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Supplement to *The Happiness Hypothesis*

created by

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What is our Supplement to *The Happiness Hypothesis*?¹

Our Supplement to *The Happiness Hypothesis* has two goals:

- To help you read texts about unfamiliar topics
- To help you internalize relevant themes from *The Happiness Hypothesis*




First, we include several tools to equip you for a more complete understanding of the text:

- **reading strategies:** develops skills such as building background knowledge, previewing, skimming, and scanning the text.
- **content overview:** organizes chapters into sections with summaries to break down the author's arguments.
- **recognizing organizational elements:** explores skills for reading accuracy and comprehension, including sections about argumentative structure, coherence, metaphors, and author voice.
- **the final happiness hypothesis:** helps you apply the advice found in the book to your own life.

The second goal, internalizing relevant themes from *The Happiness Hypothesis*, is more difficult to ensure. We focused the supplement on recognizing and interpreting organizational elements of *The Happiness Hypothesis*, and we hope this helps you read more quickly and accurately. In turn, this may help clarify complex issues raised in your classes and [Vanderbilt Visions group](#), and even improve your persuasive and analytical writing during your first year at Vanderbilt.

Find this supplement online at: <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/elc/resources/supplement-to-the-happiness-hypothesis/>

Use the tools pictured below to help you as you read:

 Want to Know More?	Expand your knowledge with links to online resources in these boxes.
 Focus on...²	Complete activities to further your understanding by following the directions in these boxes.
 Notice...	Consider details not immediately apparent from examples or explanations.

Reading Strategies

Building Background Knowledge

Before you read *The Happiness Hypothesis*, consider what you know about the book's major topic, happiness, and its themes of ancient philosophy, modern psychology, and the search for happiness. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Have you studied these topics previously?
- What can you remember about these topics?
- What is your cultural understanding of these topics?

¹ *The Happiness Hypothesis* by Jonathan Haidt, 2006, Basic Books.

² Target Icon adapted from: <http://webiconspng.com/icon/78516>

The Pursuit of Happiness in the United States

The roots of this concept in the United States were established in the [Declaration of Independence](#), adopted on July 4, 1776. It described grievances against the rule of [King George III](#) and argued for the American colonies' freedom from England. Its adoption marked a major step toward the [Revolutionary War](#) and the establishment of the United States as an independent nation.

The concept of happiness was sewn into the fabric of the American consciousness in the second sentence of the [Declaration of Independence](#): “We hold these truths to be [self-evident](#), that [all men are created equal](#), that they are endowed by their Creator with certain [unalienable Rights](#), that among these are Life, Liberty and the [pursuit of Happiness](#).”

This quote has become one of the most famous sentences in American history, and scholars have long discussed the critical role it has played in developing the American identity and central concepts within it such as equality, justice, independence, and [the American dream](#).

Additionally, scholars around the world have studied happiness across fields such as history, philosophy, political science, and psychology, to name a few.

Consult the following websites to build background knowledge of how happiness is regarded in America:

Happiness in American History	Measuring Happiness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Life, liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do you measure happiness?
Vanderbilt and Happiness	Measuring Happiness around the World
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vanderbilt Happiness Ranking Vanderbilt Hustler: Were we ever really the happiest? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summary of the World Happiness Report 2018 Full World Happiness Report 2018

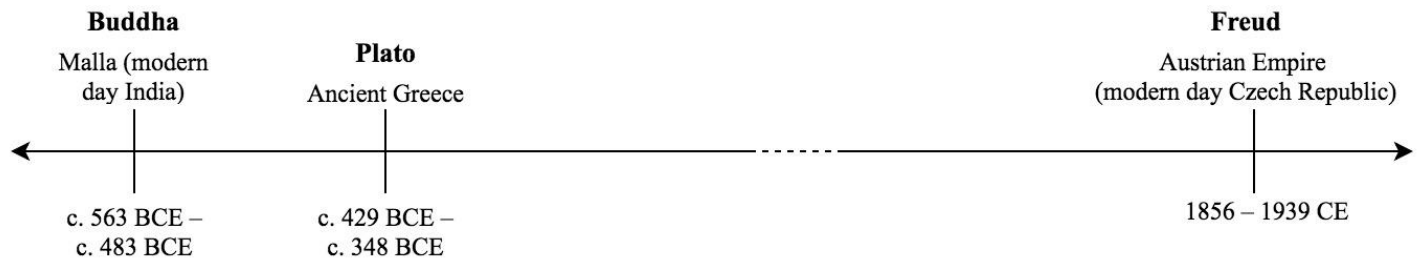
Scholarly Efforts to Research Happiness

The Happiness Hypothesis has become part of the international scholarly effort to examine happiness, and now, part of Vanderbilt University's effort to engage in that conversation via the [Commons Reading](#).

The subtitle, *Finding Modern Truth in Ancient Wisdom*, describes exactly what the author, Jonathan Haidt, has done in the book. He researched centuries-old concepts of enlightenment, psychology, and human nature from around the world and paired them with cutting-edge scientific discoveries in psychology to develop our understanding of happiness. The connections he makes between scholars can span centuries, dynasties, and thousands of miles, but be described on the same page in the book.

For example, on page 3, Haidt begins to compare and contrast the work of Freud, Plato, and Buddha. They lived in different places and during different times, but Haidt discusses them together to gain new insight into our conscious and unconscious thoughts. The timeline below can give you an idea of the range of time Haidt covers in the book.³

³ Timeline is not to scale. Click the following links for explanations of the abbreviations: [c.](#), [BCE](#), and [CE](#).



Consult the following websites to build your background knowledge of how happiness is studied today:

Author and Subjects	Philosophy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jonathan Haidt Biography Video Summary of <i>The Happiness Hypothesis</i> The Rider and the Elephant Metaphors and Similes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is Philosophy for? Vanderbilt Philosophy Department Eastern Philosophy Western Philosophy
Psychology	Positive Psychology
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is Psychology? Vanderbilt Psychology Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is Positive Psychology? University of Pennsylvania Positive Psychology Center Flow

Thinking before You Read: Previewing the Text

Before reading *The Happiness Hypothesis*, first browse through the book.⁴ Ask yourself:

- How many pages are in the book?
- How long will it take to read?

Knowing the approximate length of the chapters will help you be realistic about the time you will need to read them. Also, because this text is structured as a persuasive argument, knowing where you are in the text (beginning, middle, or end chapters) will help you know where you are in the argument (See *Argumentative Structure* on p. 9 for more details).

Skimming and Scanning

Before reading *The Happiness Hypothesis*, it is helpful to glance through the pages and focus on the important parts to better understand what the text is about.⁵ This practice is called **skimming**.

Ask yourself:

- What do the chapter titles mean?
- What are the keywords in each title?
- What will each chapter's content be?
- How will each chapter support the book's overall hypothesis?

*For example, by looking at the front cover, back cover, and chapter titles, you can predict that *The Happiness Hypothesis* explores different paths to happiness from ancient times and today. Furthermore, you can see the cover image of a rider on an elephant, and consider that this image will have meaning in the book.*

⁴ *Academic Reading: A Content-based Approach* by Holschuh & Kelley, 1988, Palgrave Macmillan, p. 2.

⁵ *Academic Reading: A Content-based Approach* by Holschuh & Kelley, 1988, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 2-3.

You can better understand the organization of the story by **skimming** the material for important elements, which may also help you predict what comes next.

For example, in Chapter 4, Haidt uses section headings to clearly outline his research on altruism and cooperation. By paying attention to the section titles, you can preview what each section will be about and break down the main points of Haidt's argument: reducing bias in your view of yourself and others can be part of your road to happiness.

A similar skill is **scanning**. Scanning is to quickly look over a text without reading every single word for complete understanding. By looking over the text for keywords, definitions, and the central metaphor, you can quickly understand the important elements of what a specific passage mentions and how it fits into the larger argument.⁶

In *The Happiness Hypothesis*, Jonathan Haidt combines the teachings of ancient wisdom with modern psychological research studies to search for a happiness hypothesis. As you read, you will notice that some passages are descriptions of experiments, stories from history, or even anecdotes from Haidt's life. These paragraphs are not always essential to the main argument, and it might benefit you to skim and scan these parts to look for the main idea they are communicating.



Focus on
Reading
Skills

Consult these reading textbooks for more information and practice:

- *Academic Reading: A Content-based Approach* by Holschuh & Kelley, 1988
- *Ready to Read More* by Blanchard & Root, 2006
- *A Good Read: Developing Strategies for Effective Reading* by Islam & Steenburgh, 2009

Content Overview

Book Summary

To get an overview of the book, you can watch a [video summary of The Happiness Hypothesis](#).

Chapter Summaries

The introduction (pp. *xi* - *xiii*), also explains the structure of the book. The sections listed below fit together to support Haidt's happiness hypothesis, which is proposed in Chapter 5 and revised in Chapter 10.

How the Human Mind Works (Chapters 1-2)

In these chapters, Haidt explains how the mind has two parts, the conscious and unconscious mind, which he calls [the rider and the elephant](#). He discusses the tendencies of some people to see the world from a positive or negative perspective (happiness setpoint), and describes three ways to help people change their style of thinking: meditation, [cognitive therapy](#), and [Prozac](#).

Our Social Lives (Chapters 3-4)

These chapters explore the concept of reciprocity, also referred to as the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you," and how some people either adhere to or take advantage of it. To expand upon reciprocity, Haidt then explores why it is easier for us to see the faults in others than in ourselves.

⁶ *A Good Read: Developing Strategies for Effective Reading 2* by Islam & Steenburgh, 2009, Cengage Learning, p. 8.

Exploring Happiness (Chapter 5-6)

In this section, Haidt introduces a happiness hypothesis that will be discussed throughout the rest of the book: Happiness = happiness set point + living conditions + voluntary activities. He then interrogates the ancient happiness hypothesis that relies on breaking ties with material objects and people by exploring different kinds of healthy and unhealthy love and attachments.

Human Growth and Development (Chapters 7-9)

This section of the book analyzes the ways in which adversity can help or hinder growth, and how the cultivation of virtue, moral development, and positive psychology can be used to develop inherent strengths. Lastly, Haidt explores the three dimensions of social space: hierarchy (status), closeness (connection), and divinity (morality), to demonstrate how a balance of worldviews can contribute to finding happiness.

The Question of Meaning (Chapters 10-11)

The last two chapters return to the formula introduced in Chapter 5 and analyze the age-old question, “What is the meaning of life?” Haidt then discusses concrete ways to find a sense of purpose, engagement (being completely engaged in a task that holds meaning), and cross-level coherence (when our physical, psychological, and social lives align) to show that “happiness comes from between.”⁷



Focus on Definitions

Use the information below to help you recognize and interpret definitions in the book.

Because this book was written for a general audience (not for expert psychologists), Haidt has included definitions for words that are specific to the field of psychology. Finding these definitions as you read will help you avoid looking up words in the dictionary, which increases your reading speed and flow. Also, dictionary definitions you find may not be helpful, as complex words have more than one meaning and you will need a definition specific to the context of this book. When you are reading, if you see a word you do not know, do not stop reading. Instead, look for a definition in the text. Definitions can be spotted by paying attention to punctuation, synonyms, defining verbs such as “called” and “means,” and descriptions in surrounding sentences.⁸ See the table on page 8 for examples.

As you keep reading, if you do not see a definition in the text, you can follow these steps.

1. Look for a prefix or suffix that might help you guess the meaning of the word and identify what part of speech the word has in the sentence.⁹
2. If the meaning of the word is still unclear, you can search for the definition in a dictionary. The ELC recommends using an English–English dictionary (such as the [Oxford English Dictionary](#) or [Merriam Webster](#)) for more precise definitions of the word. Choose the definition that best fits the context and part of speech for the sentence you are reading. If you prefer simpler definitions, you can use a learner’s dictionary, for instance, the [Merriam Webster’s Learner Dictionary](#).

⁷ *The Happiness Hypothesis* by Jonathan Haidt, 2006, Basic Books, p. 238.

⁸ *Ready to Read More* by Blanchard & Root, 2006, Pearson Longman, Chapter 3: Use Vocabulary Strategies.

⁹ *Academic Reading: A Content-based Approach* by Holschuh & Kelley, 1988, Palgrave Macmillan, p. 11.

Use the table below to help you identify definitions in *The Happiness Hypothesis* without using a dictionary. Fill in some of your own to guide your reading.

Word	Definition	How I Recognized It
<i>three lower chakras</i>	p. 6: “three lower chakras—energy centers corresponding to the colon/anus, sexual organs, and gut.”	Punctuation: dash
<i>corpus callosum</i>	p. 6: “The human brain has two separate hemispheres joined by a large bundle of nerves , the corpus callosum.”	Punctuation: comma
<i>to take something philosophically</i>	p. 24: “To take something ‘philosophically’ means to accept a great misfortune without weeping or even suffering. ”	Defining verb: “means”
<i>affective style and affect</i>	p. 33: “A person’s average or typical level of happiness is that person’s ‘affective style.’ (‘Affect’ refers to the felt or experienced part of emotion.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description in the sentence • Punctuation: parentheses • Defining verb: “refers to”
<i>“makes sense” stopping rule</i>	p. 65: “He says that thinking generally uses the ‘makes sense’ stopping rule. We take a position, look for evidence that supports it, and if we find some evidence – enough so that our position ‘makes sense’ – we stop thinking. ”	Description in the following sentence



**Notice:
Definitions**

If you look up the word **affect** in the online [Oxford English Dictionary](#), the psychological definition meant in the sentence above is the fifth definition listed.

Recognizing Organizational Elements in *The Happiness Hypothesis*

Think of *The Happiness Hypothesis* as a big argumentative essay, and all the chapters as pieces of a puzzle that come together to support the thesis: “Happiness comes from between.” This section can help you do two things to improve your reading comprehension and speed in *The Happiness Hypothesis* and other materials you read at Vanderbilt:

1. Zoom in: Recognize the pieces of the organizational puzzle
2. Zoom out: See how the pieces fit together to support the thesis

Argumentative Structure

Think of *The Happiness Hypothesis* book as a big argumentative essay meant to support Jonathan Haidt's thesis: "Happiness comes from between." Alone, this thesis does not carry much meaning, as we do not know what he means by "between." Between what? We have to read the book and analyze the evidence Haidt shares in order to understand this thesis. That is how recognizing argumentative structure can help you read more accurately: because you will understand the purpose of each section as you read.¹⁰



Want to
Know More?

Haidt's writing most closely fits with Toulmin's Model of Argument, which contains 6 argumentative items. [Read this short handout](#) for an explanation of the steps and examples of Toulmin's Model in use.

Author Voice and Tone

As we indicated earlier, Haidt wrote *The Happiness Hypothesis* using evidence from ancient philosophers and modern psychology to support his thesis. As you read and identify the parts of his argument, it will be important to recognize when you are reading Haidt's own ideas or when you are reading descriptions of the ideas of other researchers. This skill is known as identifying the author's **voice**. Once you find Haidt's voice, you can analyze the **tone**, which is the author's attitude or opinion about a topic.

Example 1: "In a brilliant series of experiments, Nick Epley and David Dunning figured out how we do it. They asked students at Cornell University to predict..." - p. 67

The phrase in boldface shows Haidt's **voice**, and we can see that the next sentences will describe Epley and Dunning's experiments. The bolded phrase also reveals Haidt's **tone** of approval regarding the experiments, as he endorses them with a positive adjective: *brilliant*. The second sentence is the beginning of his summary of the experiment, which was not his idea. After reading this sentence and interpreting Haidt's tone, you can anticipate that the results of the Epley and Dunning experiments will be important evidence in this section.

Example 2: "More recently, on television and the Internet, Dr. Phil (Phil McGraw) stated as one of his ten 'laws of life': 'There is no reality, only perception.' Self-help books and seminars sometimes seem to consist of little more than lecturing and hectoring people until they understand this idea and its implications for their lives." - p. 23

The first sentence reports on one of Dr. Phil's teachings, while the sentence in boldface shares Haidt's **voice** and reveals his opinion of Dr. Phil's work (when Haidt's **tone** is analyzed). Consider the word choices Haidt makes to describe what self-help seminars do: *lecturing* and *hectoring*. Both of these words are negative and describe behavior that talks down to or intimidates someone. These word choices show Haidt's **tone**: that he does not approve of or endorse Dr. Phil's work.

Distinguishing between Haidt's **voice** and reports of others' ideas as well as analyzing the **tone** can help you identify which sources Haidt trusts and predict which information is important to the main idea.

¹⁰ <http://www.uefap.com/reading/underst/undfram.htm>



Focus on Scare Quotes

Use the information below to help you recognize and interpret **scare quotes** in the book.

Sometimes Haidt's tone is revealed by quotation marks around a word or phrase to signal that the meaning is ironic (showing the opposite meaning), inaccurate, or misleading, otherwise known as **scare quotes**.

Example 1: Corrupt supervisors may steal an employee's first paycheck as "payment" for giving them the job.¹¹

In this example, *payment* is meant ironically, because the money is truly a bribe.

How can you identify whether Haidt is using **scare quotes** or simply attributing language to another author? The examples below will demonstrate the difference. As you read, find and categorize other short quotes in the text.

Quote	Scare Quote?	Author's Tone
<i>p. 101: As a first step, work less, earn less, accumulate less, and "consume" more family time, vacations, and other enjoyable measures.</i>	yes	<i>Haidt's use of consume is ironic, because the items on the list are often thought of as experiences rather than commodities (goods or services you can purchase).</i>
<i>p. 101: Unfortunately, letting go of one thing and choosing another is difficult if the elephant wraps his trunk around the "precious thing" and refuses to let go.</i>	no	<i>Haidt uses quotation marks here to show that the phrase is from a poem shared in the text above the sentence. See more by turning to page 101.</i>
<i>p. 102: The psychologist Barry Schwartz calls this the "paradox of choice."</i>	no	<i>Haidt uses quotation marks to show that this phrase is attributed to Barry Schwartz.</i>
<i>p. 102: When I began writing this book, I thought that Buddha would be a strong contender for the "Best Psychologist of the Last Three Thousand Years" award.</i>	yes	<i>Haidt uses quotation marks to show that this statement is inaccurate, as no such award exists. He is making a joke.</i>



Want to Know More?

[Read this handout](#) about identifying whose voice you are reading and how to write with an academic voice.

¹¹ Example adapted from: *Academic Writing for Graduate Students: Essential Tasks and Skills* (3rd Ed.) by Swales & Feak, 2012, University of Michigan Press, p. 274.

Cohesive Strategies

The Happiness Hypothesis is a non-fiction book, and the audience is the general public. Because his readers are non-experts, Jonathan Haidt needed to break down complex material in more comprehensible ways and carefully guide his readers (us) through his writing. He did this by using the set of 4 strategies listed below to create **cohesion**, or logical connections between ideas in sentences, paragraphs, and chapters.¹² Understanding **cohesive strategies** can help you follow Haidt's arguments throughout the book.

Keyword Repetition

Repeating keywords helps the reader follow a topic clearly, especially when absorbing new information. Find keywords in the first sentence of each paragraph (topic sentences) or in definitions (see *Focus on: Definitions* on pages 7-8 for examples). You may be surprised to see how many times these words are repeated even though it does not feel repetitive when you read. See the example on the next page to help you get started.

Known to New Information Flow

Following a known to new information flow is why the writing does not feel repetitive even though keywords are often repeated. Each sentence starts with a *topic* and ends by sharing new information in what we call the *stress* position.¹³ Then the next sentence can build off of the stressed information and add more content. Read the labeled excerpt on the next page to see how this works.

Generic Transitions

Transition words like *for example*, *however*, and *since* help the reader see how information connects in precise ways. To illustrate, *however* signals disagreement, and *as a result* signals effect.

Hook + summarizing phrases

The hook connects readers to an idea in the previous sentence(s). Some examples of hooks are: *this*, *these*, and *such*. Then the summary noun, keyword, or phrase explicitly tells the reader what is being referred to.¹⁴ See the labeled paragraph on the next page for an example of how this works.



Focus on
Cohesion

Use the paragraph on the next page to help you recognize and interpret cohesion strategies in the book. It is an example of all 4 cohesive strategies. Remember that this paragraph is from the middle of the book, and difficult terms are explained in earlier pages. A list of previously defined vocabulary is provided below.

¹² *The International Student's Guide to Writing a Research Paper* by Carlock, Eberhardt, Horst, & Kolenich, 2017, University of Michigan Press.

¹³ *Making Complex Writing Intelligible with the Known-New Contract*: <https://www.cmu.edu/gcc/handouts/old-new-handout-pdf>


¹⁴ *Just Writing: Grammar, Punctuation, and Style for the Legal Writer* (4th Ed.), Enquist, Oates, & Francis, 2013, Wolters Kluwer Law & Business.


<p style="text-align: center;">Topic</p> <p>“When ‘survival of the <i>fittest</i>’ came to mean ‘survival of the <i>fittest gene</i>,’ it became easy to see that the <i>fittest genes</i> would motivate kind and cooperative behavior in two scenarios: when it benefited those who bore a copy of those <i>genes</i> (that is, <i>kin</i>), or when it benefited the bearers of the <i>genes</i> directly by helping them reap the surplus of non-zero-sum games using the tit-for-tat strategy. These two processes—<i>kin altruism</i> and <i>reciprocal altruism</i>—do indeed explain nearly all <i>altruism</i> among non-human animals, and much of human <i>altruism</i>, too. This answer is unsatisfying, <u>however</u>, because our <i>genes</i> are, to some extent, puppet masters making us want things that are sometimes good for them but bad for us (such as extramarital affairs, or prestige bought at the expense of happiness).”¹⁵</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Keywords</i> 2. <u>Generic Transitions</u> 3. Hook + Summary phrase 4. Known to New Information Flow (connections between topic and stress positions)
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Keywords like the ones below return in different sections and some have whole chapters dedicated to understanding them, such as *reciprocity*.

- Survival of the fittest: p. 47
- Non-zero-sum games: p. 50 and 54
- Tit-for-tat: p. 49
- Kin altruism: p. 48
- Reciprocity: p. 45 – 58

For example, Niccolo Machiavelli's analysis of the tit-for-tat philosophy is introduced on page 61, but referenced again on pages 140 and 172. If you forget who Machiavelli was, you can use the index at the end of the book to find his original introduction, or even search in [Google Books](#) to find the page numbers where he is mentioned.

	<p>Notice: Repeated Keywords</p>	<p>As you read, notice how many keywords are repeated throughout the book, and not solely in individual sections. You may find that they appear at the beginnings and ends of chapters, as that is one of the ways Haidt helps connect pieces of the book's argument.</p>
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	<p>Want to Know More?</p>	<p>As you read, identify how Haidt uses cohesive strategies. For more guidance on using coherence to improve your own reading, writing, or oral presentations, sign up for tuition-free 1-to-1 Consultations at the ELC while classes are in session.</p>
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Metaphors

Throughout *The Happiness Hypothesis*, Jonathan Haidt uses **metaphors** as a tool to explain ideas. Simply put, a **metaphor** is a comparison between two unrelated things. [Watch this TED-Ed video](#) for a deeper explanation of metaphors.


Even though metaphors and similes (comparisons using *like* or *as*) are more commonly found in fiction literature, non-fiction also uses many metaphors that require the reader to interpret a deeper meaning. Haidt uses metaphors to be descriptive and persuasive as well as to communicate a feeling (tone) to the reader.

¹⁵ *The Happiness Hypothesis* by Jonathan Haidt, 2006, Basic Books, p. 172.

Haidt explains, "Human thinking depends on metaphor. We understand new or complex things in relation to things we already know."¹⁶ Haidt uses different metaphors throughout the book, but often returns to a main **extended metaphor**, which is a metaphor that continues throughout a longer piece of writing. The extended metaphor Haidt uses in *The Happiness Hypothesis* is that the two parts of our minds, the conscious and the unconscious, are like a rider on an elephant. If you did not watch it in the background knowledge section, take a few minutes now to watch an explanation of [the rider and elephant metaphor](#).

How can you interpret a metaphor once you identify one?

Metaphors come in three parts. All metaphors are comparing two items, so first, identify the focus of the metaphor (the main item you are meant to better understand) and separate it from the secondary item (what the main item is being compared to). Once you have identified those two parts, think of what the metaphor's *ground* is, namely, the aspect that both items have in common. Then use the *ground* to analyze the metaphor's meaning. See the chart below for examples.

 Focus on Metaphors		Use the table below to help you recognize and interpret metaphors in the book.		
Metaphor or Simile	What is the main item of this metaphor?	What is the main item being compared to?	What do they have in common (the ground)?	How does this metaphor deepen your understanding of the main item?
p. 84: "The final moment of success is often no more thrilling than the relief of taking off a heavy backpack at the end of a long hike."	"The final moment of success" (reaching a goal)	The momentary pleasure of release from ending physical exercise	They are both feelings that fade away quickly.	The metaphor shows that the path to success is more fulfilling than the moment of achievement of the success.
p. 178: "Diversity is like cholesterol: there is a good kind and a bad kind, and perhaps we should not be trying to maximize both."	Demographic diversity and moral diversity	Good and bad cholesterol	There are good and bad kinds of both cholesterol and diversity.	The metaphor suggests that we shouldn't try to maximize all kinds of diversity because some kinds of diversity (like moral diversity) can be harmful.

¹⁶ *The Happiness Hypothesis* by Jonathan Haidt, 2006, Basic Books, p. 2.

The Final Happiness Hypothesis

At the end of the book (pages 219-239), Haidt offers his **final hypothesis**, a practical path toward improving the aspects of life that are most likely to lead to happiness, summarizing his advice at the end of the chapter:

The final version of the happiness hypothesis is that **happiness comes from between**. Happiness is not something that you can find, acquire, or achieve directly. You have to get the conditions right and then wait. Some of those conditions are within you, such as coherence among the parts and levels of your personality. Other conditions require relationships to things beyond you: Just as plants need sun, water, and good soil to thrive, people need love, work, and a connection to something larger. It is worth striving to get the right **relationships** between yourself and others, between yourself and your work, and between yourself and something larger than yourself. If you get these relationships right, a sense of a purpose and meaning will emerge.¹⁷



Focus on
Yourself

Use the steps below to reflect on how you can apply Haidt's research to your life.

On his website dedicated to *The Happiness Hypothesis*, Jonathan Haidt has created [a practical guide](#) that helps you apply ideas from the book to pursue happiness. Steps include references to page numbers from *The Happiness Hypothesis* and links to diagnostic quizzes, informational websites, and further reading. He divides actions into 5 steps:

- Step 1: Diagnose Yourself
- Step 2: Improve Your Mental Hygiene
- Step 3: Improve Your Relatedness
- Step 4: Improve Your Work
- Step 5: Improve Your Connection to Something Beyond Yourself

Here are some resources on campus that can support your focus on happiness:

- [Student Care Network](#)
 - [Office of Student Care Coordination](#)
 - [Center for Student Wellbeing](#)
 - [University Counseling Center \(UCC\)](#)
 - [Student Health Center](#)
- [The English Language Center](#)

Coming to Vanderbilt marks a turning point in your life. It will be a time of change, discovery, and growth that can both challenge and inspire you. As you begin this new chapter of your life, you can use this opportunity to borrow some wisdom from Jonathan Haidt and endeavor to develop enriching **relationships** to find happiness **between**.

¹⁷ *The Happiness Hypothesis* by Jonathan Haidt, 2006, Basic Books, p. 238-239, [emphasis added].