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A Path to More Enduring Happiness: Take a Detour from Specific Emotional Goals

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Although much of consumption behavior is prompted by the pursuit of happiness, enduring happiness remains elusive, since happiness is destined to adaptation. Our research identifies a novel yet simple method of slowing hedonic adaptation from consumption activities: reducing specificity of the happiness goal. We propose that in the realm of happiness, contrary to findings from other domains, having a general (e.g., feeling good) versus a specific (e.g., excitement) emotional goal might hold the key to more enduring happiness. One lab experiment and a longitudinal study demonstrate general (vs. specific) goals expand the breadth of emotions experienced from consumption activities, which in turn impact the top-of-mind awareness of the consumption target over time; higher top-of-mind awareness of the target allows one to continue to derive happiness from it. Importantly, the happiness advantage of general emotional goals strengthens over time. Given a significant tendency by consumers to pursue specific happiness goals (as three pilot studies reveal), a simple change in the way they formulate their happiness goals could be consequential for consumer wellbeing.

Keywords Goals and motivation; Affect and emotion; Transformative consumer research

Much of consumption behavior is prompted by the pursuit of happiness (Tkach & Lyubomirsky, 2006). Yet despite consumers' best efforts to anticipate and attain happiness from their consumption experiences (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 1999; Cohen, Pham, & Andrade, 2008; Mellers, Schwartz, & Ritov, 1999), such happiness tends to be fleeting (Brickman & Campbell, 1971; Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999), subject to hedonic adaptation or a reduction in affective intensity during the experience (Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2012). Enduring happiness from consumption experiences continues to be elusive.

At its core, hedonic happiness entails increased positive emotions and decreased negative emotions (Gruber, Mauss, & Tamir, 2011; Kesebir & Diener, 2008). This core of positive emotions, however, can be conceptualized at different levels (Barrett & Russell, 1999; Shiota, Keltner, & John, 2006), abstracted at a general level of positivity (e.g., being happy or joyous, feeling good; Bradburn, 1969; Gruber et al., 2011; Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2012), or construed in terms of more specific positive emotions (e.g., excitement or high arousal happiness, peacefulness or low arousal happiness, engagement or flow; e.g., Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Mogilner, Aaker, & Kamvar, 2012; Tsai, Knutson, & Fung, 2006). Importantly, prior work relating to affective forecasting shows consumers often form expectations about both specific and general emotions that may result from consumption activities (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 1999; Cohen et al., 2008; Mellers et al., 1999). The question we ask is, does the extent to which consumers generalize (vs. specify) the core of positive emotions they seek, influence their ability to attain enduring happiness from those activities?

Past research suggests goal specificity is an important factor in goal attainment; the more specific the goal, the better the attainment of outcomes (Locke & Latham, 2002; Oettingen & Gollwitzer, 2001) and greater the psychological wellbeing (Emmons, 1992; Rudd, Aaker, & Norton, 2014). This robust effect has been found with more than 100 tasks and over 40,000 participants in at least eight countries (Locke & Latham, 2002). However, the role of goal specificity in the context of one of the most commonly desired goals, enduring happiness, remains yet to be examined. Our research not only addresses this gap in the literature, but also provides surprising insights in this regard.

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We contend that past goal setting work has limited applicability to our research question. In past research, specific goals differ from general ones in their concreteness, observability, and evaluation, allowing for clearer expectations and outcomes assessment (Emmons, 1992). However, when it comes to experiencing positive emotions, specific emotions (e.g., excitement) are neither more tangible nor easier to observe or evaluate than their general counterparts (e.g., happiness). Thus, specific goals may not hold an advantage in this domain.

Instead, we consider the breadth and diversity of positive emotions generated. When people seek happiness via specific positive emotions, their focus on experiencing particular emotions (e.g., excitement) can lead them to miss out on feeling or attending to other positive emotions that might also be available (e.g., relaxation), narrowing the range of discrete emotions experienced. In contrast, a general goal of feeling good might allow, and even enable, the experience of a broader range of discrete positive emotions, both initially and over time, during different consumption episodes or when reliving a memory of the consumption experience.

Experiencing a broader set of discrete emotions can have benefits. For instance, experiencing more diverse positive emotions is known to increase the emotional connection to and perceived self-other overlap with the target (Aron & Aron, 1986; Waugh & Fredrickson, 2006). Diverse emotions are also known to broaden the scope of attention and cognition (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005), which also promotes enhanced connections with the target (e.g., Malär, Krohmer, Hoyer, & Nyffenegger, 2011). Thus, experiencing a broader set of emotions can lead consumers to feel more connected with the target. The more connected consumers feel with an entity, the more likely they are to continue thinking about it over time, keeping it top-of-mind (Park, Priester, MacInnis, & Wan, 2009).

Notably, one of the major reasons for hedonic adaptation is that people stop paying attention to or thinking about the stimulus which generated positive affect (Dunn, Gilbert, & Wilson, 2011; Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2012); the more they continue thinking about it, the more likely they are to continue deriving positive feelings from it (Dunn & Weidman, 2015; Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2012). Thus, the higher potential of general (vs. specific) emotional goals to keep the target in consumers' minds over time could make them better suited to slow down hedonic adaptation, fostering more enduring happiness.

An alternative mechanism for our prediction is also plausible: general (vs. specific) goals can have a wider range of acceptable outcomes (Locke & Latham, 2002), as they can be fulfilled by a larger set of specific positive emotions. Hence, general (vs. specific) goals could be easier to attain or less prone to disappointment. We test for this possibility also.

In sum, and contrary to findings of past goal-setting literature, when it comes to happiness, a common goal of consumption activities, a general goal may be better than a more specific one. Such a goal is expected to increase the breadth of positive emotions experienced, which in turn are likely to enhance the target's top-of-mind awareness, allowing the consumer to continue deriving happiness from it. Thus, we propose a novel and counterintuitive, yet simple method that consumers can use for slowing down hedonic adaptation.

To operationalize specific versus general emotional goals, we relied on past research (see Russell and Barrett (1999) for a review) which has classified emotions on dimensions of pleasantness and arousal. Because all positive emotions possess some degree of pleasantness, arousal is used as a key dimension for classifying specific positive emotions (Cohen et al., 2008). For instance, past research (Mogilner et al., 2012; Tsai et al., 2006) identifies two types of specific happiness as exciting versus calm happiness, based on arousal level. Thus, we used arousal level for classifying specific consumption emotions.

Three pilot studies were run to validate the use of an arousal-based classification for specific emotional consumption goals and to assess the extent to which general and specific emotional goals are actually used by consumers. Next, study 1 manipulated emotional goal specificity in the laboratory, using the context of music consumption, and assessed the postulated mechanisms. Study 2 tested the hedonic adaptation predictions as well as the mediating role of top-of-mind awareness in a longitudinal setting (6 weeks postpurchase), using actual significant purchases.

Pilot Studies

Please see Table 1 for a full description of and findings from the three pilot studies.

In brief, in Pilot 1, two independent coders classified consumers' reported goals for their recent purchases, into various happiness and nonhappiness related categories. Based on these findings, five major goal categories were formulated for use by

Table 1
Summary of Pilot Studies

Study	Method	Goal categories	Results (percent of purchases made with different goals)
Pilot 1 $N = 45$	Participants recalled one relatively important purchase (over $100) in the past month and listed the goal they had in mind when making it.	Two independent judges ($\kappa = .80$) coded goals into three categories: specific happiness (e.g., "relaxation", "fun and excitement"), general happiness (e.g., "feel good", "to be happy"), and other nonhappiness-related goals (e.g., "replacing a broken appliance", "to hear audio better"). They further conferred on the most dominant specific goals, and coded data into them.	General happiness = 33% Specific happiness = 38% Excitement = 53% of specific Relaxation = 47% of specific Non-happiness related = 29%
Pilot 2 $N = 50$	Participants listed all relatively important purchases (over $100) they had made in the past month.	Participants indicated the percentage of these purchases made with each of the following goals: (a) feeling excitement and enjoyment; (b) feeling relaxed or more peaceful and calm; (c) just being happy and feeling good, but with no specific happiness goal; (d) some other happiness goal[a] (write-in); and (e) with no conscious happiness goal in mind.	General happiness = 17.5% Excitement = 23% Relaxation = 16% Other happiness goal = 17.5% Non-happiness related = 26%
Pilot 3 $N = 50$	Participants listed one relatively important purchase (over $100) that they were planning to make in the next month.	Participants indicated their goal for this purchase using the same categories from Pilot 2.	General happiness = 34% Excitement = 18% Relaxation = 14% Other happiness goal = 14% Non-happiness related = 20%

Notes. All pilots were run with MTurk participants; average age ranged from 35 to 36.39 years, and 40%–47.9% of participants in each study were male.
[a]In the "other happiness goal" category, participants wrote in a variety of specific goals, such as, self-improvement (e.g., to feel confident, accomplished), prosocial aims (e.g., a place for my puppy to rest, kindness to others), and satisfying basic needs (e.g., satiate thirst and hunger).

participants in the next two pilots, to self-categorize their purchase goals (past purchases in Pilot 2, prospective purchases in Pilot 3).

The pilots converged in finding that over 70% of consumer purchases have an overt happiness goal (assessed retrospectively or prospectively), with specific emotional goals typically more likely than general ones. In addition, consistent with a categorization based on arousal level, the most popular specific emotional goals were excitement (high arousal) and relaxation (low arousal).

Study 1

This study manipulated the happiness goal (general vs. specific) in the context of actual music consumption. The specific goal was excitement (popular goal from pilots).

Method

Participants from MTurk ($n = 135$, 62.2% male, average age = 34.64 years) participated in exchange for payment. All participants were told the study was about music and were instructed to pick a song with the goal of *maximizing their overall positive feelings*. Then, participants were randomly placed in one of two conditions, where they were asked to achieve this goal by experiencing general positive feelings, such as feeling good and joyous (general condition) or specific positive feelings of excitement and energy (specific condition). Everyone viewed the same selection with four options (dance instrumental, electric violin, contemporary instrumental, instrumental pop); but irrespective of the option they clicked on, everyone listened to the same target song (*Electric Daisy Violin*) for as long as they wished. The target was an unfamiliar, likable, fast-

paced song, which could as easily be chosen with the general goal of feeling good as with the specific goal of excitement (see MDA for pretest).

Immediately after listening to the song, participants rated their current happiness. Next, they were presented with a list of 22 emotions (12 positive, 8 negative, and 2 others) in randomized order, and asked to select all that they were feeling at the moment. The list was compiled on the basis of Barrett and Russell's (1999) classification of emotions and included three positive and two negative items from each of the four categories of emotions (high arousal, low arousal, pleasantness, and engagement; see MDA for details). The target song was expected to elicit high arousal positive emotions; inclusion of other discrete emotions would help assess the breadth of emotions experienced. Two additional items (disappointed and dissatisfied) tested for potential differences in disappointment.

Next, participants indicated how much they felt the focal high arousal emotions (excited, energized, $r = .80$), and disappointment (disappointed, dissatisfied, $r = .76$) at that moment. Then, participants reported their liking of and familiarity with the song.

After a 5-min filler task, participants indicated the extent to which they continued to think of the song, or their top-of-mind awareness of it. Next, they reported their current happiness experienced from the song, followed by their expectations from the song, both general (feeling good) and specific (feeling excited), after making the song selection but before listening to it. Five questions assessed the extent to which their song expectations were met ($\alpha = .93$). Participants also evaluated face validity of the listening instructions. See MDA for items.

At the end of the study, participants indicated their willingness to pay for the song (sliding scale, \$0–\$2.00). They completed demographic questions and were debriefed.

Results

All analyses employed a one-way ANOVA with the emotional goal condition as the independent variable. Results for manipulation and confound checks are reported in the MDA.

Hedonic adaptation and willingness to pay. Individual slopes from the two measures of current happiness from the song (immediately postlistening and postdelay) were extracted to assess hedonic adaptation. Despite having similar happiness levels immediately after listening to the song ($M_{general} = 6.78$, $M_{specific} = 6.88$; $F < 1$, $p > .25$), after a brief delay, participants with a general (vs. specific) emotional goal reported marginally greater happiness (*M*s = 6.37 vs. 5.76; $F(1, 133) = 2.91$, $p = .09$, $\eta_{partial}^2 = .02$), and significantly slower hedonic adaptation (*M*s = −0.40 vs. −1.12; $F(1, 133) = 7.51$, $p = .01$, $\eta_{partial}^2 = .05$). Participants with a general goal were also willing to pay significantly more for the song, suggesting they valued it more (*M*s = \$0.72 vs. \$0.51; $F(1, 133) = 4.09$, $p = .05$, $\eta_{partial}^2 = .03$).

Top-of-mind awareness of song. The two-item index ($r = .93$) revealed participants with a general (vs. specific) emotional goal were more likely to have the song top-of-mind after the delay (*M*s = 6.05 vs. 5.10; $F(1, 133) = 6.11$, $p = .02$, $\eta_{partial}^2 = .04$).

Emotions. An index of emotional breadth was computed as the total number of discrete emotions experienced ($M = 4.33$, $SD = 1.94$). A significant main effect of goal emerged ($F(1, 133) = 5.34$, $p = .02$, $\eta_{partial}^2 = .04$), such that participants with a general (vs. specific) goal experienced a broader set of emotions (*M*s = 4.72 vs. 3.96). Grouping emotions by valence showed no differences in the number of discrete negative emotions by condition ($F(1, 133) = 0.43$, $p > .5$), however, more discrete positive emotions were experienced in the general (vs. specific) goal condition (*M*s = 4.55 vs. 3.59; $F(1, 133) = 8.36$, $p = .004$). Within positive emotions, general (vs. specific) goal participants experienced more discrete low activation emotions (low arousal and pleasantness), *M*s = 3.00 vs. 2.35; $F(1, 133) = 5.11$, $p = .025$, $\eta_{partial}^2 = .04$, but showed no difference in the number of target high arousal emotions, *M*s = 1.04 vs. .91; $F(1, 133) = 0.58$, $p > .25$, or high activation emotions (combined high arousal and engagement), *M*s = 1.55 vs. 1.24; $F(1, 133) = 1.98$, $p = .16$. Thus, having a general happiness goal led participants to feel a broader set of positive emotions, especially low activation emotions.

We also tested whether participants' focus on high arousal emotions in the specific goal condition led them to experience these emotions more intensely, and found goal condition had no effect on the mean rating of high arousal emotions (*M*s = 3.59 vs. 3.60; $F(1, 133) = 0.01$, $p > .5$).

Expectations and disappointment. Analyses revealed that goal condition had no effect on general or specific expectations from the song (both Fs < 1, both ps > .25), nor did it impact the extent to which the song met participants' expectations, the number of disappointment related emotions experienced, or the extent of disappointment experienced (all Fs < 1, all ps > .25).

Mediating process. We expected number of discrete emotions to mediate the effect of goal specificity on hedonic adaptation. We used the PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2012) with 5,000 bootstrapped samples to calculate standard errors and 95% confidence intervals of the effect of emotional goal on hedonic adaptation. Number of discrete emotions mediated the effect of goal on hedonic adaptation (mediated effect = .22, *SE* = .10, 95% CI = 0.05–0.45). Furthermore, adding the top-of-mind awareness measure to the model revealed serial mediation, such that the general (vs. specific) goal expanded the breadth of emotions experienced during consumption, which, in turn, enhanced the extent to which they continued thinking about the song, and the more the person had the song on their mind, the slower the rate of adaptation to it (serial mediated effect = .08, *SE* = .05, 95% CI = 0.02–0.23). A similar mediation analysis with the willingness to pay measure as the dependent variable found a parallel pattern of results (see MDA). Notably, top-of-mind awareness also fully mediated the effect of goal specificity on hedonic adaptation in a single mediation (mediated effect: .26, *SE* = .12, 95% CI = 0.07–0.55).

Study 2

This longitudinal study examined the happiness derived from a meaningful purchase over a 6-week postpurchase period for three goals: general happiness and the two most likely specific emotional goals (excitement and relaxation).

Method

Eighty-seven college students (44.8% male, average age = 21.63) participated for course credit and a chance to win a $100 gift card. There were three data collection periods (T1–T3), each 2 weeks apart. In each period, participants received an email with a link to an online survey which was open for 24 hr. Seventeen participants dropped from T1 to T3, leaving 70 participants (42.9% male, average age = 21.66) for analyses. Results were similar when dropped participants were included.

In T1, participants described a relatively important purchase (over $100) made in the past month with one of the following goals in mind (randomly assigned): (a) become happier or increase the level of joy and happiness in their life (general); (b) become happier by increasing excitement and enjoyment in their life (specific-excitement); (c) become happier by increasing peace-of-mind and relaxation in their life (specific-relaxation). Participants reported the timing and cost of purchase, initial happiness derived from it, and the extent to which they considered the purchase experiential or material. They indicated their age, gender, and race.

In each of the three time periods, participants were reminded of their purchase and reported its contribution to their current happiness as well as overall happiness, top-of-mind awareness of the purchase, and the extent to which it evoked high (enthusiastic, excited, energized) and low arousal (peaceful, calm, relaxed) emotions (see MDA).

Participants completed a second task and several scales in some time periods. Data from these measures are not relevant to the current study, and will not be reported here.

Results

Purchase time (*M* = 2–3 weeks prior to T1) and cost (*M* = $345.10) were used as covariates in the analyses. The conditions did not differ in initial happiness derived from the purchases ($M_{general}$ = 7.04, $M_{excitement}$ = 7.07, $M_{relaxation}$ = 6.76; $F(2, 65) < 1$, $p > .25$). See MDA for examples of purchases. One-way ANOVAs of the high ($\alpha = .84$) and low arousal emotions ($\alpha = .9$) in T1, with goal condition as the between-subjects factor, validated the goal manipulation (see MDA for details).

Because our data included repeated measurements over three time periods, and more than one random factor, we used mixed models with both fixed and random effects to conduct longitudinal analyses of the dependent variables (Judd, Westfall, & Kenny, 2017). First, we estimated models to assess whether the two "specific" goal conditions (i.e., exciting, relaxing) merited separate examination. Separate mixed models were run for each of the dependent variables (current happiness, overall happiness, purchase awareness), with the two "specific" conditions as a fixed between-subjects factor and number of periods and the intercept as random effects. Results revealed no significant main effects or interactions with the condition variable (all $Fs < 2$, all $ps > .2$; see MDA). Thus, data were pooled into one "specific happiness" condition for subsequent analyses.

We next ran mixed models for each of the dependent variables with goal condition (general vs. specific) modeled as the fixed between-subjects factor and random effects estimated for the intercept and number of periods. The pattern of results

Table 2
Results of Linear Mixed-Effects Models for Changes in Current Happiness, Overall Happiness, and Purchase Awareness Over Time

	Current happiness			Overall happiness			Top-of-mind awareness		
	df	*F*	*p*	*df*	*F*	*p*	*df*	*F*	*p*
Time period	1, 64	13.91	.00	1, 64	1.26	.26	1, 64	5.94	.02
Condition	1, 64	0.29	.59	1, 64	0.84	.36	1, 64	0.02	.90
Condition × time period	1, 64	5.69	.02	1, 64	6.20	.01	1, 64	4.06	.05
Timing	1, 64	1.54	.22	1, 64	0.08	.78	1, 64	0.33	.57
Cost	1, 64	7.35	.01	1, 64	3.69	.06	1, 64	2.97	.09

Table 3
Simple-Slope Estimates of Current Happiness, Overall Happiness, and Purchase Awareness Over Time for Participants in the General and Specific Happiness Goals

	General			Specific		
Dependent variable	Estimate (*SE*)	95% confidence interval	*p*	Estimate (*SE*)	95% confidence interval	*p*
Current happiness	−0.18 (.22)	[−0.62, 0.25]	.41	−0.83 (.16)	[−1.15, −0.52]	.00
Overall happiness	0.17 (.20)	[−0.22, 0.56]	.40	−0.44 (.14)	[−0.72, −0.16]	.00
Top-of-mind awareness	−0.05 (.21)	[−0.46, 0.36]	.79	−0.57 (.15)	[−0.87, −0.27]	.00

remained the same when the material-experiential variable was entered in our models as a covariate. Similarly, including age, gender, and race as covariates did not change the pattern of results. The results are presented in Tables 2 and 3, and visually depicted in Figures 1a to 1c.

The mixed models for both happiness variables (*current* and *overall happiness*; see Table 2 and Figures 1a & 1b) revealed significant main effects of time period on happiness, consistent with hedonic adaptation. More importantly, significant interactions between condition and time period emerged for both happiness variables, indicating that happiness derived from the purchase dropped faster for participants with a specific (vs. general) goal (see Table 3 for slope estimates). Contrast analyses revealed that although goal condition had no effect on the happiness variables in T1 ($p > .25$; see figures for means and MDA for contrasts), an advantage of the general goal emerged over time, as participants in the general (vs. specific) goal condition reported significantly more current and overall happiness in T3 (current happiness: $p \leq .001$, 95% CI = 0.68–2.47; overall happiness: $p = .04$, 95% CI = 0.08–2.17).

The pattern of results was similar for *top-of-mind awareness of the purchase*, with a significant main effect of time period and the anticipated interaction between condition and time period. As predicted, top-of-mind awareness of the purchase declined faster over time for participants with a specific (vs. general) goal (see Tables 2 and 3, Figure 1c). Furthermore, although there were no differences by condition in T1 ($p > .25$), participants with a general (vs. specific) goal showed greater top-of-mind awareness of their purchase in T3 ($p = .02$, 95% CI = 0.22–2.46).

Mediating process. To assess whether top-of-mind purchase awareness mediates the effect of happiness goal on hedonic adaptation over time, an index of hedonic adaptation was computed (current happiness, T1–T3). Mediation analysis was conducted using the PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2012), with top-of-mind awareness in T3 as the mediator (happiness goal → purchase awareness → hedonic adaptation index). The analysis used an ordinary-least-squares path analysis to estimate the coefficients, with 5,000 bootstrapped samples to estimate the confidence intervals. As predicted, purchase awareness mediated the effect of happiness goal on hedonic adaptation (mediated effect = .77, *SE* = .39, 95% CI = 0.16–1.69). Hence, a general (vs. specific) goal enhanced the extent to which participants continued thinking about their purchase, which slowed adaptation.

General Discussion

Consumers frequently try to anticipate and attain happiness from consumption (Mellers et al., 1999). Yet, because happiness is destined to adaptation, attaining it continues to be a challenge for

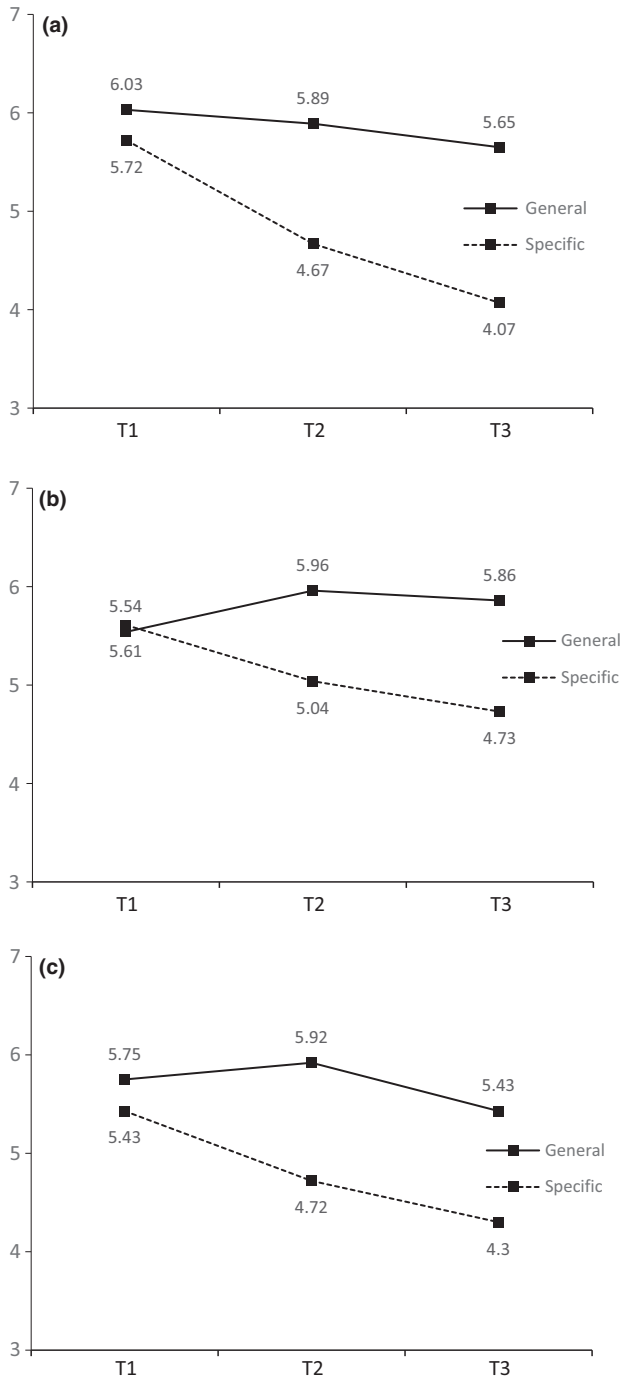

Figure 1. (a) Mean current happiness ratings by condition. (b) Mean overall happiness ratings by condition. (c) Mean top-of-mind purchase awareness ratings by condition.

consumers, and seeking it has been deemed counterproductive (Mauss, Tamir, Anderson, & Savino, 2011). Our research suggests that a crucial missing piece in the pursuit of happiness might be how consumers define their happiness goal. Unlike other domains, where goal specificity has significant advantages, our research suggests that in the realm of happiness, having general (vs. specific) emotional goals may hold the key to a happier state of being. Although goal specificity might not create initial differences in happiness and enjoyment of consumption, the advantage of general goals emerges and increases over time, sustaining higher happiness levels 6 weeks after the initial purchase in our longitudinal study. Thus, our research identifies a novel method of slowing hedonic adaptation.

Notably, while our work shares consistencies with extant affective forecasting and related literatures (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 1999; Cohen et al., 2008; Mellers et al., 1999), past research has generally conceptualized affective forecasts as reflective and reactive, based on consumers' perceptions of how they would inherently respond to an experience. Emotional goals, in contrast, present a more proactive approach to emotions. Our findings suggest that consumers can proactively vary the emotions they seek from an experience, which in turn, can have an impact on their actual emotional experience and ensuing happiness. Hence, our proactive goal-specificity perspective provides an empowering approach, giving consumers more control over the happiness they derive from consumption.

Our findings also have implications for societal wellbeing, given that not only are a majority of decisions motivated by happiness, but there is also a significant tendency to pursue specific happiness goals. A simple change in how people formulate their happiness goals, reframing them in terms of general as opposed to specific positive emotions, could have far-reaching effects for their wellbeing.

It is important to note that our findings may be most relevant for everyday consumption situations where emotional intensity of experiences is not extremely high (in our studies it ranged from low to moderate). However, we speculate that high intensity emotions may also have the potential to influence hedonic adaptation. It is plausible that very high intensity emotional experiences (e.g., profound joy, a deep sense of peace) may remain in consumers' top-of-mind awareness longer, enabling them to derive continued happiness from them. Such intense emotional experiences could also bring lasting joy.

Our research directs attention to a relatively under-researched dimension of emotions: the breath of emotions. Potential areas ripe for future research, using a breadth of emotions perspective, include the formation of self-brand connections and brand loyalty. It is possible that brands which are able to elicit a broader array of emotions may exhibit a

loyalty advantage over time. Future research could also examine the potential pay-offs of building a brand on an intense but narrow experience of emotions (e.g., sheer excitement) versus a broader, and perhaps less intense, repertoire of diverse positive emotions (e.g., exciting, pleasing, relaxing).

In addition, it is plausible that certain types of experiences inherently elicit a broader range of emotions. For instance, moderately arousing experiences (e.g., pleasantness and contentment) tend to elicit broader emotional assessments compared to higher or lower arousal emotions (Cohen et al., 2008). Such experiences could have an inherent hedonic adaptation advantage, which may be worth examining.

Although we did not find any differences in hedonic adaptation by arousal level, it is plausible that different specific emotions may vary in their rate of dissipation, with high arousal emotions eliciting faster adaptation. Such differences might be more likely to emerge when the focus is on the extent to which the emotion is actually experienced (vs. simply used as a goal) during consumption. This issue merits further examination.

We acknowledge limitations of our research. Specifically, it is plausible, use of the potentially abstract term "enjoyment", in Pilots 2 and 3, in the excitement goal category, boosted representation of excitement goals. However, it is important to note that Pilot 1 findings also support the popularity of excitement goals – "excitement" emerged as popular specific goal irrespective of whether "enjoyment" was coded by the judges in the "exciting" or "general" category (*Excitement*-with-enjoyment = 53%; *Excitement*-without-enjoyment = 50%). Similarly, it could be speculated that Study 2 results were muddied by use of the word "enjoyment" in the exciting condition. However, the results of Study 1 (pattern of findings replicated without use of "enjoyment") argues against this possibility. Additionally, if "enjoyment" indeed prompted recall of more general (vs. specific) goal purchases, one would expect a slowdown in hedonic adaptation; but a steep decline still emerged, increasing our confidence in the manipulation.

Finally, would emotional goal specificity effects generalize to the domain of negative emotions, that is, *avoidance* of negative emotions? The advantage of general emotional goals could potentially be reversed in this domain: avoiding a specific negative emotion could distract the consumer from paying attention to or dwelling on other negative emotions in the situation, resulting in a more positive experience overall.

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Supporting Information

Additional supporting information may be found in the online version of this article at the publisher's website:

Appendix S1. Methodological Details Appendix.