components: positive emotions, negative emotions, judgments about one’s life as a whole, and judgments about satisfaction with specific aspects of life, such as work, leisure time, friends, and family (Diener, Scollon, & Lucas, 2004). The role of positive and negative emotions is of particular interest. Although we tend to think of happiness and sadness as opposites (i.e., if one feels happy, one can’t feel sad), research shows that this is not always the case (D. Watson & Tellegen, 1985). For example, when moving out of their dormitory at the end of the school year, many college students reported feeling excited about summer vacation yet also sad to leave their friends behind (J. T. Larsen, McGraw, & Cacioppo, 2001). More generally, when looking over our lives, we make somewhat independent assessments of the amount of joy and pleasure we feel, and the amount of sadness and worry (Bradburn, 1969; Lucas, Diener, & Suh, 1996). Happiness is associated with a tendency to experience more positive than negative emotion, but a person doesn’t have to completely avoid sadness in order to feel happy. Moreover, it is the frequency of this balance, not the intensity of emotions, that is critical (Diener, Sandvik, & Pavot, 1991). Happy people are frequently more happy than sad, but they do not necessarily report feelings of intense rapture or euphoria.

1. The Advantages of Being Happy

Happiness is associated with a wide variety of positive outcomes. Compared to unhappy people, happy people are more creative, sociable, and energetic, and more caring, helpful, and involved in community affairs (Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, in press). They also appear to live longer. Danner, Snowdon, and Friesen (2001) studied handwritten autobiographies of 180 Catholic nuns, composed when the nuns were in their early 20s. Each sister was asked to write a short sketch of her life at the time she entered a convent, and these autobiographies were later coded for the presence of positive emotional content. Figure 5.13 shows that women who expressed the most positive emotion lived nearly seven years longer than those who expressed the least positive emotion. It is especially notable that these effects appeared more than 50 years after the essays were written.

![Figure 5.13](image-url)

**Figure 5.13**

Happiness and Longevity

Nuns who wrote positively toned autobiographies in their early 20s lived longer than those whose autobiographies were less positive.