



In Search of Happiness: Understanding an Endangered State of Mind

John F. Schumaker

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When future archaeologists sift through the layers of artifacts from our current era, they are going to scratch their heads over the vast quantities of happy faces. Bright yellow happy face buttons, decals, refrigerator magnets, knobs for pens and pencils, happy-face ties, coffee mugs, wallpaper, stationery and bumper stickers, even happy face stamps issued by the US Postal service in 1999. Happiness reigns supreme and most people in polls when asked what is most important in life will say happiness. The quest for happiness has become a cultural obsession. Its a must-have state of mind that is marketed at every turn from fast food to amusement park hawkers to self-help book publishers, cosmetic companies and plastic surgeons. There is even an emerging brand of therapists happiness counselors. And a new branch of psychology: Happiness Studies. Have we gone happy crazy? Yes, in a consumer-oriented way, says clinical psychologist and internationally known social critic John Schumacher. The problem, he says, is were looking for happiness in all the wrong places, and have no idea how to find deep and authentic happiness. Schumaker takes us through history, across cultures, literature, religions and philosophies to show how consumer culture is toxic to happiness, as well as general emotional well-being. Then he offers ways we can society-proof ourselves to find new, deep and lasting happiness.

Astutely and with enthralling creativity, Schumaker examines happiness as far back as the prehistoric age, then takes a deep look at what we are doing today, and how that might affect the future. Entertaining, insightful and thought-provoking every step of the way, Schumaker takes us into an arena and a growing field that will motivate readers to think, and smile, and wonder.

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