

Well-Being: Lamentable Treadmill

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ABSTRACT

There were many theories put forward on well-being by many researchers. Still these theories are having limited scope in explaining both positive and negative functioning to relate wellbeing. Even though both the directions are conceptually unique they are interrelated and cannot be separated. So, it is waste of studying only in one direction. The theory Lamentable thread mill says that there is a negative state which is neutral state that misleads us to react in a negative way. The person tries to vanquish this state in order to maintain wellbeing through the skills of living.

Keywords: *Well-Being, Positive Functioning, Negative Functioning and Lamentable Treadmill.*

Since the inception of the research on well-being, researchers focused their attention mostly on unhappiness and suffering than on positive functioning, its causes, and consequences (Ryff, 1989). The earlier conception to maintain psychological well-being was ameliorating psychopathology (Ryan & Deci, 2001) Researchers started flourishing their research on promoting well-being since past 3decades, due to the recognition of the importance that was residing in this broad domain (Keyes, Shmotkin, & Ryff, 2002; Deci, 1975; Diener 1984; Cowen 1991). The Wellbeing was defined by Jahoda(1985) as the absence of illness that means having good physical health and also having desirable mental health. Mental health requires prescriptive nutriments supply in the surroundings to magnify one's psychological health. Prescriptive nutriments are the factors external to the individuals that help and support to escalate one's wellbeing.

Quality of conscious is believed to be significant and also given a core value by many psychological, philosophical and spiritual traditions to enhance and maintain the well-being of an individual (Wilber, 2004). Mindfulness, which represents a state of being attentive and aware of what is being done in present is said to be an attribute of consciousness (Brown & Ryan, 2003). In late 1990's early 2000's researchers like Kabat-Zinn focus their research on escalating wellbeing through enhancing mindfulness by giving training.

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Kahneman, Diener & Schwarz (1999) & Waterman's (1993), concepts of wellbeing were put together as a single theory- gained popularity as a traditional theory of well-being (Ryan and Deci, 2001). This theory was organized into 2 broad categories, in which one is 'hedonic wellbeing', related to happiness (Kahneman, Diener & Schwarz, 1999) and the other is 'eudaimonic wellbeing', related to human potential (Waterman, 1993). The term 'eudaimonism' is having significant value, it is something more than happiness and that instead lies in the actualization of one's potentials. For example, completion of each task, immediate attainment of each goal and gaining new social relationships etc., leads to happiness of an individual and which is said to be 'eudaimonic wellbeing'.

Waterman (1993) explained wellbeing as an individuals' realization of one's potential to the maximum extent. According to Aristotle, Eudaimonism is nothing but living with their own daimon or true self. This eudaimonism contributes to happiness, which is otherwise called hedonism. As per his belief, a real happiness is achieved when an individual lead a virtuous life unimpeachably, dealing situations with worthiness (Boniwell, 2008).

Steger et al. (2008) studied whether the eudaimonic pursuits and hedonic pursuits contributing to wellness. For this, he used behaviors checklists using the characteristics of these pursuits that are pre-classified by the earlier authors. Eudaimonic pursuits like expressing gratitude, volunteering time and listening carefully to another's point of view. He found hedonic pursuits (like eating to excess, relaxing with their hobbies, having sex for pleasure) represented as lacking self-regulation. He also found that eudaimonic pursuits brought long-lasting effects on well-being prolonged to the next day, indicated by leading a meaningful life, positive affect, and life satisfaction. Motives addressing the underlying orientations of the people are assessed to be varied for different activities (Huta & Ryan, 2010). Some activities were said to be high in hedonic and eudaimonic motivations such as playing sports, doing something artistic, dancing, singing, playing a musical instrument etc (Huta, 2007). These motives are elicited inherently (Kashdan et.al 2008). According to these authors, hedonic and eudaimonic motivations and pursuits promote wellbeing for an individual.

Keyes et.al. in 2002, improvised the Kahneman's categories of wellbeing by adding a cognitive assessment of life satisfaction and also included some other aspects of personal growth and purpose in life. He asserted these factors contribute to happiness along with the concepts of traditional wellbeing. Buhler (1935) proposed the basic life tendency of a person is to work towards the fulfillment of their own life.

Brickman and Campbell (1971) developed 'Hedonic treadmill' theory of well-being, which proposes that human being is having a neutral state i.e., hedonic state and they naturally come to this state after they encounter with the brief reactions for good and bad events. Human beings have the tendency to continuously pursue happiness, for example, the accomplishment of goals one after another, next problem solved and when the new social relationships obtained. It is a habitual and automated process that requires immediate attention.

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In contrary to this treadmill theory, Diener, Lucas, and Scollon (2006) proposed that an individual does not set with any automated neutral factor i.e., hedonic factor. People partly depend on their temperaments and they do not have a single set point. The individual will have multiple set points of happiness and differential components of wellbeing. Components of well-being such as life satisfaction, pleasant emotions, and unpleasant emotions change under conditions. Each individual reacts to a different set point in a different way during their adaptation towards an external event.

Positive emotions escalate wellbeing

Taylor and Brown (1994) proposed that the accurate perception of the world is vital to maintaining the mental health of an individual. They also asserted that people's bias on positive illusions will promote their psychological well-being.

Fredrickson (1998) developed 'broaden and build theory' which states that positive emotions like joy, happy broadens the individual thought and action repertoires and negative emotions narrow the individuals' thought and action repertoires. Positive emotions create resources to discover and explore the novel ideas and actions to build their intellectual, physical and socio-emotional development. Positive emotions broaden the scope of attention and cognition and also increase spiral upward, that contribute to wellbeing. Taylor and Brown proposed that the accurate perception of the world is considered to be vital to maintaining the mental health of an individual.

Diener & Lucas (1999) propounded Subjective Well Being (SWB) constitutes three dimensions: the existence of positive mood, the absence of negative mood and life satisfaction. Most of the researchers used these dimensions of SWB in order to evaluate the hedonic state of well-being. Ryan and Deci (2001) asserted that this concept is an operational definition of well-being that is used to evaluate hedonic view. They supported eudaimonic view claiming that it fosters SWB. Regardless of such debates among the researchers, SWB has renowned for measuring outcome variables to evaluate one's hedonic state during the past two and a half decades. SWB has a limited scope as far as positive functioning is concerned (Ryff & Singer, 1998).

METHODOLOGY

The author was not satisfied with 'Hedonic treadmill' Hedonic theory of wellbeing developed by Brickman and Campbell (1971). The stable state of happiness that arises after the brief reactions to good or bad events lasts only for a very brief period of time after this the person might shift this state as per their own cognitive intentions. This state may not lead the person towards wellbeing in a later situation. So, in order to maintain well-being, we cannot study only in one direction. Studying positive affect is not opposite to the negative affect on well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Cacioppo & Berntson, 1999). Even though, these are independent and unique but are interrelated with each other and cannot be separated. So, it is waste of studying only in one direction. Theory or the concept of studying well-being should be based on both the directions to improve one's well-being.

Sample and Procedure

The theory was developed through insight and introspection along with the observation of surrounding environment along with the family members and neighbors. This theory was the inspiration of Hull's postulates. After developing this theory, the author interviewed 80 people from the general community, consisting of 40 males and 40 females who are married and living with their family members. The interview was conducted at their own home.

RESULTS

The summary of the interviews was: The whole sample agreed that they all are having this natural state of lamenting treadmill when they were not engaged in any situation for some period of time regarding the things that they 'feel guilty' about their way of dealing with things. At this state they found a minimal change in their well-being, most of them suppress their thoughts to adapt to the present situations. During the time of the interview, some of them hesitated to solicit information in detail. But when all the subjects were explained with this theory all of them agreed that same is happening to them and generalized this for all humans. They all agreed that the different examples given for the lamenting state occur in general even to them but some feel they do not allow this state to intensify by using constructive cognitive restructuring and communicating about the issue to others. Some exaggerate their thinking to the extent as it suffers them. They said that this has not intentionally done by them; still, they know that these are irrelevant, they were entangled in the evocation of continuous thoughts which embraces suffering. They did not even try to reduce these thoughts by involving in any activity instead they claim that they are unable to indulge in any activity due to these thoughts.

Lamentable treadmill

According to Brickman and Campbell's (1971) 'Hedonic treadmill' theory, there is a neutral state (state of happiness) where human beings naturally come into this state after they encounter with brief reactions of good or bad events. But in the present article, the author says that *individuals exhibit negative thinking naturally, which misleads them to exhibit negative emotions, which reduces their well-being for a brief period of time temporarily or permanently, during when not engaged in any work, event or situation for certain time or when there is a gap between rational facts. They prone to exhibit this negative thinking regarding the persons, events or things that they are consciously concerned about. This state is called lamenting state.* For example, a wife waiting for a husband will prone to think that 'there might occur some accident to him' or 'he struck in a problem with his enemies'. A Daughter spoke to her mother via mobile in a very low and dull voice, hung up soon, as she was engaged in some work, will prone her mother to think that 'she and her husband might have an 'issue or conflict between them' or 'something happened to her daughter'. A friend Y borrowed Rs.1lakh from his friend X. X in some emergency asked Y to return that amount. When Y hang up the phone continuously or did not lift the phone of X due to some meeting in his office might prone X to think ' Y is rejecting the phone deliberately as he is not willing to return back that money'. Due to these negative thinking, the person exhibits negative emotions which reduces their wellbeing for some or more period of time. This state occurs

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naturally in each and every person but varies in the degrees of magnitude. The magnitude of suffering their well-being also differs at different period of time in a single individual. This magnitude of suffering will be high for the things, situations or persons that they are more concerned about. This degree of magnitude is considered to be equal to the amount of individual suffering their wellbeing. Every individual continuously strives to vanquish these lamenting occurrences in order to secure their life from the damage aroused by these occurrences. Now the challenge is to reduce these lamenting emotions or negative thoughts that occur in us naturally. For this, a person adopts some skills in his life through their own experiences or by imitating others. To do this conventionally one has to acquire the skills of living and rational thinking. Skills of life such as maintaining a constructive interpersonal communication to reduce the gap of the unknown where the person was struck with, in order to reduce negative thinking. Constructive cognitive assessment and cognitive restructuring paves a pathway for rational thinking. The rational thinking, in turn, tunes up the skills of living. The amount of individual suffering their wellbeing is equal to a total number of recurring negative thoughts minus the efficiency of the skill they employed to reduce their recurring negative thoughts. The individual maintains equilibrium when he effectively manages these recurring negative thoughts. By framing it mathematically,

$$W_s = R_n - S_e$$

Where **W_s** is the amount of individual suffering their wellbeing,

R_n is the total number of recurring negative thoughts and

S_e is the recurring negative thoughts after employing their own skills to bring into an equilibrium position.

A person reaches an equilibrium state only when the **W_s** (the amount of individual suffering their wellbeing) will become 0.

For instance, a man has recurring negative thoughts of 100 which brought some negative emotions in him, assume that he used the technique of self-talk in reducing these negative emotions and he is capable of managing his negative emotions to the extent of 90 recurring thoughts, which also reduces their negative emotional state to this extent. Then the amount of total suffering of their wellbeing is 10 out of 100. When the person managed all the 100 hundred recurring negative thoughts through constructive self-talk then the amount of the individual suffering their wellbeing is zero. It means he reached the equilibrium state.

On regular basis, each and every individual strive to reach this equilibrium state. For suppose the amount of individual suffering their wellbeing is not zero, it is some numeral other than zero, it will be constant only when he is engaged in some work to further and still, if he is not engaged in any work, the amount of suffering their wellbeing will continue and tend to increase their suffering as the recurring negative thoughts continue. For suppose the amount of suffering their wellbeing is measured to be 10 after managing their recurring negative thoughts through a technique of self-talk and still the person does not engage in any work, then the new recurring negative thoughts will add to these 10 thoughts, the lamentable state

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of this person extends and the amount of individual suffering their wellbeing (Ws) increases. This condition makes the persons crammed with new links and associations to those existing thoughtstend to increase the magnitude of the lamenting state. The wellbeing of the person depends on the defense or the skill maintained by the individual to reduce the damage on him. If the person is unable to counteract this state, through the realizing of the facts in a rational way, then their behavior is manifested to be eccentric. When the person strives to reduce this damage on him by exploring, analyzing and by understanding the facts, the person plans a strategy to counteract such state and finally, he succeeds after some attempts and adopts this skills in his behavior. Such skills are learned through their own experience or by observing others behavior.

Goal direction

When a person is goal-directed, having a tendency to accomplish a goal. Then the person will be somewhat relaxed with the lamentable thread mill, as he is engaged in a behavior manifested to accomplish a goal. They will have only a brief amount of time to encounter with this lamentable treadmill and it will be easy for them to maintain equilibrium. When the person is not self-actualized, having no goal to accomplish. He will have a long period of free time, to encompass lamentable thread mill, which invokes their suffering.

When the persons encounter the lamenting state naturally the person'sbehavioral reaction to this lamenting state (neutral state) is directed by the '**central goal (intentions)**' of the person. The centralgoal might be one of these two. -1) **to reduce the damage to him or 2) more concern about the external events.** The person's goal in a particular situation directs them to bring their entire cognition, attention, emotions, andbehavior at one central point. That point might be one of these two goals. If the person aimed at the first goal his entire energy is utilized in a positive way in understanding the facts by using rationale principle. This goal embraces him towards a positive direction. When the person aimed at the second goal the person wrongly assumes that this lamenting state is real and they try to relate all known arbitrary concepts to this lamenting state invoke damage to their well-being temporarily or permanently. The second goal turns him towards a negative direction.

Habit formation

Maintaining both directions (personal goals stated earlier) need cognitive and interpretative skills. By using these skills people tend to add them in some other relevant situations. By practicing these skills regularly make the personadapt these skills as a habit of their behavior. These habits can be framed in more than one direction in a single individual at different situations (i.e., in a positive or negative direction as per their central goal in that situation). For suppose A, B, C, and D are irrelevant situations, the person might adopt a positive goal and positive directed behavior towards situation A and they link it to some other relevant situations (such as situations P and Q are relevant to the situation A). After certain practice, the person frames a habit of using these skills unconsciously to the situation A and its relating situations. If the same person's goal is manifested in a negative direction towards the situation B and exhibits some skills in a negative way, he adopts such skills toward that

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situation B and other relevant situations. Thus, the habit is framed in a negative direction towards the situation B and its relevant situations. In the same way, the person adopts his behavior in different directions to the irrelevant situations C and D and their respective relevant situations. Thus, the habits are formed in combinations of different directions which mean the same person is having a pool in which combinations of negative and positive self-directed cognitions, behaviors, and goals exist. If this combination is dominant with more negative goals that person's behavior looks eccentric and abnormal. If it is dominated by positive direction then the person will lavish with a sturdy psychological wellbeing.

CONCLUSION

Lamentable thread mill says that there is a neutral state, called the lamenting state during which the individual exhibit negative thinking naturally which misleads them to exhibit negative emotions which curtail their well-being temporarily to some extent or permanently. This state is manifested when an individual is not engaged in any work, event or situation for a brief period of time or in the situations where there has a gap in the rational facts. One prone to exhibit this negative thinking in the area where they show concern. An individual continuously struggles with himself to reduce the damage that occurs due to this lamenting state. In order to regain back to his normal state, he adopts some skills that are either learned through experience or through observation of others over years. The well-being of the person depends on the skills maintained by the person to counteract this state to regain equilibrium. In order to maintain this state one adapt the skills like constructive interpersonal communication, constructive cognitive assessment, and cognitive restructuring.

When an individual is self-actualized, utilizes all their potentials and skills in achieving the goals set by them. As they are engaged in the goal-related behavior, they will have minimized effects on this lamenting state and can be able to maintain equilibrium easily. When the person is not self-actualized, he will not have any set goal point. Having more free time makes them vulnerable to this lamenting state that hinders well-being temporarily or permanently.

After one meets this lamenting state naturally, their behavioral reaction is directed by the central goal of an individual. There are two different central goals that direct individual behavior during this state 1) to reduce the damage on him 2) more concerned about the external events or goals. The central goal will be only one of these two. The individual brings his entire cognition, attention, emotions, and behavior at that particular central goal. When an individual set first central goal ('to reduce the damage on him') helps them to resort back to his normal state. Then he adapts rationale thinking, analyses the preceding's and consequences of their behavior and thus plan their further step. This shifts the person towards a positive direction. When the person shifted his attention on the second central goal (more concerned about the external events) they wrongly assume that this lamenting state is true and relate all the known arbitrary concepts and links to it, thus damage themselves temporarily or permanently. Further research will be implemented by relating this theory with the empirical findings.

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