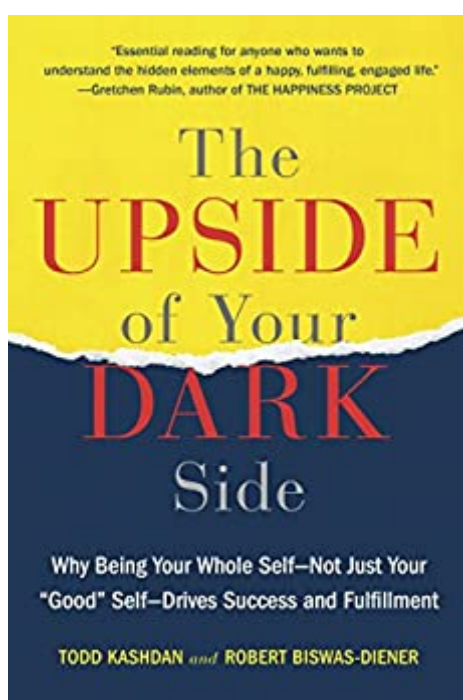


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The Upside Of Your Dark Side: Why Being Your Whole Self--Not Just Your "Good" Self--Drives Success And Fulfillment



Synopsis

Two mavericks in the field of positive psychology deliver a timely message. Happiness experts have long told us to tune out our negative emotions and focus instead on mindfulness, positivity, and optimism. Researchers Todd Kashdan, Ph.D., and Robert Biswas-Diener, Dr. Philos., disagree. Positive emotions alone are not enough. Anger makes us creative, selfishness makes us brave, and guilt is a powerful motivator. The real key to success lies in emotional agility. Drawing upon extensive scientific research and a wide array of real-life examples, *The Upside of Your Dark Side* will be embraced by business leaders, parents, and everyone else who's ready to put their entire psychological tool kit to work.

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Customer Reviews

I have always been a pretty happy and cheery person, and I have rarely allowed my "dark" side to realistically ever rear its head. I grew up in an environment where conflict was avoided at all costs, and negative emotions considered to be bad, so reading this book was not only highly informative but allowed me to access and harness a side of myself I have ignored. The authors begin by

observing that most people don't know what makes them happy. We estimate the effect events will have on us, and typically don't experience the highs or lows that we expect from events. So rather than striving for happiness all the time, the authors suggest going for something closer to 80/20, 80% positive to 20% negative, taking advantage of the benefits of perceived negative concepts like anger, guilt, anxiety, and mindlessness. This leads to social, emotional, and mental agility, the ability to function optimally across the wide range of human emotions rather than unrealistically pretending to be happy all the time. The authors focus on the downsides of being happy, such as that happy people are less persuasive and less likely to spot lies. Happy people tend to take mental short cuts and thus when things get stressful, happy people are more likely to rely on stereotypical views of others. They also explain the benefits of negative emotions. For example, anger can lead to greater creativity and guilt can cause positive change in people. The authors provide ways to effectively use anger and guilt, avoiding rage and shame, which are rarely effective accomplishing anything. The quest for happiness at all costs, evidenced by our "comfort at all costs" culture, is actually hurting our ability to be happy. In fact, studies show that doing things with the expectation to be happy actually decreases the happiness we get from them. In fact, our own brain gets in the way of us being happy, and there is nothing wrong with this, if you know how to deal with it. They also explain the benefits of mindlessness (more creativity and instant access to our valuable subconscious mind), the downsides of being polite (polite people get their way less than assertive people), and the upsides of following one's impulses (taking risks that lead to great rewards). What about "dark triad" traits like Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy? Yes, they too have a place in our mental toolbox, demonstrated by the fact that the most effective presidents possessed these traits in greater amounts than the least effective. The authors are careful to admit that there are limits to embracing our "bad" sides, and that is why this book is so amazing, as it provides research-backed guidelines to making states like anger, mindlessness, impulsiveness, narcissism, etc, work for our benefit. Overall, I highly recommend this book. It has opened up a new realm of possibility for me. Rather than effectively pretending I don't have a bad side, I have the tools to make *all* of myself function optimally. This is quite possibly the best book I have read in 2014.

It's about time somebody said enough to the overselling of positivity. Please be clear that these authors are part of the positive psychology movement and have contributed a lot to it, but they make a great case for not going to the extreme in being positive and valuing your negative emotions. I loved the chapter about the obsession with mindfulness. As someone who is not naturally positive but who believes in not being too negative, I've decided over the years that some people like me

just can't change their basic nature and this book gives us consolation that there can be advantages in certain so-called negative outlooks and emotions. They document their arguments with scientific research. This book is extremely well written and an easy and enjoyable read. It makes intuitive sense and I think will appeal to reasonable people who are tired of the happiness and mindfulness fads. Highly Recommended.

Enjoyed all of it! This book helped me develop a more complete picture of living as a whole, healthy and competent human. Thank you for capturing and sharing the value in embracing our many sides.

Well written and full of fine examples and academic results. Learned a lot around fear, aggression, guilt and shame. The part around meaning and fun was interesting. Next book?

Its a good read in trying to reconcile why less comfortable emotions are useful in small doses. Sometimes we feel bad. Understanding that there may be a reason and those less comfortable emotions may be useful is a MUCH better way of dealing than simply smiling and pretending something isn't at the root of the feeling.

An emotional and mental toolbox of facts and insights that every parent, manager, and human being will benefit from, thank you guys! Bob

provocative, and a balancing voice in the runaway era of 'happy-speak'. Thank you !

extremely enlighteneing

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