



# **Positive Psychology- Making a Difference for You and Your Students**

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# What Is Positive Psychology

Based on Martin Seligman's concept of the Theory of Well-being as described first in "**Authentic Happiness**" and later updated in "**Flourish**" (April 2011)



## 5 Essential Elements

- **Positive Emotion:** the pleasant life
- **Engagement:** Flow, Did Time Stop for you? Absorbed
- **Relationships**
- **Meaning-** belonging to and serving something you believe in. Bigger than self.
- **Accomplishment-** achievements often pursued for own sake.

(PERMA)

# What is Most Important to You

- When was the last time you laughed uproariously?
- Felt indescribable joy?
- Felt proud of your accomplishments?
- Who were you with or were you alone?



- Best antidote to the downs of life and single most reliable up is to do something kind for someone else.

- Try the Kindness Exercise tomorrow.

Find one wholly unexpected kind thing to do tomorrow and just do it. Write down how you felt and what it did for your mood.



# GOAL OF POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

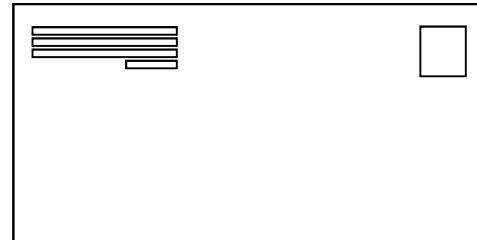
Is to increase flourishing, not just find happiness.

Try different exercises to increase flourishing and build well-being.



# Gratitude Letter and Visit

Think of someone who has helped you but you never properly thanked. Write them a concrete letter of about 300 words describing the impact they had on their life. Then make an appointment to visit them and read them the letter!



# What Went Well and Why?

- Every night write down three things that went well and describe why. Do this every night for a week or more.
- Think about your mood and how you feel. Do you sleep better?
- What other applications can you see for what went well?





## Check out:

- <http://www.authentic happiness.org>.

Take the Values in Action Signature Strength Test. What are your top three strengths? How can you use one of them every day this week.

Don't get focused on weakness, BUT pick the weakness that is like Kryptonite for you. Kryptonite is the weakness that can hinder your life or career.

# Do These

Visualization

Muscle

Relaxation

Breathing

Techniques

Heart-Lock

# Check out

The Institute of Heart  
Math

[http://www.heartmath  
.org/](http://www.heartmath.org/)



**Focusing on gratitude reduces  
stress and anxiety**



# Advantages of Positive Psychology Over Drugs

- What advantages does positive psychology offer over drugs? In a study of depressed patients by Seligman and partners...
- Remission of depressed symptoms in 55% of patients with positive psychology plus 14 sessions therapy sessions with assignments
- 20% remission in group with treatment as usual
- 8% remission in group with treatment as usual plus drugs
- Of course this study was conducted by Seligman with a partner.
- We are only at beginning stages of practice and needs to be replicated.

# Depression is the most expensive disease in the world!!

- The World Health Organization has identified the cost of treating depression as \$5,000 per year for drugs and therapy.
- Drugs offer only some symptom relief, not a cure. And when you go off the drug symptoms return.



# Ineffective Treatments?

- Cognitive therapy and selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor offer a 65 % relief rate compared to 45-55% for placebo. Not much difference between placebo and treatment. There are some reliable effects for severe depression but not much for moderate and mild depression. Why are the effects so small? Talk therapy? No fun, difficult, hard to incorporate into life. Drugs- once you stop taking them they don't work and you have recurrence and relapse





# Compelling Reasons for Positive Psychology

- Inexpensive
- Can be massively disseminated
- At least as effective as therapy and drugs
- Can be taught to children and adults but protocols need to be implemented with fidelity and counselors/teachers and others need coaching and supervision.

# Communication Activity

4 Ways to Respond to good or bad news (I received a promotion and raise and work)

1. Active and constructive-  
That is great! I am so proud of you!
2. Passive and constructive-  
That is good news.
3. Active and destructive-  
That is a lot to take on. Are you not going to be home now?
4. Passive and destructive-  
What's for dinner?

- How you respond can build or undermine your relationships with other people.
- Try the activity....





## TIPS FOR RESPONDING

- ✓ Listen carefully each time someone you care about tells you something good that happened to them. Go out of your way to respond actively and constructively. Ask the person to relive the positive event with you. The more time reliving the better. Then spend lots of time responding. Try this week and write down the response you get.

# Incentives and Reinforcers

4 positives for every negative to maintain

11 positives to change a behavior

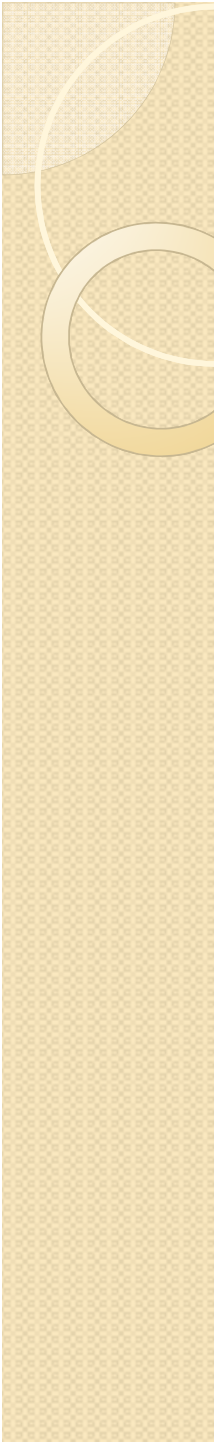
21 days for a new habit to form

Try small changes-one at a time



## What motivates you???

Reward kids for effort not perfection or  
being the best!



# Losado Ratio (named after Marcel Losado, Brazilian psychologist)

- Losado ratio: companies with a 2.9 :1 ratio for positives are flourishing.
- Below 2.9:1 companies are not doing well economically
- 4 to 1 ratio for maintaining a behavior (positives to negatives) (PBIS)
- 11 to 1 to change a behavior (PBIS)
- Above 13:1 you go overboard and lose credibility
- 5:1 ratio predicts a strong loving relationship in marriage
- 1:3 is catastrophe!



## Another Idea for Responding Positively

Keep track of positive to negative responses in 30 minute time period. Tape a strip of paper to your sleeve. Mark positive with a + and negative with a -. How did you do?

Try with students, your kids, husband etc. Or keep track in a TV show. Are we a positive or negative society?



# Hmmm???

What relationship does Positive Psychology have to PBIS in schools?

- Learning to function well even if you are sad or anxious or angry-just deal with it. How do you do this? What would be the psychology of “dealing with it” for kids?
- Seligman argues that removing the disabling conditions of life (suffering, misery and negative symptoms) is not the same as building the enabling conditions of life. How do we build the enabling conditions?

# Speaking of fun....

- Frequent Energy Breaks important for kids and adults. The older we get, the more they help us teach and learn.
- Getting physically active with dance, exercise, or brisk walk can really help you eliminate fatigue and provide instant return of intellectual energy.

What do you do for a break in the day?





## Teaching Well Being to Young People

**What do you most want for  
your children?**

**What do schools teach and  
focus on?**

# Should Positive Psychology be Taught in Schools?

Depression 10X  
greater than 50  
years ago.

Life in wealthier  
nations is easier.

Measures of  
happiness do not  
show increases

Greater well  
being enhances  
learning

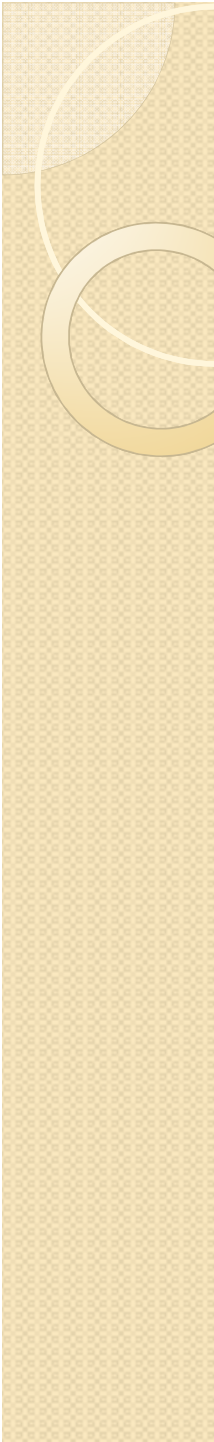
Which helps>

Broaden  
attention, creative  
thinking and more  
holistic teaching.



# Positive Computing

- How is Facebook helping build four of the elements of well being?
- What is missing and still needs to be added?
- [www.avantgame.com](http://www.avantgame.com)



# How Can We Incorporate the Elements of Positive Psychology into Our Work as Counselors?



## For More Info:

- Read the book “Flourish” by Martin Seligman. Continue the discussion.
- Check out [www.authentic happiness.org](http://www.authentic happiness.org)
- Google the Positive Psychology Newsletter
- Watch Martin Seligman on TED