

# A Unified Theory of Happiness: An East-Meets-West Approach to Fully Loving Your Life

Andrea F. Polard

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## a unified theory of happiness

AN EAST-MEETS-WEST APPROACH  
to FULLY LOVING YOUR LIFE

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**Andrea F. Polard : A Unified Theory of Happiness: An East-Meets-West Approach to Fully Loving Your Life** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Unified Theory of Happiness: An East-Meets-West Approach to Fully Loving Your Life:

27 of 28 people found the following review helpful. A NEW APPROACH TO HAPPINESS IS BORN--A MUST READBy M. BeltingerWhen I received my preordered book of "A Unified Theory of Happiness", I could not put it

down. I learned so much while enjoying a very pleasurable style of writing. The book is obviously very well researched, based on science and grounded in real experience, both of which makes me feel taken seriously. No gimmicks. Complex issues, facts and theories are explained in a way that aren't over anybody's head and makes one even more curious about the subject. This book is a wonderful contribution to the deep longing I have in my life, namely how to find a deep connection with life without disregarding the necessity to function in this life. Particularly I like that this book allows me to be who I am as a spiritual person, abstaining from telling me to go in a particular religious direction. I don't feel I have to believe in the Buddha, Hindi gods, energies, or a Judea-Christian God. The spiritual value lies in opening up to existence, to life and all living beings. The principles of love, connection, compassion, receptive awareness trump everything in our happiness. I really believe that and feel strengthened in that belief now. Lastly I want to share that I really appreciated that the author has included so many exercises after each chapter, making the wisdom of the West and East more accessible. It is fun to fill out the happiness quiz which pointed me to areas in my life I would have not looked at. Excellent book -- will read it many times in my life!

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. I have always considered myself a fairly lighthearted individual; in my 20s I used to buy bottles of soap bubbles by the case. By James Kenney While the title makes this book sound like a theoretical exercise in explaining that elusive emotion "happiness," it is actually a very practical way to identify your strengths and weakness in 8 key areas of personal development and functionality: Ambition, Competence, Connection, Confidence (from the Basic Mode of behavior) and Receptivity, Tranquility, Reliance and Lightheartedness (from the Supreme Mode of behavior.) Dr. Polard helps you identify your key aptitudes early on, by 10 page set of questions for you to use in self-rating your skills. This was an extremely effective way to give focus to reading, and benefiting from, the rest of the book. I was surprised at the areas this questionnaire flagged as my domains of weakness: Ambition and Lightheartedness. I have always considered myself a fairly lighthearted individual; in my 20s I used to buy bottles of soap bubbles by the case. Apparently I have become more serious as I have aged, until now my score in this vital area was 29 out of 40, or barely 72%. This is largely due to my response to 3 key statements: "I'd rather not exercise," "I like to feel 'in the know'," and "I tend to worry too much." Self-knowledge is good; even better is a road-map to greater self-improvement and self-awareness, and this is what Dr. Polard offers. Once you have identified your primary areas in which improvement would be appropriate, "Happiness" offers a chapter for each with discussion, suggestions and exercises to help you learn how to be more lighthearted, or more tranquil. Unlike many self-help books, these chapters are well thought out, the suggestions are worth pursuing and the exercises are germane. I will put into effect many of the suggestions Polard offers, and see whether they help me become less serious. I also read the chapter devoted to my greatest strength, Tranquility. I was surprised by how right-on it was. I was also impressed that the chapter focused on something I have pursued for most of my adult life: meditation and Buddhism. Reading this chapter, I felt right at home. That alone is an indication on how this book differs from its many rivals. Andrea Polard combines ideas and world-views from both Western and Eastern thought and spiritual practice. Presumably that is where the "Unified" comes from in the title of this book. It is also an approach that gives the book more heft, depth and credibility.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Integration of Sense and Soul By Customer Given the unending diversity of opinions on the descriptive, prescriptive, normative and substantive aspects of happiness, one can acknowledge that the subject of happiness is immensely elusive, with a complex past and perhaps an uncertain future, not to mention its relationship with things ironic and paradoxical at times. In the context of this confusion, Dr. Andrea Polard's A Unified Theory of Happiness: An East-Meets-West Approach to Fully Loving Your Life, is a much needed perspective which not only honors the ancient sacred wisdom, but also respects the hard-won insights of science and humanities, thus addressing mind, body, soul, spirit and culture. Moreover, her sensitivity towards all humanity and openness towards all available wisdom is a beautiful testimony of her cosmopolitan and compassionate soul. Indeed, in an increasingly inter-connected and inter-dependent world of ours, any understanding of personal happiness, has to include all sentient beings. And before one consciously pursues happiness, it should be based upon what is true, good and just, in a universal sense, and not just on what one has been conditioned to believe by the chance of birth. And her book fits the bill gloriously. Based on twelve years of interdisciplinary, cross-cultural and transpersonal research, she eloquently integrates scattered partial insights on happiness along with offering unique practical exercises to implement those insights. Her theory also reminded me of Oscar Wilde's words: Nothing can cure the soul but the senses, just as nothing can cure the senses but the soul. In the same way, nothing can cure the soul but the East, just as nothing can cure the senses but the West. By making us aware of the importance of both, the senses--Basic Mode of Consciousness--and the soul --Supreme Mode of Consciousness (what she calls the two wings of happiness), Dr. Polard has given us a hands-on manual for artfully living Wilde's wisdom. After reading her book, I am firmly persuaded that without simultaneously honoring the potentials of reason, affect and action, along with the depths of reflection, contemplation, and transcendence, something worthwhile will be absolutely missing in life. Head, heart, hand, feet, and soul---all have to be in sync for a disciplined pursuit of happiness. So thank you Dr. Polard for an inspiring gift which will be cherished by all truth and happiness seeking souls, from East and West.

The Western world teaches us that happiness comes from achievement from setting goals and actively pursuing them.

Eastern wisdom teaches us that surrender is the key, that we must let go in order to experience the great flow of being that is only available in the present moment. How do we take the best wisdom from both of these approaches, and honor what Dr. Andrea Polard calls the two wings of happiness that allow us to truly soar? Discover Dr. Polard's groundbreaking synthesis of Western thinking and Eastern philosophy with *A Unified Theory of Happiness*, a warm and personalized guide for the transformation of consciousness that allows personal well-being and fulfillment to flourish. While our lives are full of ups and downs, Dr. Polard teaches us that we don't have to let these ups and downs control our experience of life. *A Unified Theory of Happiness* teaches you the skills to choose and accept happiness by illuminating: How to navigate the active Basic Mode and the non-active Supreme Mode of consciousness to respond to life's complexities with flexibility; Tools to build ambition, competence, confidence, and connection; essential aspects of reconciling with life's fragility and building an engaging, authentic self; Paths to receptivity, tranquility, reliance, and lightheartedness; keys to accessing your natural connection with the whole of being, and realizing your non-dual self; The Theory of Elastic Consciousness; a balanced place in perfect accord with an authentically lived life.

In this comprehensive and well-written guide to a life of happiness, Polard, a clinical psychologist, proposes a blending of Western and Eastern philosophies by focusing on balancing "the two modes of consciousness:" Basic Mode, wherein one "actively relate[s] to the so-called objective world;" and Supreme Mode, wherein one "focus[es] on Being." After explaining the two modes, Polard provides a useful questionnaire to help readers determine which chapters would be most relevant to their unique circumstances. The rest of the book is divided into distinct discussions of the two modes, with chapters dedicated to aspects of each. Under the auspices of the Basic Mode, Polard discusses ambition, competence, connection, and confidence, and provides practical exercises, such as drafting a "personal competency chart" and even watching movies like *Billy Elliot* or *Dead Poets Society*. For the Supreme Mode, Polard discourses on receptivity, tranquility, reliance, and lightheartedness; for the latter she suggests being a little silly, even if it feels uncomfortable--sing in a karaoke contest, or play on the floor with the dogs. Though she introduces the modes separately, she maintains that a synthesis of the two is ideal, and negative experiences will always be a part of the equation. By balancing new-age spirituality with relevant research and useful tips, Polard's approach will appeal to a wide range of readers. Publishers Weekly (May 2012) Andrea Polard is a German-born author and clinical psychologist with an extensive background in psychodynamic therapies, meditation, and Erickson mind-body work. Now practicing what she calls "Zen Psychology" in the Los Angeles area, she continues her mission to reduce suffering and promote happiness for individuals wherever they may be. *A Unified Theory of Happiness* charts Polard's 20-year study of the vibrancy and meaning that comes to those who combine the active Western "Basic Mode" of consciousness with the non-active Eastern "Supreme Mode" of consciousness. Or as the author puts it in more simplistic terms: "The active way makes us get our hands dirty, plant the seeds, harvest the fruit, and share it with friends and family. The nonactive way is seeing the interplay of hands and dirt, plants and seeds, sun and fruit, friends and family. Neither way is enough by itself." Happiness stems from blending of the active and non-active modes of consciousness. Polard discusses the four tools of the Basic Mode: ambition, competence, connection, and confidence. There are helpful exercises following each of these tools which contain something to think about, exploring your feelings, and things you can do (movies, books, and practices). This section of the book leads naturally to a consideration of the qualities which enhance and sustain "The Supreme Mode" of consciousness: receptivity, tranquility, reliance, and lightheartedness. All of these combine to a realization of "no self" and our natural immersion in the flow of life. Psychologist Polard has fashioned a compelling map of the good things which can grow out of a synthesis of Western science and Eastern wisdom. Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat, *Spirituality Practice*, July 2012