

I'm not okay, neither are you

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The Sydney Morning Herald:

Self-esteem is big business. Peruse the self-help section of any bookshop and you'll find row after row of books dedicated to feeling good, getting happy and making the most out of you. But despite all these apparent solutions, a recent survey by health insurer Bupa found that Australia is the world's most depressed nation. (To make matters worse, the survey also helpfully pointed out that we're rather fat.)

Being positive may seem like a good idea – but it's not guaranteed to make our lives more fulfilled.

In fact, positive thinking can create an “empathy deficit”, argues Barbara Ehrenreich in *Smile or Die: How Positive Thinking Fooled America and the World*. Staying upbeat becomes such a prized goal that we end up ostracising those who might bring us down – the elderly, for example, or the unwell. Meanwhile, our own self-esteem swings between telling us that we are fabulous and that we are rubbish. Neither statement is particularly useful for a life well lived.

Read the whole story: [The Sydney Morning Herald](#)