



## The Happiness Fantasy

*Carl Cederström*

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## **The Happiness Fantasy** Carl Cederström

In this devastatingly witty new book, Carl Cederström traces our present-day conception of happiness from its roots in early-twentieth-century European psychiatry, to the Beat generation, to Ronald Reagan and Donald Trump. He argues that happiness is now defined by a desire to be "authentic," to experience physical pleasure, and to cultivate a quirky individuality. But over the last fifty years, these once-revolutionary ideas have been co-opted by corporations and advertisers, pushing us to live lives that are increasingly unfulfilling, insecure and narcissistic.

In an age of increasing austerity and social division, Cederström argues that a radical new dream of happiness is gathering pace. There is a vision of the good life which promotes deeper engagement with the world and our place within it, over the individualism and hedonism of previous generations. Guided by this more egalitarian worldview, we can reinvent ourselves and our societies.

## **The Happiness Fantasy Details**

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## From Reader Review The Happiness Fantasy for online ebook

### Michael Huang says

An interesting narrative that traces the idea of happiness-as-self-actualization from Wilhelm Reich in the 1920s to the hippies in 60s, and then to the corporate-friendly version today.

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### Danessa says

The happiness fantasy revolves around ideas of self-actualization, authenticity and pleasure-seeking that arose from the work and thought of Wilhelm Reich in the 1920s, were developed by the human potential movement in the 1960s and 1970s and were commercialized by that same movement in the 1980s and 1990s.

In becoming popularized and commercialized, their problematic, contradictory nature has become apparent, rendering the happiness fantasy increasingly untenable.

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### Alice Maldonado Gallardo says

Definitely thought-provoking. However, I still think we need a balance, like everything else in the universe it seems. A balance between the individual and the social/community goals of happiness. Life is too short to go to extremes and you'll miss the pleasures of both if you do.

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### Richard Finkelson says

The book makes good on its main theme to show how the pursuit and definition of happiness radically changed between the 1960's and today - co-opting what was an attempt to "find oneself" in an attempt to be free of the burdens of a capitalist society, into a more selfish, gross hedonistic and material journey. It is clear from this that the more popular definitions of pleasure and happiness do not result in a happier society and so I am left wondering what fantasy is actually worth pursuing.

I could have done without all of the Trump bashing. I understand he is a symbol of the author's point but it gives the book both a dated and partisan slant which I think undercuts an interesting, if cursory, exploration of the topic.

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### Yogesh Tak says

the happiness fantasy is revealing itself to be just that: a fantasy.

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### **Supipi Perera says**

Thought provoking. This book gives us some history of why the world is today. It's worrisome to think generations have been manipulated into thinking about happiness the way Cederstrom has described. I recommend this book to anyone who wants to understand why the world makes the decisions it makes to find happiness that has been constructed by a few during the sexual revolution.

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### **Chayong says**

Awful. Read via Blinkist.

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