

### SMILE OR DIE: THE TRAP OF POSITIVE THINKING

Barbara Ehrenreich  
Madrid: Ed. Turner Noema, 2018

**Fernando Pérez del Río**  
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Let's put positive thinking in its place: we know that when one is too optimistic it is easy to make poor decisions; it makes one analyze the situation from a single perspective, and this overconfidence can turn into false hopes. Logically, being an optimist does not guarantee that we achieve things. Fantasizing about and constantly visualizing "getting something" may even be a deterrent to achieving it.

The author, a biologist by training, does not shy away from criticizing the statistical research on positivism. She seriously questions this method which, according to her, is far from being scientific, without foundation, and does not warrant the exaltation that it has received.

This is a work that reminds us of the excesses of a psychology (if you can call it that) that has been misunderstood and poorly applied, and infected by motivational gurus who use semi-religious categorical phrases that insult the intelligence and lists of recommendations in which the attitude of positive thinking becomes a mandate. It is the tyranny of tattooing a smile on one's face.

There are a multitude of self-help books that propose positivity,

dazzling goals for reaching a higher level as a person. And if you do not achieve this, it is because you do not have enough winning positive thinking, as those Amway tapes used to remind you insistently. Finally, and as this book points out to us, the culprit is you, yourself - do not complain, because being fired is an opportunity. And so, social control is exercised in the form of guilt towards the self; it is a society that is ultimately a fertile ground for self-blame, depression, and burnout.

For Barbara Ehrenreich, in her book *Sonríe o muere: La trampa del pensamiento positivo* [Smile or Die: The Trap of Positive Thinking], "the approach of optimism emerged to challenge the philosophy that extolled self-denial, hard work, and constant self-evaluation of our actions."

More than a few authors point out that part of the cause of the economic crisis was an excess of optimism: build more and more, do great works that will bring great profits (during that time I remember hearing hundreds of times and without exception, "apartments will never come down, I will never sell my apartment for less"); banks signed mortgages and then many sold that debt, so it was impossible to lose... It was all a frenzy of enthusiasm.

But the obligation to be optimistic has also been found in other totalitarian, nationalist systems for example we have seen it in Spain in "the revolution of smiles", even in the left wing, as this requirement also occurred in the former Soviet Union.

It is a recommended book, and light and entertaining reading.

### CRITICISMS AND ALTERNATIVES IN PSYCHIATRY

Ortiz Lobo, A. and Huerta, R. (Coords.)  
Madrid: Editorial Catarata, 2018

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Those of us who have taken a back seat, contemplating with renewed enthusiasm the changes that are taking place, have been delighted, first of all, with the publication of *Poder, Amenaza y Significado* [The Power Threat Meaning Framework]. Under this striking title, the British Psychological Society has launched a new way of understanding mental suffering. Without a doubt, it is something that we had been waiting for.

In the wake of 2018, the second delight has been to read and highlight another work with a suggestive title, *Críticas y alternativas en psiquiatría* [Criticism and Alternatives in Psychiatry].

Debate is even established in the name itself when defining change, critical psychiatry, antipsychiatry, and alternative psychiatry. We could call it postpsychiatry.

"Postpsychiatry does not intend to become a new way of conceptualizing mental problems, but rather to contextualize and criticize the existing definitions and practices, to erase any claim to truth and, therefore, dogmatism in any of them."

There is change even in the brave use of the feminine in the writing, an aspect that some of us simply do not like, or maybe we just need some time to adapt.

The work is divided into four essays. The first, by Rafael Huertas, stands out for its careful prose and historical rigor. Iván de la Mata offers us a critical and politically charged text that does not shy away from criticisms of neoliberalism. From Alberto Ortiz Lobo, we are

already accustomed to publications that are well-executed, understandable, and always accompanied by a certain novelty that makes us open our eyes, like a family member who brings us an unusual gift after traveling abroad. The last part, by Vicente Ibáñez, is about alternatives and activism.

As there are four essays, we could fall into the temptation of comparing the authors and their texts, but if the teachings of this book have not been in vain, we will know that the work of a great scholar, a typical figure of psychology/psychiatry, is not so important.

Now we see that what is important also includes the group; health is not something that is exclusively individual as they have insisted time and time again on making us believe; rather, it is about joining together to find solutions.

On the other hand, this book would be worthless if it only focused on the criticisms that, at this point, we already more or less know, although there are so many discrepancies that there is always room for further surprises.

Other recently-published books commit an unforgivable error; it is as if the essays were a conduit for channeling one's own personal discomfort, a poorly managed gastric irritation in the form of a book that criticizes throughout its entire length the misnamed biologist psychiatrist, statistics, scientism, or the DSM.

Note, it is not just about rejecting something and vomiting it out, because, as the title indicates, there are criticisms and there are also "alternatives." This book is a choral reflection on what has happened previously, and on the direction to be taken now.

It is an appropriate work for us to continue to understand the change that we need so very much; one that urges for society a less individual psychiatry and psychology, aware of history, of economic inequalities, of the social arena, of the importance of the subjective without falling into solipsism; in short, an integrated psychiatry-psychology, steeped in humility. This work is a welcome one.



**EAGE, WORK AND RETIREMENT.  
NEW REALITIES, NEW UNDERSTANDING**

Carlos María Alcover  
Madrid: Editorial Grupo 5, 2018

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When a person has a multidisciplinary training, they are more likely to be able to approach any subject that they analyze based on a more holistic, broader and more comprehensive perspective. This is the case of the book *Edad, trabajo y retiro. Nuevas realidades, nueva comprensión* [Age, work and retirement: New realities, new understanding], by Professor Carlos María Alcover.

Although in the Anglo-Saxon field manuals are still frequent that cover a whole discipline and bring readers closer to the latest results of the empirical research in this area, in Spain in recent years the number of manuals and monographs seem to have suffered a significant decline.

Without going into the background of this phenomenon, the fact is that the specialized authors seem to be responding to the scant academic assessment of the manuals and research monographs and the intense pressure under which lecturers find themselves to publish empirical articles with impact index.

However, this fact has a consequence, undesirable from my point of view, which is the absence of publications with academic rigor that make the findings of specialized empirical research accessible to a wider audience.

Professor Alcover, however, has once more invested his renowned abilities in the publication of the monograph *Edad, trabajo y retiro. Nuevas realidades, nueva comprensión* [Age, work and retirement: New realities, new understanding], within the collection directed by Professors José Francisco Morales Domínguez and Esther López Zafra.

The aging population is a serious concern for societies and individuals, and not only in developed countries, but also in those that are still developing. In the first, among other reasons, because the minimum acceptable to a citizen in terms of social benefits, established from the consolidation of the welfare state, means that in the coming decades, the costs of maintaining these minimums will be unsustainable for society. Furthermore, if they are not maintained, manifestations of considerable social discontent could be unleashed.

In developing countries, despite their still considerable birth rates, aging coexists with other social problems, such as inequalities in the distribution of wealth or structural difficulties for certain sectors of the population to access education and health services. But beyond the macrosocial approach, aging is a problem for the individual. And the difficulty in addressing the issue lies precisely in its difficult articulation

on both levels. This is why the book *Edad, trabajo y retiro. Nuevas realidades, nueva comprensión* [Age, work and retirement: New realities, new understanding] is a prominent piece in the collection of Professors Morales and Zafra, in which the psychosocial perspective is a "sine qua non" key in their work.

The work analyzed here explores in an organized and comprehensive way the three most important aspects that affect retirement today and the people who are approaching this phase or going through it.

In the first chapter the social and work situations of the elderly are highlighted, taking into account the prolongation of working life and the improvement of the health and well-being of the elderly. To begin with, the author analyzes with his usual meticulousness the recent changes in the concept of work, retirement, and older workers, to end up showing the promising prospects of these changes in relation to the adjustment of people to their new status as pensioners.

In the second chapter an organizational perspective is adopted, focusing on the relevance of the late career of workers. The author analyzes gender differences in late career and senior entrepreneurship, among other phenomena.

The third chapter focuses on the concept of retirement planning and decision making, and it sheds light on the new situations that are emerging, such as bridge employment, understood as strategies for prolonging working life.

The fourth chapter serves both to close the book and to contribute to intervention. In this chapter, several theories are analyzed that cover recent empirical research, such as the theory of the conservation of resources, by Steven Hobfoll, socioemotional selectivity theory, and the approach of selection, optimization, and compensation strategies. In addition, concepts such as work ability or meta-stereotypes are contemplated, which have been proposed in recent years as frameworks to understand the adequacy and difficulties of older people in the workplace.

Regarding the author's contributions to the scientific literature, it is worth mentioning that in addition to the exhaustive analysis of this subject in Spanish, he offers intervention proposals that focus on his model of sustainable work capacity, at the end of the fourth chapter.

This work is of special interest to social psychologists and work and organizational psychologists, but it also speaks to a wider audience. Educators, vocational counselors, and human resources managers in organizations can take note of its recommendations, suggestions, and findings from serious and rigorous research. It is also of interest for other professionals, such as financial advisors or health personnel, who have the task of guiding the elderly in specific matters which are of enormous impact in the medium and long term, such as health or finance.

In short, I must say that Professor Alcover has not surprised us. One would expect no less than this work, a rigorous and updated analysis of an emerging issue, aimed as always at promoting the welfare of his fellow citizens.





**EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO  
KNOW ABOUT EMOTIONS  
(BUT NEVER DARED TO ASK)**

Francisco Martínez Sánchez, Enrique G. Fernández-Abascal y  
Francisco Palmero Cantero  
Madrid: Pirámide, 2019

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This manual on emotions, is not just another manual; it is a book that will not leave the reader indifferent. It is striking in itself, from the beginning, because of its title. Certainly, a person interested in psychology could not resist taking it from a bookshelf in a bookstore and starting to look through it. Its power of attraction and the expectations it generates are met when the reader begins to read right from the index of this work. It is a direct, “fresh” book that encourages the reader to devour the chapters, and to enjoy and reflect upon its reading.

The quality of this work is no surprise, since it is coordinated by three professors who are renowned in the world of emotions in our country: Francisco Martínez Sánchez, Enrique G. Fernández-Abascal, and Francisco Palmero Cantero.

This book reveals the ins and outs and the secrets of emotions throughout its 19 chapters. A priori, it may seem like a lot of chapters, but the language used, simplicity, and scientific rigor, make its reading enjoyable and very interesting. The chapters are relatively short, so the reader can digest the different chapters—as if they were the different dishes from the gourmet sampling menu of a famous chef—hoping, with each of them, to be able to gradually satisfy their curiosity and desire to learn.

As for the structure of the book, the 19 chapters have been written by renowned professors in the field of emotions. Their order helps the reader to dive fully into the passionate world of emotions. A series of recommended readings (books and articles) are presented at the end of each chapter, to help the reader to deepen their knowledge on the specific theme of that chapter.

In the first chapter, the editors of the book orient the reader by describing what emotions are and their most important functions, highlighting communication and adaptation to the environment. In the second chapter, the professors of the Jaime I University, Rosa Ana Clemente-Estevan, Clara Andrés-Roqueta, and Irene García-Molina explain how emotions develop throughout the life cycle describing emotions from birth and focusing on other aspects of emotions that often go unnoticed, such as the expression of discomfort, desire, and interest. Subsequently, they analyze children’s understanding of emotions and how emotions evolve with age, focusing on individual differences in controlling emotions and their role in interpersonal interaction.

In the third chapter, Alvaro Mailhos of the University of the Republic of Uruguay surprises us by talking about emotions and animals. Do animals have emotions? Are dogs more empathetic than cats? The author answers these questions throughout this chapter.

The remaining five chapters are related to the higher cognitive functions and the organ that regulates them, the brain. In Chapter 4, M. Carmen Pastor and Nieves Fuentes-Sánchez of the Jaime I University of Castellón and Jaime Vila Castellar of the University of Granada describe the brain areas involved in the emotions, in general, and in positive and negative emotions, in particular, as well as the control that these brain structures exert in the experimentation of emotion.

Alberto Acosta Mesas, of the University of Granada, discusses in Chapter 5, whether we are rational or rather emotional beings and analyzes the close relationship between emotion and cognition. Along these same lines, Luis Fuentes Meler and Agustín Romero Medina of the University of Murcia analyze in Chapter 6, the influences that emotions have on attention processes and learning. These authors reveal a number of secrets, and they answer the question, “When do we learn best, when we are sad or happy?”

Do emotions influence our memory? Do emotions influence what we think? And our problem solving? Guillermo Campoy, from the University of Murcia, and Juan José García Meilán and Ana Nieto Carracedo from the University of Salamanca, answer this and other related questions in Chapter 7.

From Chapters 9 to 11, different authors tell us about how we identify, express, and share emotions. Juan Lázaro-Mateo and Mariano Chóliz of the University of Valencia explain to us that this occurs through non-verbal language, the ease or difficulty that people have in identifying basic emotions and secondary emotions. They also alert us to pseudosciences, such as morphopsychology, which is a total fraud. Does the reader think that another person might be able to “read” his personality only through his face?

If the identification of emotions is important, their expression is also an essential element of communication. Francisco Martínez Sánchez, of the University of Murcia, and Juan José García Meilán, of the University of Salamanca, explain the secrets of emotional expression. They explain what its role is, and the difficulty or ease that people have in expressing their emotional state both through facial expressions and through the voice. In Chapter 11, one of the authors of the previous chapter, Francisco Martínez Sánchez, introduces us to the social study of emotions, emphasizing the importance of their communicative role in human adaptation processes. This author highlights the importance of sharing emotions with others and reveals the beneficial effect of sharing emotions with those closest to us.

In Chapter 12, Francisco Palmero and Lucía B. Palmero of the Jaime I University of Castellón, show us the difference between stress and emotion. They describe the importance of stress in adaptation processes, the different types of stress, and its physiological, emotional, and behavioral consequences.

What role do the emotions pride, guilt, and shame play in the regulation of our behavior? Do they have positive effects or more negative ones on people’s behavior and well-being? Itziar Etxebarria of the University of the Basque Country talks about these issues in Chapter 13.

Enrique G. Fernández-Abascal of the UNED (National Distance Education University) and José Miguel Latorre of the University of Castilla-La Mancha analyze whether or not we can control our emotions through emotional regulation and its influence on coping processes. Can we really control our emotions? These authors clarify our doubts in



Chapter 14. Related to the previous chapter, Enrique G. Fernández-Abascal and Américo Baptista, the latter of the Lusophone University, tells us in Chapter 15 of the positive power of emotions in our lives, how can we increase joy, happiness, hope, and optimism. This chapter injects into the reader a “shot” of positive affect and makes them aware of the power that they have on their own emotional state, over how their way of interpreting the events of their life, their hope, optimism, or their friends influence their joy, happiness, and well-being.

On the other hand, Juan José Miguel-Tobal and Mayte Orozco Alonso of the Complutense University of Madrid, explain the differences between fear and anxiety and how they manifest. In this chapter, Chapter 16, they also discuss phobias, the large number that exist, how they occur, and how they negatively affect the emotional well-being of the person.

Am I sad, depressed, angry, or irritated? José Miguel Mestre and Cristina Guerrero of the University of Cádiz and Consuelo Gómez-Íñiguez of the Jaume I University of Castellón analyze these negative emotions in Chapter 17, helping us to differentiate them and how to influence them.

Rosario Cabello of the University of Granada and Pablo Fernández Berrocal of the University of Malaga, state what emotional intelligence is in Chapter 18. They describe this new concept and the function of the different components that comprise it: perception, understanding, and emotional management. They also tell us about the benefit of emotional intelligence and how you can learn it.

In Chapter 19, Jordi Fernández-Castro, Silvia Edo, and Tatiana

Rovira, from the Autonomous University of Barcelona, tell us about how emotions influence our health. Can we get to live longer if we experience more positive emotions than negative ones? Or, on the contrary, can we get sick if we suffer more negative emotions? Throughout this chapter, these authors explain to us the mechanisms through which our emotions positively or negatively influence our health.

In the last chapter of this book, Miguel Á. Vallejo Pareja from the UNED explains to us from a practical perspective what emotional disorders are and what can we do to treat them, in order to reduce the suffering associated with them. To do this, the author indicates a series of alarm signals, as well as strengths to counter them, highlighting the importance of the role that prevention plays in preventing their development.

In conclusion, *Todo lo que usted siempre quiso saber sobre las emociones (y nunca se atrevió a preguntar)* [Everything you always wanted to know about emotions (but never dared to ask)] is a work in which great effort has been made to describe the world of emotions in a scientific, didactic, and enjoyable way. It constitutes a valuable contribution to the world of emotions that will help the reader to better understand the phenomenon of emotions and, perhaps, to better manage their own emotions, by having an improved and clearer knowledge of them. However, this book is not a self-help book, but a book that offers clear answers to many questions about emotions. Without a doubt, it is a fundamental book for psychologists and other health sciences professionals, as well as in general for people interested in gaining a better understanding of the emotions.

### AN INTRODUCTION TO FULLY INTEGRATED MIXED METHODS RESEARCH

Cremer, E.G.

Los Angeles: Sage Publication, Inc.

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Elizabeth G. Cremer is an emeritus professor and a lecturer of educational research and evaluation at the School of Education of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, USA. The origin of this book is linked to Cremer's initiative to design an introduction to research course based on mixed methods to be taught online.

Its focus is on fully integrated mixed methods. Cremer advocates a way of investigating that employs qualitative and quantitative aspects in a dialectical way in all phases. The book is proposed for applied sciences in education, health sciences, and social sciences. It is thought of as a practical textbook for a master's and introductory doctorate course in mixed methods research.

It is noteworthy that the preface shows a careful willingness to express to the reader in a persuasive, clear, and detailed way that, compared

with other books of mixed methodology, this book involves entering this type of research in the light of a perspective that decants the developments in the field, makes an original proposal of integration in the different phases of study, and anticipates the progress in the field.

The book is organized in four parts. The first part, “Fundamental aspects”, covers the basic aspects of the mixed methodological approach in four chapters and introduces the idea of full integration.

In the first chapter, the distinctive characteristics of mixed methods research are reviewed and the core of the conceptual framework of the book is established in terms of full integration. The metaphor of an ideal architectural arch is the image that best exemplifies this idea. One arm of the arch represents the qualitative data and methods, the second arm represents the quantitative data and methods. The cornerstone at the apex of the arch reflects the main objective of a mixed methods approach: to integrate qualitative and quantitative inferences so that meaningful conclusions can be produced.

The second chapter establishes the superiority of the purpose of the study over other design factors in the reasons that may be used to use a mixed methods approach. It explores an expanded version of the classic typology of purposes.

The third chapter takes up the discussion about the philosophical foundations of mixed methods research. It overcomes the incompatibility thesis as it develops the main point: multiple and overlapping paradigms support the logic of combining methods. Four paradigmatic approaches

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are discussed: pragmatism, dialectical pluralism, realism and critical realism, and the emancipatory transformative approach.

The fourth chapter presents the distinctive features of prototypical mixed methods research designs. But it is done with a particular perspective, as it prioritizes qualitative and quantitative components at the center of the definition criteria, rather than the time taken to collecting and analyze the information.

The second part of the book, "Conducting a fully integrated mixed methods investigation", provides in three chapters a detailed review of the original contribution of the book on the topic of *full* integration. The first of these chapters describes integration while outlining the objective, the research questions, the sampling procedures, and the coding during the data collection.

The second chapter presents a set of analytical procedures exclusive to mixed methods, which are data fusion, combination, transformation, sampling of extreme cases, and comparison of cross-cases. The third chapter goes deeper into the different ways in which a mixed methods analysis can be achieved through data transformation.

The third part of the book, "Evaluating quality", offers tools to evaluate research publications and to design a mixed methods study. Its first chapter proposes a rubric under the logic of being a critical user of the literature. The second chapter provides guidelines for designing and organizing the manuscript of either a research project or a dissertation.

The last part of the book, "Controversies and future directions", revisits in a single chapter some of the most controversial aspects such as the excessive dependence on the typology of basic designs, and the greater attention given to design at the expense of the explanatory (and comprehensive) power of the knowledge it generates. The view to the future explores how the centrality of integration can be captured in forms of expression provided by innovative figures and flowcharts.

In weighing up the contribution of Elizabeth Creamer's book, the first thing that can be highlighted is its merit of revitalizing the area of publication on the teaching of this methodology. It is an accepted fact that in the face of the rapid expansion of research publications, the information published on the teaching of mixed methods courses is extremely scarce (Mertens, et. al, 2016).

The general overview of this book is that it is an excellent book that encompasses both the conceptual and the methodological aspects; it is easy to read and very useful as a textbook for an introductory postgraduate course in research based on mixed methods. However, it is currently considered that the undergraduate research curriculum is lagging behind the innovations in mixed methods and must be transformed (Mertens, et. al, 2016). In this regard, the book has potential for undergraduate teaching.

An experience of my own in this regard showed that students valued the book with lessons learned around aspects such as the displacement

of the qualitative-quantitative dichotomous vision in favor of a deeper, unique and highly valuable knowledge of human and social phenomena; the hybridization of traditional methods in the different phases of a study; the importance of philosophical and methodological transparency that guides and gives coherence to the methodological development of research; and the challenges that new researchers encounter.

It is interesting to note that Creamer's book emerges amidst a dialectic dynamic in a young field that is still developing. On the one hand there is the growth of publications in various disciplines at an accelerated rate, the creation of an international journal in mixed methods, the formation of an association of researchers, and significant developments - methodological and conceptual advances, technological changes, increasing credibility, and application to real-world challenges (Mertens, et al., 2016; Creamer, 2016; Fetter & Molina-Azorin, 2017).

On the other hand, many aspects of this growing field remain unsolved, which leaves the research charged with ambiguity. The most noted challenge, which is also part of the central controversies, and which constitutes the hallmark of the field, is integration (Fetter & Molina-Azorin, 2017).

Creamer faces up to the challenge with the most important idea in her book: that of *full* integration. It is the heart of the book. She stresses that the logic of full integration leads to the recognition of the emerging, the commitment to the unexpected, the divergent, or the paradoxical in the investigation of human and social phenomena whose complexity it would not be possible to grasp based on a single approach. Creamer's proposal is therefore reflexive and expansionist.

To the extent that the overall goal of this book is to make available to graduate students fundamental and exclusive methodological strategies of the mixed approach, so that they can propose and develop their own research, it is an invaluable resource for the plans of research studies of the post-graduate, and eventually of the undergraduate.

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