

## **For Immediate Release**

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### **Pill-Free Happiness?**

#### **The Mission Is Possible . . . But Not Always Practical.**

*Blair Lewis, a.k.a. The Happiness Doctor, weighs in on the “medication vs. meditation”  
debate sparked by the infamous comments of Tom Cruise.*

**Honesdale, PA** (July 2005)—Tom Cruise really has the country talking about mental illness. On one hand, we have the actor and his supporters saying, “Mood altering drugs are bad, bad, bad. There are *always* better ways to deal with mental health issues.” On the other hand, we have a white-coated army of doctors poised ready to write prescriptions for everything from “the blahs” to clinical depression to Social Anxiety Disorder (formerly known as “shyness”). The gulf between the “Pull-Yourself-Up-By-Your-Bootstraps Brigade” and the “Chemical Imbalance Society” has never seemed wider. Isn’t there a non-polarized voice of reason to advise a confused and conflicted public?

Enter Blair Lewis, PA, known to his patients as “The Happiness Doctor.” A holistic physician assistant and author of *Happiness: The Real Medicine and How It Works* (Himalayan Institute Press, 2005, ISBN-13: 978-0-8938-9245-6; ISBN-10: 0-89389-245-9; \$14.95), Lewis believes that the “right” treatment depends wholly on the individual.

“I think it’s good that Tom Cruise has us focusing some real attention on the subject of mental health,” says Lewis. “Clearly, there *are* too many antidepressants being prescribed. Even most conventional physicians will agree with that. But also, I don’t think you can say that it’s *never* appropriate to treat depression or anxiety pharmaceutically. Whether the solution lies in the pill bottle, the health food store, the therapist’s office or the yoga mat depends very much on the patient and his or her unique situation.”

So what factors determine whether a depressed or anxious patient should go the “prescription” route or a more “natural” route? Lewis lists a handful of them.

• **Finances.** The harsh reality is that money *is* an issue for most people. Quite often, health insurance won't cover extended talk therapy sessions, natural herbs and supplements, massages and the like—and many people may not have the funds to pursue such remedies on their own. Further, the root cause of emotional dis-ease—too much work and too little time to relax—is often necessary to keep a roof over the family's head. “If you're so stressed out that it's harming your health, and your choices are to cut your work hours in half or go on an anti-anxiety drug, you're probably going to choose the latter,” says Lewis. “In fact, that's *why* people have come to demand a pill for their problems. Our society simply doesn't lend itself to long periods of quiet introspection.”

• **Family situation.** Lewis acknowledges that for a patient with a less-than-ideal family structure, natural remedies simply may not be feasible. “If someone is a single parent of four kids who works two jobs, how will he or she have time to practice yoga every day for an hour?” he says. “Even if it's really the best thing for that person, it's just not going to happen. Likewise, if one of those kids has a behavioral problem that is disrupting the rest of the family, it's much easier to put him on an ADD drug than to work with him in more time- and attention-intensive ways. People have to do what works for them in *reality*, not in theory.”

• **The severity of pain a person is experiencing.** “When a person is drowning in the ocean, just being able to get one hand on a lifeboat is huge,” Lewis points out. “A good anti-depressant, for example, can be just such a lifeboat. That doesn't mean you want to live in the lifeboat forever. Eventually, you want to get back to safe, solid ground. A drug can be a great help in getting you to shore. When you feel more in control, you can work on the issues that are causing your depression.”

• **The desire to do the hard work of going a more natural route.** Here's the truth that's hard for the anti-pharmaceutical types to accept: some people really *do* just want a quick fix. Getting to the root of an emotional problem is hard work. It's highly participatory. It requires a commitment of time, money and mental energy that some people aren't willing or able to make. That's why patients have demanded “happiness in a pill” in the first place—and the medical establishment has complied. “Many people are willing to settle for 70 percent happiness rather than going for 100 percent,” says Lewis. “The pill is an easy route and many people just don't want to risk going back into the hell they fear is waiting if they go off it. You have to trust that people know what's best for them. Let them live their life.”

Here's the bottom line: weigh all the factors that make up your life and you'll come to a solution that makes sense for you and your family.

“Let me give you an example,” says Lewis. “Let's say you're miserable in your job, but the money is good and keeps your family financially stable. A prescription to help you cope with your anxiety *until* you can figure out a way to better your situation is better than having a complete breakdown, losing your job and losing your home. Whatever promotes healthy, stable, empowered families is a good solution.”

For all his open-mindedness, it's hard to miss the fact that Lewis prefers to see medication as a stopgap measure rather than a lifetime commitment. He is, after all, The Happiness Doctor.

“If you want a deep, profound, lasting happiness, you just can't find it in a little blue pill,” he says. “I don't think too many people really dispute that. But also, I don't think too many people make pursuing happiness a real priority in their lives. We don't work at uncovering and nurturing the internal wellspring of perennial joy that is our birthright. It's a true tragedy. And that's the message I want people to take from the 'medical vs. natural' debate currently raging. Never give up the search for happiness—nothing is more important.”

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#### **About the Author:**

**Blair Lewis** is a seasoned and recognized expert of holistic medicine, Ayurveda, and yogic sciences. Trained in the tradition of the Himalayan Institute, he has been a physician assistant and holistic practitioner for over twenty-five years. Specializing in the holistic treatment of chronic disease, Lewis has successfully developed modern strategies from homeopathy, Ayurvedic medicine, yoga science, and meditation therapies to help thousands of people find meaning and purpose in their lives.

For over two decades, Lewis has practiced classical homeopathy in a holistic psychiatric setting. “While homeopathic medicines are completely safe, non-toxic and very economical, there is a huge void of homeopaths in America,” he says. “Most all people with mild to moderate challenges in mental health would greatly benefit from homeopathic care and lifestyle management.”

Lewis is a frequent author of articles in national magazines, the creator of a free monthly Internet magazine, and a teacher of holistic health through his audio training courses. He has several free publications on meditation and yoga available at [www.AliveandHealthy.com](http://www.AliveandHealthy.com). He is also the co-author of *Homeopathic Remedies for Health Professionals and Laypeople*, published by the Himalayan Institute Publishers in 1990, a book that sold over 33,000 copies.

#### **About the Book:**

*Happiness: The Real Medicine and How It Works* (Himalayan Institute Press, 2005, ISBN: 0-89389-245-9, \$14.95) is available at bookstores nationwide, major online booksellers, at seminars and live events featuring Blair Lewis, at [www.AliveandHealthy.com](http://www.AliveandHealthy.com), and direct from the publisher at 800-822-4547 or [www.HimalayanInstitute.org](http://www.HimalayanInstitute.org).