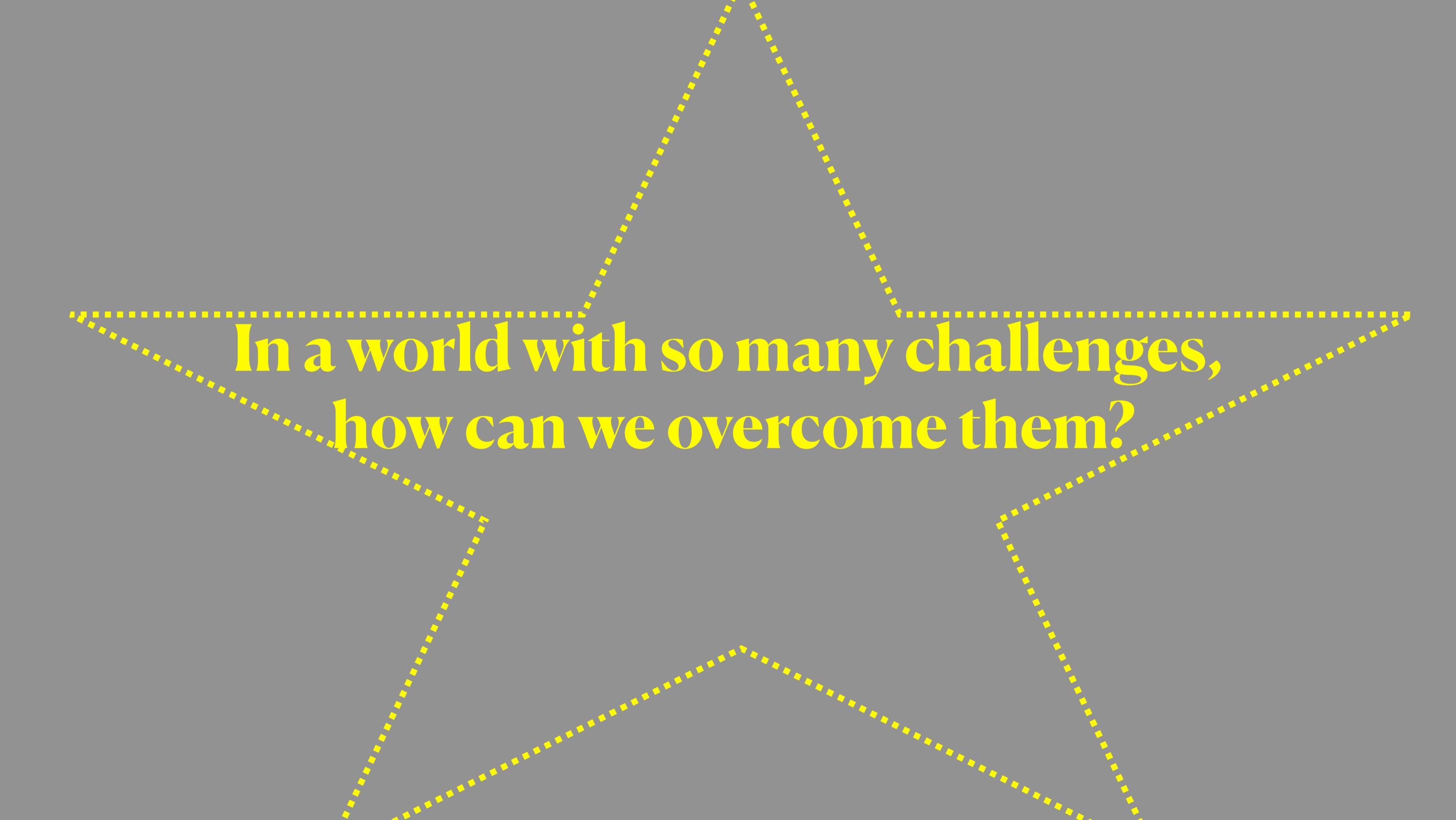


PRE-PANDEMIC



NOW





**In a world with so many challenges,  
how can we overcome them?**



**“There is a crack in everything,  
that’s how the light gets in”**

**Leonard Cohen, legendary Canadian poet and musician, lyrics from song “Anthem”**

# Positive Psychology Primer

- Optimists vs. Pessimists
- Influence of DNA & Circumstances
- Link to Happiness
- What Positive Psychology is NOT
- Implementation=Habit with key being to Take Action



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# Some Happiness Lessons Apply to All

- There are resources and tools related to the science of well being & happiness that apply broadly to individuals in a wide variety of settings.
- Generally, challenges to one's feeling of happiness and life satisfaction are being seen in all aspects of society as we progress through the COVID-19 crisis.
- As the crisis continues, we are seeing many health professionals and others make adjustments & adopt new strategies to reflect changing conditions and experiences.
- Much of this strategies would be of assistance to medical professionals as well.

## YALE PROFESSOR LAURIE SANTOS, PH.D. ON HOW TO BE HAPPY DURING A PANDEMIC



**THE WALL STREET JOURNAL**  
**THE FUTURE OF EVERYTHING**  
FESTIVAL VIRTUAL SERIES

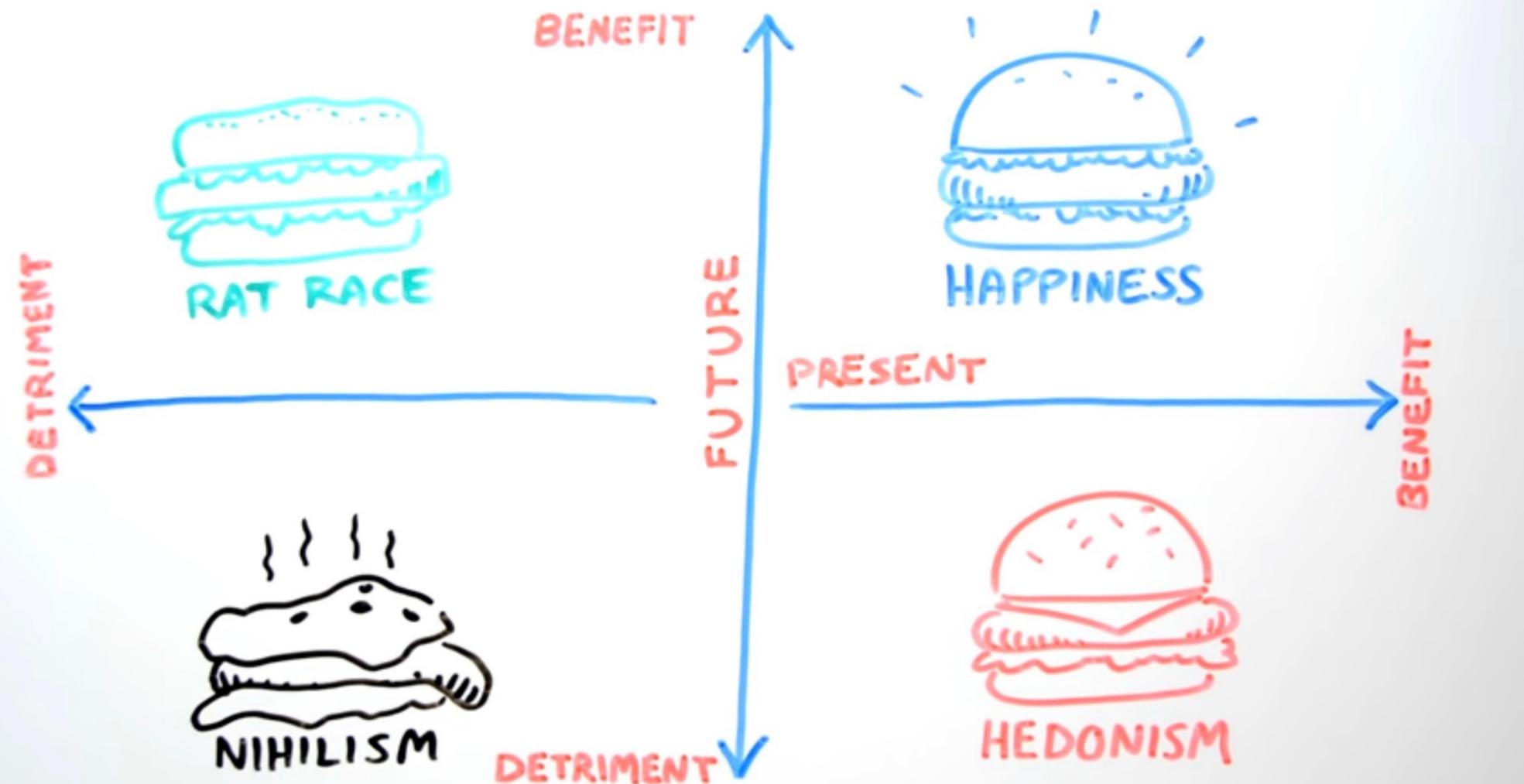
**WSJ**

**ELLIE AUSTIN**  
EDITOR, LIVE JOURNALISM, THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

**DR. LAURIE SANTOS**  
PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOLOGY, YALE UNIVERSITY

# Hamburger Model of Happiness

TAL BEN-SHAHAR, PH.D., AUTHOR OF "HAPPIER"(2007)



# But There Are Factors that are Unique to Doctors



- Doctors have been on the frontline of the pandemic, working long hours, often with more demands and less resources, enduring the emotional toll of losing hundreds to thousands of patients to the virus.
- Doctors' roles, their work settings, their routines, their pressures— all are experiencing a degree of change beyond what is seen in many other sectors in society.
- There has been a significant increase in physician burnout during the pandemic.
- The pandemic has had a negative impact on doctors' mental health and despite this, only few seek medical and/or mental health treatment.

# I Have Been Privileged to Have a Unique Vantage Point



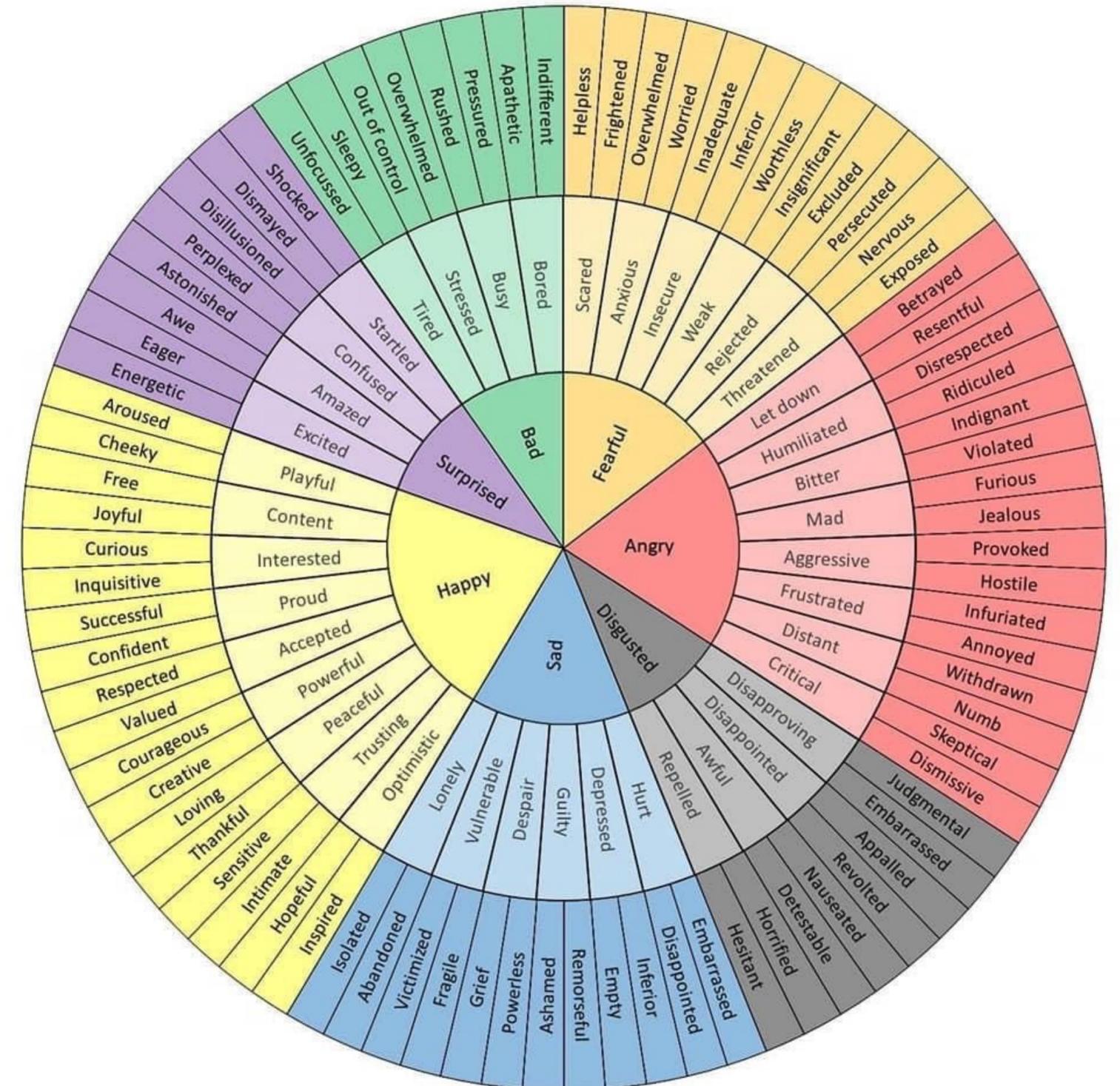
- Research and background
- Ongoing review of the literature
- Opportunity to work with medical professionals in group settings, a trend that has accelerated during COVID
- Referrals for Joy of Medicine Resiliency Consultations with physician clients are also spiking
- Surfacing trends that allow me to talk about happiness challenges for doctors.

# How Can We Become Happier?



# Happier Doctors Have Permission to Be Human

- They experience the entire range of emotions
- They realize happiness is not a constant high
- They actively accept negative or painful emotions
- They do not suppress their emotions
- They distinguish between feelings and behavior



# Happier Doctors Simplify Their Lives

- Do Less Not More
- Saying No

*“I want to do that, but I’m not available until December. Will you ask me again then?”*

*“Thank you for asking, but that isn’t going to work out for me.”*

*“Thank you so much for your enthusiasm and support! I’m sorry I’m not able to help you at this time.”*

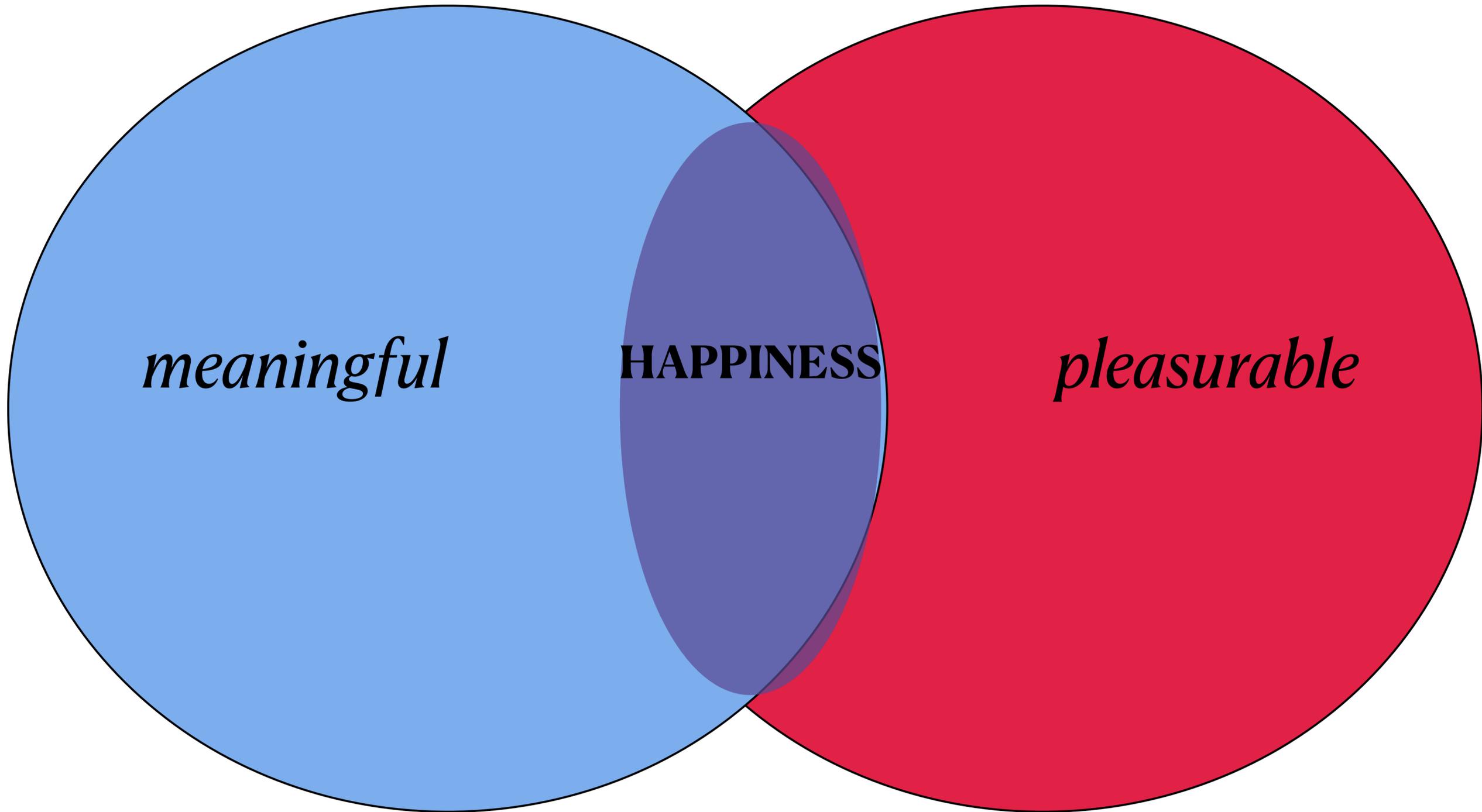
*“I really appreciate you asking me, but my time is already committed.”*

*“Thank you for asking, but I’m not doing any speaking while I’m picking up extra shifts.”*

- Time Affluence



# Happier Doctors Find Both Meaning & Pleasure in Their Lives (ideally in the same activity)



# Happier Doctors Invest in Their Relationships

- #1 Generator of Happiness
- Intimate Partners, Soulmates, Friends, Family Members, Coworkers
- Gottman Research
- Being Known vs. Being Validated



# Happier Doctors Monitor and Update Their Minds & Bodies

- Sleep
  - Meditation
  - Exercise
  - Touch
- Getting Caught in Thinking Traps
    - Mindreading*
    - Me*
    - Them*
    - Catastrophizing*
    - Helplessness*
  - Practicing Real-Time Resilience
    - Evidence..... Reframe.....Plan.....*



# Happier Doctors Have Strong PPE Habits & Strategies



Build & Broaden Positive Emotion

Gratitude aka HTGS

Leveraging Character Strengths

Building Relationships

# Questions & Responses



THANK  
YOU