

Ed Diener, Who Studied Happiness, Dies

April 28, 2021



Ed Diener, a psychological scientist whose seminal research examined the factors that influence people’s life satisfaction and happiness, died April 27. The founding editor of APS’s [Perspectives on Psychological Science](#) journal, he received the [APS William James Fellow Award](#) in 2013 and had served as a psychology professor at the University of Virginia and the University of Utah, Distinguished Emeritus Professor at the University of Illinois, and senior scientist for the Gallup Organization.

With 400 publications and a citation count exceeding 250,000, [Diener](#) (in photo with his wife, Carol) was one of the most highly cited scientists in the world. He also wrote or co-authored nearly three dozen articles or editorials in APS journals (see the full list below). Nicknamed “Dr. Happiness,” he was chiefly responsible for coining and conceptualizing the term “subjective well-being” and hypothesized that human beings possess a genetic basis for “positive affect” that we generally return to, even after horrible events.

Yet despite his scholarly pursuits and professional laurels, Diener was equally known for his generosity toward students and other scholars—he mentored hundreds and received several teaching awards. Along with his wife and fellow psychologist Carol, Diener also created the [Noba project](#) to provide students with online access to free, high-quality textbooks and other educational materials, relieving a significant

financial burden for students around the world. And his enthusiastic embrace of new challenges extended to launching *Perspectives* in 2006. “We plan to appeal to the entire scientific psychology community—everyone who wants to keep up with the cutting edge work that is being done across all fields of psychology,” he [told APS in 2004](#).

“The thoughts of everyone at APS are with Ed’s family and friends. His contributions to APS and to science more generally are an incredible legacy,” said APS Executive Director Robert Gropp. “People around the world continue to benefit from his scholarship and that of the many scientists he mentored.”

Ed Diener’s Research in APS Journals

Psychological Science

- [Zeroing in on the Dark Side of the American Dream](#) (2003)
- [End Effects of Rated Life Quality: The James Dean Effect](#) (2001)
- [Very Happy People](#) (2002)
- [What to Do on Spring Break?](#) (2003)
- [Unemployment Alters the Set Point for Life Satisfaction](#) (2004)

- [Who Is Happy?](#) (1995)
- [Most People Are Happy](#) (1996)
- [On “Feeling Right” in Cultural Contexts](#) (2010)
- [Subjective Well-Being and National Satisfaction](#) (2011)
- [Income Inequality and Happiness](#) (2011)

- [Progressive Taxation and the Subjective Well-Being of Nations](#) (2011)
- [Residents of Poor Nations Have a Greater Sense of Meaning in Life Than Residents of Wealthy Nations](#) (2013)
- [Living Among the Affluent](#) (2014)
- [Subjective Well-Being Around the World: Trends and Predictors Across the Life Span](#) (2020)
- [Does Happiness Improve Health? Evidence From a Randomized Controlled Trial](#) (date?)

Perspectives on Psychological Science

- [Editorial](#) (2006)
- [Introduction to the Special Section: Professional Issues in Psychological Science and a Discussion of Collaboration Indicators](#) (2006)
- [The Optimum Level of Well-Being: Can People Be Too Happy?](#)

- [In Pursuit of Happiness: Empirical Answers to Philosophical Questions](#) (2008)
- [Introduction to the Special Issue: Improving Psychological Science](#) (2009)
- [Editor’s Introduction to Vul et al. \(2009\) and Comments](#) (2009)
- [Editor’s Introduction: Special Issue on the Next Big Questions in Psychology](#) (2009)
- [Culture and Psychological Science](#) (2010)

- [From the Editor: Thank You and Good Bye](#) (2010)

- [Neuroimaging: Voodoo, New Phrenology, or Scientific Breakthrough? Introduction to Special Section on fMRI](#) (2010)
- [The Remarkable Changes in the Science of Subjective Well-Being](#) (2013)
- [Improving Departments of Psychology](#) (2016)
- [A Website System for Communicating Psychological Science](#) (2017)

- [Beyond Money: Progress on an Economy of Well-Being](#) (2018)
- [Happiest People Revisited](#) (2018)
- [Revisiting “Most People Are Happy”—And Discovering When They Are Not](#) (2018)
- [The Scientific Pursuit of Happiness](#) (2018)
- [Citation Metrics in Psychological Science](#) (2021)

Psychological Science in the Public Interest

- [Beyond Money](#) (2004)