Forget Money; Nothing Can Buy Happiness

Researchers have found a correlation between relatively greater electrical activity in the left prefrontal region of the brain (the fight-or-flight area at right) and strong agreement with statements to the following effect:

- "When good things happen to me, I strongly agree that it is because of my own actions"
- "I will often do things for no other reason than that they might be fun"
- "When I get something I want, I feel excited, energized, and happy"
- "I'm doing well at something, I love to keep it up".

These findings were reported in a study at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and the data closely match those of Dr. Richard Depue, a psychologist at Cornell University.

Some psychologists dismiss the choice of happiness as an index of the good life. "Satisfaction is a by-product of a life that involves more than the mere pursuit of happiness," said Dr. Carol Ryff, a developmental psychologist at the University of Wisconsin. "People have different criteria for what they consider a good life. It's a matter of perspective."

Dr. Ryff's view is shared by many. For example, Dr. Carol Ryff, a psychologist at the University of Wisconsin, has found that people who are satisfied with their lives are not necessarily happy. They may be content with their circumstances, but they are not necessarily happy.

Other psychologists argue that happiness is a complex emotion that cannot be reduced to a single concept. Dr. Richard Depue, a psychologist at Cornell University, argues that happiness is a multifaceted concept that includes both positive and negative aspects.

The brain may be wired to a preset level of well-being, argue some psychologists, who say new data on twins gives the argument support in data for that idea.

"About half of your sense of well-being is determined by your set point, which is from the genetic heritage, and the other half from the rewards and pleasures of the last 20 years or so," said Dr. Carol Ryff. "People who are relatively happy will have the highest level of well-being 10 years from now, despite the day-to-day fluctuations," said Dr. Robert R. Jac- Crass, a researcher at the Harvard University of Wisconsin, who analyzed the data with a colleague, Dr. Paul T. Cieslak.

Some of the set-point idea agree that people can have deep mood changes, like depression or anxiety. They argue that these changes are normal and should be expected, not necessarily treated as pathological.

"For most of the widowed, or those who lose a job or get divorced," Dr. Carol Ryff said, "it's a matter of time and things begin to pass. If you're doing something else, it's another matter. It's a lasting effect on mood, it's because in some sense the bad event continues to happen. There are remnants of a bad event every day."

Similarly, some researchers argue that happiness is not the same thing as well-being. Dr. Carol Ryff said, "There's a difference between having a good day and being in a happy mood."

Some psychologists argue that happiness is not a measurable concept. Dr. Richard Depue, a psychologist at Cornell University, argues that happiness is a complex emotion that cannot be reduced to a single concept. He argues that happiness is a multifaceted concept that includes both positive and negative aspects.

In conclusion, the study of happiness is complex and requires a multidisciplinary approach. It is not a simple matter of defining what makes a person happy or unhappy. It requires a holistic understanding of the human experience, including biological, psychological, and social factors.