

THIS EMOTIONAL LIFE



Airing January 4-6, 2010 on PBS
pbs.org/thisemotionallife

Media inquires please contact:
Rosanna Maietta, 202.828.9706, maiettar@fleishman.com
Brooke McNally, 202.631.3548, bmcnally@voxglobal.com

NEW PBS DOCUMENTARY, *THIS EMOTIONAL LIFE*, EXAMINES OUR SEARCH FOR HAPPINESS

Vulcan Productions, NOVA/WGBH Team Up With Harvard Author to Provide Americans with Keys to Richer Lives

Seattle, Washington, Nov. 2, 2009 – As Americans ring in the new year, a traditional time of self-reflection, Vulcan Productions, WGBH, and PBS will premiere *This Emotional Life*, an in-depth look at the journey to a more fulfilled life. The series, airing January 4-6, 2010, is hosted by renowned Harvard psychologist and best-selling author of *Stumbling on Happiness*, Professor Daniel Gilbert.

This Emotional Life, a co-production of Vulcan Productions and the NOVA/WGBH Science Unit unfolds across three, two-hour episodes, exploring ways we can improve our social relationships (Family, Friends & Lovers), cope with negative emotions such as depression and anxiety (Facing Our Fears) and become more positive, resilient individuals (Rethinking Happiness). Each episode weaves together the compelling personal stories of ordinary people and the latest scientific research, along with revealing comments from celebrities such as Chevy Chase, Larry David, Elizabeth Gilbert, Alanis Morissette, Katie Couric and Richard Gere.

Gilbert, whose research examines why people so often mispredict what will make them happy, says happiness is not as elusive as people think. “When it comes to happiness, science has revealed three important factors: You can’t be happy alone; You can’t be happy all the time; You can be happier than you are,” said Gilbert.

“*This Emotional Life* represents what television does best—it opens a window into real lives. People shared their personal stories, honestly and openly,” said Senior Executive Producer Richard Hutton of Vulcan Productions. “The results are dramatic. You’ll see first-hand how people, both ordinary and extraordinary, cope with challenges as they struggle to achieve greater happiness and fulfillment.”

-MORE-

A Co-Production of the
NOVA/WGBH Science Unit and
Vulcan Productions, Inc.
A film by Kunhardt McGee Productions



Funding is provided by the
Corporation for Public Broadcasting and public television viewers



A private corporation funded by the American people

THIS EMOTIONAL LIFE



Airing January 4-6, 2010 on PBS
pbs.org/thisemotionallife

“Scientific understanding about what makes us happy is constantly growing, and *This Emotional Life* addresses what we know – and don’t know,” said Paula Apsell, Senior Executive Producer, NOVA/WGBH Science Unit and co-producer of *This Emotional Life*. “We’ve been fortunate in this project to tap some of the best experts who deal with serious conditions many Americans face to learn what we can about how to improve our lives.”

The three episodes trace our relationships and what science tells us about them beginning with our very first one, the parent-child bond, and how our connections to others impact our happiness. Below are descriptions of the three episodes:

Episode 1: Family, Friends & Lovers (January 4)

The first episode looks at the importance of relationships and why they are central to our emotional wellbeing. What are the cognitive and neurological processes underpinning our everyday interactions, and can they help us to understand why some relationships flourish and others fail?

Episode 2: Facing Our Fears (January 5)

In the second episode, we look at emotions that are commonly regarded as obstacles to happiness — such as anger, fear, anxiety and despair. Why do we have these emotions and how can we best manage them? Everyone wants to be happy, but nature has a different plan for us. Our brains are designed for survival, and the negative emotions they create are vital to that mission. But those negative emotions can spiral out of control with debilitating effects.

Episode 3: Rethinking Happiness (January 6)

The last episode explores happiness. We learn from the latest research that we often incorrectly predict what will bring us greater happiness, leading us to look for it in the wrong places. The film ends by coming full circle to the understanding that it is the quality of our relationships — with friends, family and the larger community — that ultimately defines our happiness.

The film is complemented by a content-rich website, www.pbs.org/thisemotionallife. It provides vetted resources and opportunities to build social support networks around topics highlighted in the series, such as the importance of early attachment, how to heal strained or damaged relationships, PTSD, stress, depression, grief, resilience and our pursuit of happiness.

-MORE-

THIS EMOTIONAL LIFE



Airing January 4-6, 2010 on PBS
pbs.org/thisemotionallife

The website is the centerpiece of a nationwide outreach campaign, extending the reach of the project beyond the broadcast. The effort provides people with valuable information, offers access to mechanisms for social support and helps mitigate the stigma attached to mental illness.

As a result of research conducted in the making of the documentary, Vulcan Productions identified two areas that deserved deeper attention and is developing two toolkits: one on early attachment for parents of infants and a second on the deployment process for military service members and their families.

Leading medical and health sciences organizations from around the country, recognizing the potential impact of this multi-faceted project, are assisting in developing content and will be taking part in events and distributing materials and resources. Partners include The National Alliance on Mental Illness, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Mental Health America, the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance and Mayo Clinic.

About the Project Partners:

Vulcan Productions is the independent film production company founded by investor and philanthropist Paul G. Allen in 1997. Vulcan Productions devotes itself exclusively to producing independent films of unique vision and artistic quality. Through its collaborative partnerships with established and emerging filmmakers, Vulcan Productions explores creative opportunities that result in engaging and inspirational storytelling. www.vulcanproductions.com

NOVA/WGBH Science Unit WGBH Boston is America's preeminent public broadcasting producer, the source of fully one-third of PBS' prime-time lineup, along with some of public television's best-known lifestyle and children's programs and many public radio favorites. One of its premiere programs, NOVA, is a production of the NOVA/WGBH Science Unit. Now in its 36th year of broadcasting, NOVA is the most popular science series on American television and is seen in more than 100 countries. It is also one of television's most acclaimed series, having won every major television award, most of them many times over. www.wgbh.org/ and pbs.org/nova

-MORE-

THIS EMOTIONAL LIFE



Airing January 4-6, 2010 on PBS
pbs.org/thisemotionallife

Kunhardt McGee Productions (formally Kunhardt Productions) was founded in 1987 by Peter W. Kunhardt, a veteran of ABC News and the winner of three national Emmy Awards. Dyllan McGee, Kunhardt's longtime colleague, became a partner in the company in 2008. The company specializes in multi-platform documentary programming crafted to bring cutting-edge scholarship to popular audiences. www.kunhardtmcgee.com

Method is a brand experience agency that helps organizations and businesses harness the competitive power of design. With deep expertise in research, strategy, design and technology, Method offers a rigorous, intelligent approach to solving complex brand problems in the physical and digital realms. www.method.com

Cause & Affect is an innovative agency operating at the nexus of media and social change, with the objective of creating meaningful public engagement on a wide variety of issues. Led by Meredith Blake, the architect of the social action campaign accompanying Al Gore's Academy documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth*, Cause & Affect brings widespread attention to causes by partnering with influential individuals or organizations that possess considerable resources, visibility and credibility. www.causeaffect.com

Mission Measurement helps nonprofits, foundations, and corporations measure and improve their social impact through strategy and measurement consulting, training and data services. As the result of our work, organizations have been able to improve the effective delivery of their services, increase the visibility of their work, achieve financial sustainability and communicate results to key stakeholders. www.missionmeasurement.com

-30-