

**Dr Michael Pluess from the Department of Biological and Experimental Psychology, Queen Mary University of London, in partnership with the Centre for Economic Performance, London School of Economics, and Action for Happiness**



**ACTION FOR HAPPINESS**

**present:**

***Is Happiness a Matter of our Genes? New Research Findings and their Implications for Society***

Three short lectures with invited expert panel and audience discussion

**Wednesday 7 October 2015**

**18:30 – 20:30**

Arts Two Lecture Hall  
Queen Mary University of London  
Mile End Road  
E1 4NS London

**This event is free to attend please register [here](#)**

## **Programme**

- 18:30** Welcome and introduction to the evening – **Dr Mark Williamson**, Director of Action for Happiness
- 18:40** **Lecture 1: Professor Lord Richard Layard** will talk about **how our experience over life affects our well-being**. Lord Layard is a labour economist who worked for most of his life on how to reduce unemployment and inequality, co-founder of Action for Happiness and author of several books on happiness including 'Happiness: Lessons from a new science'.
- 18:55** **Lecture 2: Professor Meike Bartels** will talk about **the genetics of well-being**. Prof Bartels is University Research Chair Professor in Genetics and Wellbeing at the Department of Biological Psychology, VU University Amsterdam where she conducts and supervises several large research projects to gain sight into the underlying genetic and environmental sources of variation on psychological well-being.

**19:10**      **Lecture 3: Dr Michael Pluess** will talk about the **interplay between genes and environment**. He is a senior lecturer in developmental psychology at the Department of Biological and Experimental Psychology at Queen Mary University of London and investigates how genetic differences moderate the effects of environmental influences. He is the editor of a new book ‘Genetics of Psychological Well-Being: The role of heritability and genetics in positive psychology’ published by Oxford University Press.

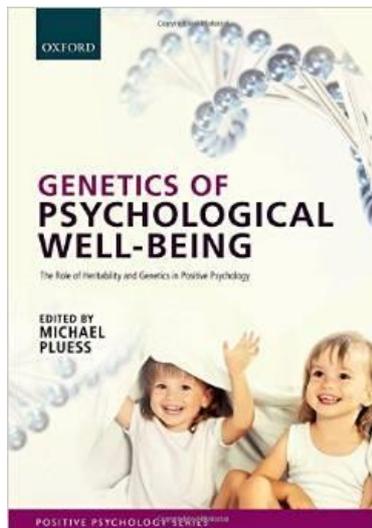
**19:25**      **Panel discussion** on “Genetics of Well-being and implications for Individuals, Society and Social Policy” – chaired by **Dr Mark Williamson**, Director of Action for Happiness

- **Professor Lord Richard Layard**, London School of Economics
- **Professor Meike Bartels**, VU Amsterdam
- **Dr Michael Pluess**, Queen Mary University of London
- **Professor Felicia Huppert**, University of Cambridge
- **Tim Loughton MP**, former Minister for Children and Families
- **Professor Elaine Fox**, University of Oxford

**20:10**      **Audience questions and discussion**

**20:30**      Summary and end of evening – **Dr Mark Williamson**, Director of Action for Happiness

**This event is inspired by the release of a new book on the genetics of psychological well-being, edited by Dr Michael Pluess:**



In the past decade there has been an explosion of research into the psychology of well-being. While we know that psychological well-being is partly heritable, it is only recently that researchers have started to investigate the specific genetic factors that influence well-being. Such research explores not only heritability, based on traditional twin study designs, but also includes studies combining some of the most recent molecular genetic techniques and methods.

This landmark book summarizes the state of knowledge regarding heritability and molecular genetics in positive psychology. Divided into four parts, it starts by exploring the basics of genetics and associated research methodology, providing the reader with the knowledge required to understand the empirical work presented throughout the volume. The second part of the book focuses on heritability estimates of the most important positive psychology concepts based on quantitative behavioural genetics studies. In the third section of the book, results from more recent molecular genetics studies are presented including candidate gene, gene-environment interaction, as well as genome-wide association studies. This section also contains chapters on epigenetics and imaging genetics, both relatively new methodologies that are just about to make their way into the field of positive psychology. The fourth and final part of the book discusses more overarching questions regarding the roles of genes and environment in the development of well-being as well as a review and discussion of the current state of knowledge and future direction in this new field of inquiry.

The first book of its kind, The Genetics of Psychological well-being is a major contribution to the positive psychology literature, and important for all those in the fields of positive psychology, psychiatric genetics, and well-being.

**Discounted copies of the book will be available at the event.**