



Healing The Unhappy Caveman: Why The Human Mind Was Not Designed For Happiness And What YOU Can Do About It

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Of course, happiness is great. There's every reason to seek it. There's every reason for psychiatrists to try to instill it, and no reason for them to mold the kinds of people natural selection wants. But therapists will be better equipped to make people happy once they understand what natural selection does want, and how, with humans, it tries to get it. What burdensome mental appliances are we stuck with? How, if at all, can they be defused? And at what cost to ourselves and to others?

- Robert Wright

The Moral Animal (Vintage Books, 1994)

Natural selection was the architect of our minds, and happiness was never part of the plans. As Robert Wright pointed out fourteen years ago, echoing the pioneers of a new science called evolutionary psychology, we have the minds of cavemen. Indeed, he was right. Our minds were built to survive, happiness or not, in a time that has long since disappeared, but now they're miserable. At least, a lot of them are, and it's not because they don't think positively. It's because they don't think *properly*.

The fundamental source of frustration, depression, despair, and general unhappiness that pervades society is the clash between the caveman mind and the modern world. Far from hopeless, this is a manageable problem, but it requires a new approach to mental health. We must dispense with the platitudes of optimism that dominate the happiness market and set a course to understanding the caveman within us. Only then can we determine what it takes to make ourselves happy, regardless of our environment.

Healing the Unhappy Caveman: Why the Human Mind Was Not Designed for Happiness and What YOU Can Do About It is the first book founded on the idea that the human mind was not designed for happiness, and it is the first book to suggest that finding happiness entails learning how to use the mind in an entirely new way. Never before has the evolutionary history of the human mind been applied to finding happiness in a modern world.

When left unchecked, our ancient minds work against us in our quest for peace, contentment, and happiness in life. On its face, this seems like reason to lament. However, it is actually somewhat comforting that the problem is shared among all of us grappling with life in a supremely prosperous world. As individuals, we need no longer feel inadequate because we are unable to marshal the optimism and positive outlook that are demanded by modern happiness gurus. Their solutions address the symptoms, not the disease, which is why they sound great, but rarely work over the long haul. Genetic problems require different solutions. This, too, is a source of comfort.

Our species has a long and distinguished track record of outmaneuvering its genes. Birth control, sky diving, monogamy, the rule of law, capitalism, and gene therapy are all examples of mankind's overruling genetic imperatives in favor of the conscious desires of human beings. Happiness need not be out of bounds. We need only grasp what we're truly up against to begin to put unhappiness behind us for good. Never before has

a book approached this, the most daunting of tasks, from such a novel perspective.

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Amanda Moberly:

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Santos Conrad:

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James Valenzuela:

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