Friendship and Happiness in Adolescence

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Consider these two examples of friendship in children's literature. First, E. B. White's beloved *Charlotte's Web* tells the story of the spider Charlotte who devotes her life to saving the life of her friend, the pig Wilbur, by weaving messages into her web. Her words of praise for Wilbur and the ensuing fame Charlotte's web brings to the farm convince the farmer to spare Wilbur's life. As Charlotte nears the end of her life, she answers Wilbur's question about why she helped him saying, "You have been my friend…That in itself is a tremendous thing. …By helping you, perhaps I was trying to lift up my life a trifle. Heaven knows anyone's life can stand a little of that" (White 1952, p. 164). Charlotte understands that her friendship with Wilbur contributes to her own happiness.

Second, J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series has enchanted readers over the past decade (e.g., Rowling 1997). One theme that stands out is the power and importance of friendship. Harry, Ron, and Hermione move through adolescence together, and their friendships deepen and become more complicated. As they battle evil forces and learn about the magical world in which they live, their friendships with one another are a primary source of their happiness. Noted friendship researcher William Bukowski (2001) describes the importance of Harry's friendships this way: "Certainly, Harry's life was changed by his friends. He came from a harsh and unhappy childhood. He was bound for a sullen life of dejection. Then it all changed. He met Ron and Hermione, friendships flourished, and he never, or almost never, looked back" (p. 102).

These two examples provide a backdrop for evaluating the link between friendship and happiness in adolescence. There is an impressive history of research on

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adolescents' peer relations as correlates and predictors of numerous aspects of adjustment, including school adjustment, self-competence and self-esteem, internalizing and externalizing behaviors, and other aspects of social and emotional development. Interest in the special dyadic relationship of friendship took off in the 1980s, and reviews of this burgeoning literature establish the importance of friendships in adolescents' lives (e.g., Bagwell and Schmidt 2011; Ladd 2005; Rubin et al. 2009). Aside from the relatively extensive work on the contributions of friendship to negative affect, happiness (especially positive affect and life satisfaction) has rarely been considered as an antecedent or consequence of adolescents' friendships. Nevertheless, theoretical speculation, lay beliefs, and stories like those of Charlotte and Harry that highlight the importance of social relationships for happiness abound.

In the current chapter, we evaluate the extent to which friendships contribute to happiness. We first consider theory and research on the significance of friendships in adolescence. We then review empirical research that establishes connections between adolescents' experiences in their friendships and their life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect. Finally, we suggest several specific directions for future research as investigation of happiness in adolescence catches up with the growing literature on happiness in adulthood.

The Developmental Significance of Friendship in Adolescence

Friendship is a normative experience in adolescence. Most adolescents name at least one or two best friends and several other close friends (Hartup 1993). Adolescents spend significant amounts of time with their friends—in face to face interactions, talking on the phone, and communicating by email and text messages (Hafner 2009; Johnson 2004; Larson 2001)—and adolescents emphasize companionship, loyalty, intimacy, understanding, and support as requirements for friendship (e.g., Berndt 2004; Buhrmester and Furman 1987).

Harry Stack Sullivan (1953) provided an important theoretical framework for understanding the developmental significance of friendship in adolescence. Sullivan contended that various interpersonal needs arise at each period in development and suggested that particular relationships are best-suited for meeting these needs. The need for interpersonal intimacy emerges in preadolescence, and friendships develop to satisfy this need. The friendships Sullivan described are close, dyadic relationships that are based on affection, reciprocity, and mutual liking.

In specifying the developmental significance of friendship, it is necessary to distinguish between dimensions of friendship that might contribute to adolescents' adjustment in different ways. Willard Hartup first articulated the distinctions among having friends, friendship quality, and the characteristics or identity of friends (e.g., Hartup 1996). With regard to having friends, comparisons of interactions between youths and their friends versus nonfriend acquaintances suggest that friends are more positively engaged with one another—they talk, share, smile, and laugh more with friends than with nonfriends—and they show more of the deeper properties of

their relationships—equality, closeness, and loyalty (Newcomb and Bagwell 1995). In addition, adolescents without friends may be at risk for maladjustment.

A focus on friendship quality recognizes that not all friendships are alike, and friendship quality reflects the relative presence of positive and negative features in the relationship. Positive features include companionship, closeness, providing help, intimacy, and loyalty. Negative features include conflict and dominance. Numerous studies show links between friendship quality and various dimensions of concurrent and future adjustment, including self-worth, social competence, and school adjustment (see Berndt 2002, for a review).

Individual characteristics of each adolescent in a friendship pair contribute to the outcomes associated with that relationship; therefore, the characteristics or identity of friends warrant attention. For example, being friends with another who is aggressive versus prosocial or who is highly engaged in school versus at risk for dropping out is expected to have implications for one's own adjustment (e.g., Granic and Dishion 2003). Existing research indicates concurrent and longitudinal linkages between these three friendship dimensions and aspects of adolescent adjustment. Although we expect all three to be associated with adolescents' happiness, there are potentially differential associations between each dimension and various components of happiness.

It may be a simple platitude to suggest that friendships contribute to happiness. After all, ancient philosophers, literary geniuses, and even everyday greeting cards suggest as much. When children and adolescents are asked what makes them happy, important people in their lives, including friends, are a common answer (Chaplin 2009; Magen 1998). In an oft-cited quote from Sullivan's lectures, he identifies what is special about friendships, describing them as "very different" from any other relationship because a child "begins to develop a real sensitivity to what matters to another person. And this is not in the sense of 'what should I do to get what I want,' but instead 'what should I do to contribute to the happiness or to support the prestige and feeling of worth-whileness of my chum'" (p. 245). Interestingly, although numerous empirical investigations have examined whether friendships contribute to the latter of these outcomes—self-esteem and feelings of self-worth—few uniquely consider happiness as a consequence of children's and adolescents' experiences with their friends.

Measuring Happiness and Friendship in Adolescence

Current definitions of happiness, or subjective well-being, typically include three components—life satisfaction, the presence of positive emotions, and the absence of negative emotions (Argyle 2001; Miao et al. 2013; Pavot and Diener 2013). Satisfaction with life is the cognitive component of happiness and is typically measured with scales that index the satisfaction versus dissatisfaction one feels about his or her life in general or within specific domains. Positive and negative affect both comprise the emotional component of happiness. This component is often measured with questions about positive and negative mood or by creating a score to reflect the

balance of positive and negative affect generally experienced. Experience sampling methods (ESM) have also been used to assess specific moments of happiness as well as to index a trait-like indicator of a person's general happiness by combining multiple responses over a period of time (Csikszentmihalyi and Hunter 2003).

Although studies with adults often include multiple indicators of happiness, including both the cognitive and emotional components, this is not the case with research on friendships in adolescence. Instead, some researchers have assessed happiness as part of the broader construct of adolescent adjustment (e.g., Demir and Urberg 2004); others include only one dimension (typically negative affect); still others use single items of happiness. For example, Holder and Coleman (2008) used an item assessing "overall happiness" and included self-, parent-, and teacher-reports on an individual child's happiness.

Huebner and colleagues developed two measures of life satisfaction for use with children and adolescents (see Huebner and Diener 2008). First, the Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (Huebner 1991), a measure of global life satisfaction, is used to assess adolescents' perceptions that they experience their lives as overall satisfying versus dissatisfying. Second, Huebner (1994) developed the Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale, which assesses satisfaction in five domains—family, friends, school, self, and general living environment. The items about satisfaction with friends tap into multiple aspects of adolescents' perceptions of the adequacy of their friendships, many that are frequently captured in measures of friendship quality as well, including companionship, help, and conflict.

Reciprocal friendship nominations are the gold standard for assessing friendship in adolescence. Adolescents are asked to name their friends (one best friend, a limited number of friends, or an unlimited number), and a reciprocal friendship exists when the nominated friend also names the adolescent as a friend. Reciprocal friendships are used to determine whether adolescents have a friend or are friendless, and they are also counted as a measure of friendship quantity (see Bagwell and Schmidt 2011). Friendship quality is typically assessed with self-report questionnaires (e.g., Furman and Buhrmester 1985; Bukowski et al. 1994; Parker and Asher 1993). These instruments include items about positive and negative features of friendships, and adolescents report the degree to which each characteristic describes their relationship. Each dimension of friendship can then be considered separately or combined into summary positive (e.g., companionship, intimacy, closeness, help) and negative (e.g., conflict, antagonism) indicators of quality.

Empirical Evidence for the Link Between Friendship and Life Satisfaction

The antecedents, correlates, and consequences of life satisfaction in adolescence have received limited attention despite the fact that life satisfaction is a frequently and thoroughly studied construct in adulthood. Three studies evaluating adolescents' peer experiences suggest connections between friendship and satisfaction with life, especially in the context of peer victimization. Goswami (2012) evaluated children's

and adolescents' reports of a variety of social relationships and their global life satisfaction. Positive friendship quality, negative friendship quality, and self-reports of victimization all made unique contributions to life satisfaction in expected directions, though they were not as strong as the contributions of family relationships. In a second study, receiving prosocial acts from peers and experiencing low levels of overt physical or verbal victimization by peers predicted overall life satisfaction in adolescence, suggesting the importance of both avoiding negative peer interactions and experiencing positive peer relations in adolescents' appraisal of their life satisfaction (Martin and Huebner 2007). Third, using a short-term longitudinal design, Martin et al. (2008) examined the direction of the association between life satisfaction and victimization and found that adolescents who are dissatisfied with their lives during one school year are at risk for relational victimization and for not experiencing prosocial interactions with peers the following year.

The results of several studies converge to suggest the importance of taking into account the role of friends vis-à-vis other relationships, especially family relationships, because friends and peers are perhaps outshined by parents and family relationships in the strength of their association with life satisfaction. Consider these two examples: Dew and Huebner (1994) found that self-concept in the domain of peer relations was associated with global life satisfaction, yet the correlations were not as strong as the link between self-concept in parent relations and life satisfaction. In a study of urban adolescents, support from peers was positively correlated with life satisfaction, yet peer support did not contribute uniquely to predictions of satisfaction with life above and beyond the personality characteristics of hope and optimism, even though family support did (Vera et al. 2008).

An alternative way to consider interpersonal predictors of adolescents' life satisfaction is to evaluate the characteristics of adolescents with very high life satisfaction, and aspects of peer relationships (e.g., support from friends) distinguish adolescents with high versus average versus low life satisfaction (Gilman and Huebner 2006; Suldo and Huebner 2006). Overall, though, it is difficult to draw conclusions about the role of adolescents' friendships in their life satisfaction in part because the existing studies use very different measures of peer relations and do not isolate friendship as a unique relationship in adolescents' lives. In the studies discussed above, positive peer experiences include specific friendship experiences, peer support, low levels of peer victimization, and being the recipient of peers' prosocial behaviors. Additional research considering specific dimensions of friendship—having friends, friendship quality, and the characteristics of friends—and their contributions to adolescents' life satisfaction is needed.

Empirical Evidence for the Link Between Friendship and Positive Affect

Spending time with friends is associated with increasing positive affect from preadolescence into adolescence (Larson and Richards 1991). Using experience sampling methods, fifth graders reported high levels of positive affect when spending time

with friends, as compared to with parents or alone, and this level of positive affect steadily increased from fifth to ninth grade, suggesting an increase in the happiness that interactions with friends bring to adolescents (Larson and Richards 1991). A decade later, Csikszentmihalyi and Hunter (2003) used experience sampling to evaluate happiness in a national sample of adolescents from sixth through twelfth grades. Among the top ten most frequent activities in which adolescents engage, talking with friends was the activity associated with the highest levels of happiness, and among all possible others with whom an adolescent can spend time, the highest levels of happiness were reported when they were with their friends.

Friendship quality is also associated with the positive affect dimension of happiness (Hussong 2000; Kipp and Weiss 2012). Hussong (2000) considered positive and negative friendship quality as predictors of positive affect among high school students. Boys who reported higher friendship quality also reported experiencing more positive emotions in the past 6 months. Hussong (2000) also considered a typological approach to friendship quality and grouped adolescents according to the degree of positive and negative friendship quality they reported. Boys in the positive engagement group (high positive and low negative features) reported greater positive affect than the disengaged, mixed engagement, and negative engagement groups. Girls in the positive and mixed engagement groups reported greater positive affect than girls in the disengaged group. Thus, the positive features of friendship, especially in the absence of negative features, seem particularly salient for the emotional adjustment of boys.

In a more recent investigation of associations among social support and all three components of happiness, Morgan and colleagues found that perceived social support from friends was correlated with life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect in the expected directions (Morgan et al. 2011). However, when analyses considered whether support from friends contributed to subjective well-being above and beyond the contributions of family relationships, support from friends added uniquely only to the prediction of positive affect. Overall, findings with a variety of methods converge to indicate that friends may be especially important as a determinant of adolescents' day-to-day positive affect and mood (e.g., Cheng and Furnham 2002; Csikszentmihalyi and Hunter 2003; Morgan et al. 2011).

Empirical Evidence for the Link Between Friendship and Negative Affect

The component of happiness that has been investigated most thoroughly with regard to adolescents' friendships is the absence of negative affect, especially loneliness and depression. These studies are grounded in a developmental psychopathology perspective that emphasizes peer relations as potential risk and protective factors in the emergence of problem behavior and emotional maladjustment (e.g., Bukowski et al. 2006). Unlike the associations between friendship and positive affect or life satisfaction, multiple dimensions of adolescents' relationships with

their friends have been implicated in the experience of loneliness and depression—having friends, friendship quality, and the characteristics of friends.

Loneliness involves significant negative affect, including feelings of sadness, longing, and emptiness, related to feeling isolated or distanced from others (Parkhurst and Hopmeyer 1999). These emotions are associated with a person's perceptions that his or her social relationships are lacking in quantity and/or quality (Asher and Paquette 2003). Models of loneliness suggest that withdrawn social behavior, peer relationship difficulties, and an attributional style that emphasizes stable and internal attributions for social failures all contribute cumulatively to loneliness and social dissatisfaction (Asher et al. 1990; Rubin et al. 1990). Further specifications of this model suggest that friendship may play an important mediating role in the link between early behavioral characteristics, such as social withdrawal, and loneliness in adolescence (Pedersen et al. 2007). Anxiety and social withdrawal as well as disruptiveness in early childhood create a context in which children have difficulty making and keeping friends in middle childhood. In turn, friendship difficulties contribute to loneliness in early adolescence.

In a test of these models of loneliness, Renshaw and Brown (1993) found that both concurrently and over the course of a school year, having few or no friends was associated with loneliness, and losing friends led to increases in loneliness. Loneliness is felt more acutely by youth without friends than those with friends (e.g., Bowker and Spencer 2010; Parker and Asher 1993); by youth with fewer friends than those with more friends (e.g., Nangle et al. 2003; Pederson et al. 2007); and by youth with lower-quality than higher-quality relationships (e.g., Bukowski et al. 1993; Hoza et al. 2000). These associations hold up both concurrently and over time. For example, having more friends and having-higher-quality friendships help children avoid loneliness across school transitions (e.g., Kingery et al. 2011).

The fact that numerous dimensions of friendship are tied to loneliness suggests that it is more than a fickle association. First, having a mutual friend (versus not) satisfies interpersonal needs and promotes positive feelings about the self and other that are incompatible with loneliness. Second, links between the number of friends and loneliness may reflect the fact that one friend may not be able to satisfy all of a person's needs (Bowker and Spencer 2010; Parker et al. 1999). In adolescence, especially, when the structure of peer groups changes to emphasize multiple levels of relationships (e.g., "best friends" versus "close friends" versus "friends") and when friendships become more differentiated, an adolescent may have multiple friends, each of whom fulfills a distinct need. An adolescent may have one friend from whom he or she solicits emotional support and another friend with whom he or she shares a rousing game of chess. Third, friendship quality may be the dimension of friendship most antithetical to loneliness. Relationships that are high on all of the positive features adolescents expect from friends are those most likely to contribute to one another's happiness as Sullivan described.

Finally, evidence is mounting to suggest that one key way in which friendships in adolescence stave off feelings of loneliness and negative affect is by acting as a buffer between other negative experiences and emotional distress. Here are just several examples. Having close friends protects socially anxious adolescents from

loneliness; socially anxious youth reported high levels of loneliness, but those with more close friends were less lonely than those without many close friends (Erath et al. 2010). Associations between peer victimization and loneliness were attenuated among adolescents with high- (compared to low-) quality friendships (Woods et al. 2009). In addition, preadolescents who experienced peer victimization had increasing internalizing difficulties from one school year to the next if they did not have a best friend, yet peer victimization and changes in internalizing difficulties were unrelated for preadolescents with a best friend (Hodges et al. 1999). Together these findings are suggestive of an important protective role for friendships in adolescence. Although not yet tested directly, having close friends with whom to have fun, share secrets, and engage in intimate conversations may protect adolescents' feelings of happiness in the face of other negative peer experiences.

Just as numerous studies support concurrent links between friendship and low levels of loneliness, evidence supports the hypothesis that having friends and having high-quality friendships are associated with low levels of depression symptoms. In addition, loneliness may mediate the link between friendship difficulties and depression. In this conceptualization, depression is expected to result from poor friendship relations only when children are unhappy and feel lonely (Boivin et al. 1995). It is the dissatisfaction that results from friendship difficulties that contributes to depression symptoms. In support of these ideas, Nangle et al. (2003) found that loneliness mediated the link between having few friends and/or low-quality friendships and depression.

In adolescence, many different aspects of friendships are linked with depression symptoms, including being friendless (e.g., Bagwell et al. 1998); low friendship quality (e.g., Burk and Laursen 2005; La Greca and Harrison 2005); being friends with others who have high levels of depression symptoms (e.g., Giletta et al. 2011; van Zalk et al. 2010); and having many friends with positive characteristics or few friends with negative characteristics (e.g., Simpkins et al. 2008). Recent longitudinal evidence supports an association between friendships and changes in depression. Brendgen and colleagues identified three different trajectories of depressed mood in early adolescence. Compared to friendless youth, youth with nondepressed friends did not experience as much increase in depression, but youth with (versus without) depressed friends showed a greater increase in depressed mood across early adolescence (Brendgen et al. 2010). In addition, Prinstein and colleagues identified peer contagion effects for depression (e.g., Giletta et al. 2011; Prinstein 2007; Stevens and Prinstein 2005). In one study, having a best friend with high levels of depressive symptoms predicted increases in girls' own levels of depression over time (Stevens and Prinstein 2005). Notably, among adults, this emotion contagion has been established for happiness as well (Fowler and Christakis 2008). Across time, happiness spreads, and those who are surrounded by happy others are more likely to be happy in the future.

Much of the research on friendship and depression is motivated by the hypothesis that friendship difficulties contribute to symptoms of depression. In addition, interpersonal theories of depression suggest that depressive symptoms also interfere with the development of peer relations (Hammen 2006; Rudolph 2009).

A growing body of research suggests that depression contributes to the development of problematic peer relations, including peer victimization (Kochel et al. 2012; Tran et al. 2012) and low friendship quality (Brendgen et al. 2002; Prinstein et al. 2005). Depression not only compromises friendship quality but also places youth at risk for few or no mutual friendships. For example, maladaptive relationship appraisals, in combination with depressive symptoms, might cause depressed youth to disengage from their social environments (Rudolph et al. 2008) thereby limiting opportunities for participating in friendships. In turn, youth may not initiate friendships with depressed peers whose disengagement is interpreted as social disinterest. Social-behavioral deficits (e.g., excessive reassurance seeking and negative self-focus) might impede friendship formation and maintenance if such deficits irritate peers or preclude reciprocal self-disclosure and, in turn, inhibit the development of intimacy (e.g. Prinstein et al. 2005). Overall, then, there is strong support for the association between friendship and negative affect, especially loneliness and depression. Nevertheless, researchers should aim to explore more fully both the dimensions of friendship that are more or less associated with loneliness and depression across time and the processes through which loneliness and depression contribute to friendship difficulties or vice versa.

Conclusions and Directions for Future Research

The question about the role of friendships in adolescents' happiness is ripe for further empirical investigation and theoretical consideration. As our review suggests, correlational research supports the conclusion that friendship is associated with happiness, yet stopping at that conclusion is hardly satisfactory. Moving beyond requires additional systematic investigation, and there are at least four important considerations in designing such research: (1) distinguishing between happiness and other aspects of well-being, (2) embracing a multidimensional perspective on friendship, (3) understanding moderators and mediators, and (4) moving beyond cross-sectional to longitudinal investigations.

Subjective Well-being versus Well-being It is important to distinguish between subjective well-being (i.e., happiness) and well-being as assessed by a set of more objective variables including health, education, and income (Argyle 2001). Nobel laureate Amartya Sen writes extensively about the human capabilities approach (see Sen 1999). Sen suggests that a focus on subjective factors like happiness can lead to problems such as "adaptive preferences" in which one may settle when he or she should not be satisfied, or one may be unhappy despite having many objective goods. He argues that we should instead focus on the human capabilities that promote agency, that are truly valued, and that allow us to be and to do. Philosopher Martha Nussbaum (see Nussbaum 2011) suggests ten central human capabilities. One of these is *affiliation*, another is *emotions*, and a third is *play*. It is easy to

envision how friendship might be involved in each of these capabilities—being able to show concern for others, engage in social interaction, laugh, enjoy leisure activities, love and care for others, and form attachments. At the heart of the capabilities approach is the understanding that functional capabilities are a part of well-being and should be valued rather than subjective factors such as happiness.

A distinction between happiness and well-being may be helpful for understanding situations in which adolescents report happiness and satisfaction but are not engaged in behaviors leading to positive well-being (and, in fact, may be involved in behaviors leading to maladjustment). For example, deviancy training explains the process through which antisocial adolescent friends reinforce one another's problem talk and behavior, leading to increased delinquent and risky behaviors (e.g., Granic and Dishion 2003). In these friendships, positive affect tends to follow deviant talk. Friendships that are organized around deviant talk promote behaviors, including substance use, violence, and delinquency, that are not conducive to objective well-being, yet they may be highly satisfying and enjoyable to the participants and involve significant levels of positive affect.

A Multidimensional Perspective on Friendship and Multiple Measures of Friendship and Happiness Additional systematic research on friendship and happiness in adolescence should continue to evaluate multiple dimensions of friendship, and ideally, multiple measures of friendship (e.g., having friends, friendship quality, and the characteristics of friends) will be considered in the same study. In addition, considering less frequently studied aspects of friendship such as gaining or losing friends, negative friendship quality, and the stability of friendships as predictors and consequences of happiness is warranted.

A related issue that has been addressed with adults is whether the quantity or quality of friendships is most strongly linked with happiness, and the conclusion is that relationship quality is a better predictor than the number of close relationships (e.g., Demir et al. 2013; Saphire-Bernstein and Taylor 2013). In studies with adolescents, measures of the number of friends and the quality of friendships have rarely been considered simultaneously. In one study, however, Demir and Urberg (2004) found that for boys, friendship quality was associated with better emotional adjustment (happiness and depressed mood), and having more friendships was indirectly associated with better emotional adjustment through its association with friendship quality. Findings about the salience of quality rather than quantity of friendships in predicting adjustment are consistent with developmental theory suggesting that close intimate friendships are more critical in adolescence than popularity or having many friends. Nevertheless, the number of friends has been linked with happiness, especially negative affect. For example, Nangle et al. (2003) found that friendship quantity and quality were correlated with loneliness among boys, but for girls, only quantity was related to loneliness.

Lucas and colleagues (e.g., Lucas and Dyrenforth 2006; Lucas et al. 2008) have argued that the contribution of social relationships to happiness has been exaggerated in part because of shared method variance that results from reliance on self-report measures of relationship quality and life satisfaction. Additional research is clearly

needed that incorporates not only multiple measures of friendship and happiness but also multiple reporters. For example, measures of friendship quality can be obtained from the friends in addition to the target adolescent; self-report measures of happiness can be augmented by reports from parents, teachers, and friends (e.g., Holder and Coleman 2008). Much of Lucas and colleagues' discussion about the size of the effect between close relationships and happiness does not apply directly to research with adolescents—the comparison between the effect size for relationship variables versus income or research on marital status and happiness. Nevertheless, Lucas et al. raise important questions for future research with adolescents. How do friendships compare with other relationships (for adolescents, parent relationships might be the most important comparison) and other life domains (e.g., school adjustment) in their effect on happiness? Our review of the literature suggests that friendships are indeed central contributors to adolescents' adjustment and happiness. At the same time, we agree with Lucas et al. (2008) that additional evidence is needed to better understand the size of the effect on happiness, specifically, and the role of friendships in relation to other important contributors to adolescents' happiness.

Efforts to gain a more complete picture of the role friendships play in adolescents' happiness should also attend to broader definitions of friendship, such as those forged via technology. For example, a recent study with college students evaluated connections between "Facebook friends" and subjective well-being and found that the number of Facebook friends was directly associated with subjective well-being, and this link was not mediated by perceptions of social support from these friends (Kim and Lee 2011). Similarly, the time adolescents spent with Instant Messaging (IM) was related to their life satisfaction; adolescents' use of IM encouraged more time with their friends, which in turn predicted higher friendship quality and subsequently greater life satisfaction (Valkenburg and Peter 2007). As adolescents engage more and more in social networking sites and establish and maintain relationships with friends in new ways, it is necessary to expand our definitions of friendship and consider the role that these friends play in happiness.

Understanding Moderators and Mediators of the Friendship-Happiness Link As the research connecting friendship to the negative affect dimension of happiness indicates, there are numerous potential moderators of the friendship-happiness association that warrant empirical attention. Age, gender, culture, and developmental tasks are four potentially important moderators to consider. First, as just one example of age as a possible moderator, a developmental perspective on loneliness suggests that what contributes most might differ from childhood to adolescence to adulthood (Asher and Paquette 2003; Parkhurst and Hopmeyer 1999). Young children, for example, might be particularly lonely when they lack friends' companionship—not having someone to sit with at lunch. However, in adolescence, loneliness might be strongly related to lacking close, intimate friends because of the importance of disclosure and emotional support at this age. Second, as discussed above, gender differences emerge in studies of both friendship and positive affect and friendship and negative affect suggesting that the role of friendship experiences in the emotional component of happiness may differ for girls and boys; however, it is premature to

draw strong conclusions about gender as a moderator of the friendship-happiness link. Third, research on college students in the United States, Jordan, and Iran offers a glimpse at the importance of considering culture as a moderator variable (Brannan et al. 2013). Students in all three countries who reported high levels of social support from family also reported greater life satisfaction and positive affect and less negative affect, yet only in the United States was support from friends also linked to all three aspects of happiness. Finally, to the extent that adolescents are experiencing shifts in interpersonal relationships, including increased individuation from parents and the establishment of romantic relationships, the role of friendships in happiness may change. For example, Demir (2010) found that friendship quality forecasted greater happiness for college students not involved in a romantic relationship, but friendship quality did not predict happiness for students involved in a romantic relationship when the quality of relationships with parents and romantic partners was also taken into account.

Given the associations between friendship experiences and happiness among adolescents, an important step is to consider *why* and *in what ways* friendship experiences contribute to happiness. In other words, what are the mediators of the friendship-happiness link? One possibility is that friendship offers provisions that allow adolescents to satisfy important psychological needs. This conceptualization of friendship and need fulfillment draws from numerous psychological theories suggesting that our behavior is centered on fulfilling multiple basic needs (see Baumeister and Leary 1995; Buhrmester 1996; Deci and Ryan 2000, for reviews). Underlying theories of need fulfillment is the assumption that satisfying emerging needs is necessary for well-being, for successfully achieving various developmental tasks, and for happiness (e.g., Deci and Ryan 2000). Developmental models (e.g., Buhrmester 1996; Sullivan 1953) suggest that the prominence of different relationships and different features of relationships might change across the lifespan. For example, numerous empirical studies identify the importance of friends as a source of intimacy in adolescence and as contributing to important developmental tasks of adolescence including identity development and individuation from parents. In contrast, companionship is a provision consistently offered by friends throughout the lifespan. Various provisions of friendship might allow for the satisfaction of basic needs, including autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci and Ryan 2000), which in turn, is expected to lead to happiness and well-being (Demir and Özdemir 2010). Further investigation of need fulfillment and other possible explanations of the link between friendship and happiness is a valuable direction for research. For example, among adults, the provision of social support is a primary mechanism through which relationships affect health and well-being (Saphire-Bernstein and Taylor 2013).

Moving to Longitudinal Designs Although much of the existing work on friendship and happiness involves cross-sectional designs, longitudinal designs are critical for at least two reasons. First, they offer the potential for better understanding the developmental issues at play in the links between friendship and happiness. For example, the theories of need fulfillment described above suggest important developmental

shifts in the interpersonal needs most salient at particular ages. Longitudinal designs can help elucidate potential developmental changes in how friendship and happiness are related at particular ages, whether certain aspects of friendship are most associated with specific components of happiness at certain ages, and whether the connections between friendships and happiness wax and wane throughout development.

Second, longitudinal designs allow for more clear specification of the direction of the effect between friendship and happiness. Although the assumption made in many correlational, cross-sectional studies is that friendship contributes to happiness, it is also likely that adolescents who are happy are more successful in the peer world. Interpersonal theories of depression suggest as much (e.g., Rudolph 2009; Rudolph et al. 2008). Likewise, Lyubomirsky et al. (2005) provide extensive evidence to suggest that happy adults have more and stronger friendships and are viewed as more likeable than less happy adults. There are likely complex transactions between friendship and happiness such that having good friends leads to positive affect and life satisfaction and protects against negative affect. In turn, adolescents who are happier may be more successful in forming and maintaining friendships. Happy adolescents are expected to evoke positive responses from others, including positive reinforcement and positive social overtures. Peers may be more attracted to them because they seem friendly and fun to be around, and once friendships are formed, happy (compared to unhappy) adolescents may have an easier time maintaining those relationships—they may be better prepared to resolve conflicts with friends and more successful eliciting support from friends. Longitudinal studies that allow for testing transactional models of happiness and friendship over time are needed.

These and other directions for future research will help us better understand how, in what ways, and under what conditions friendships both contribute to and are facilitated by happiness. As a result, we will have scientific evidence to more carefully evaluate and understand the centrality of friendship in the happiness of Charlotte and Wilbur; Harry, Ron, and Hermione; and the rest of us.

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