The Great Plan of Happiness: The Intersections of the Restored Gospel of Christ and Positive Psychology

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Abstract
Happiness has been the Holy Grail sought by most of humanity for millennia. What it is and how to find it has been discussed and debated since the earliest records of humankind, and has been the object of countless studies by scholars the world over, including those in the field of positive psychology. Several empirically-based theories of happiness and well-being have emerged, and there is much commonality between them. It is proposed here that religion and spirituality are primary sources of happiness and well-being, and that there is much overlap between these sources and the research and practices emerging within the field of positive psychology. One religion in particular, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church), shows many broad intersections with positive psychology research and the interventions which contribute to well-being. Examining these intersections may deepen the appreciation LDS adherents feel toward their membership and more fully inform their level of participation. In addition, there are many interventions found within positive psychology which, if learned and applied, may increase the happiness and well-being of members of the LDS Church, and the public at large.

Keywords
atheism, belief, character strengths, church, Christianity, cognitive bias, community, eudaimonia, explanatory style, faith, Gospel of Christ, happiness, happy, health, hedonia, Latter Day Saints, LDS, meaning, meditation, Mormonism, Mormons, positive psychology, relationships, religion, religiosity, resilience, service, spirituality, spiritual practices, thinking traps, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, well-being

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Happiness is often an elusive experience - people will go to great lengths for a fleeting moment of happiness. Even the U.S. Declaration of Independence, written in 1776, asserts the right to “Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness”. Positive Affect. The happiness of 22 winners of large lottery prizes was compared to that of both controls and 29 people who had been paralysed as a result of an accident. The level of happiness experienced by winning the lottery had numbed people to the smaller joys of everyday life - a resistance the researchers described as “habitation”, as only more significant events could bring the winners joy (Brickman, Coates, Janoff-Bulman, 1978).