

Edward Diener, Psychologist Known as Dr. Happiness, Dies at 74

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[Edward Diener](#), a playful social psychologist who was nicknamed Dr. Happiness for his pioneering research into what defined contentment, died on April 27 at his home in Salt Lake City. He was 74.

The cause was bladder cancer, his son, Robert Biswas-Diener, said. His death had not been widely reported.

Dr. Diener brought legitimacy and scientific rigor to a field that had been largely uncharted when he began his research in the 1980s at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Misery, sadness and fear had long been more fertile subjects of psychological study than happiness.

Happiness “sounds flaky, kind of frivolous,” [Dr. Diener said in 2017](#).

“But what we’re talking about,” he continued, “is sustainable happiness — what you get from your family, work, meaning and purpose, having goals and values. Well-being is much, much more than having fun.”

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