

The Body 2.0: Bringing bodies back to positive psychology

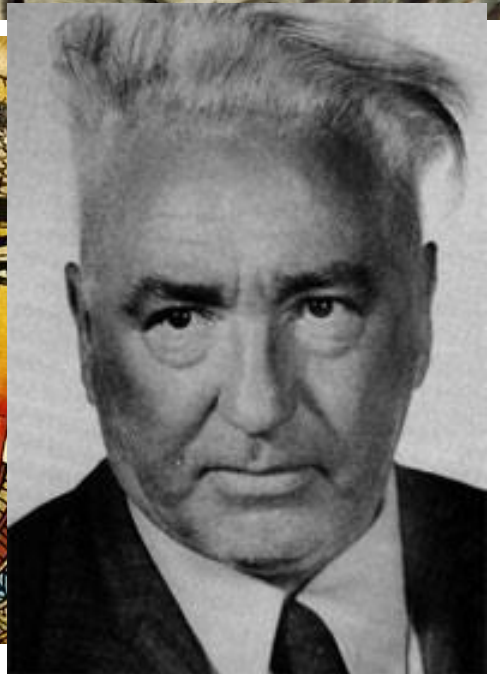


Canadian Positive Psychology Conference
Ottawa, Ontario
July 2014

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***“We are bound to our
bodies like an oyster is to its
+ shell”***

- Plato



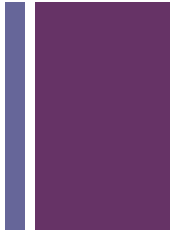
+ Outline



- Brief review of the body and positive psychology
- Links between well being and the body
 - Embodiment
 - Interpersonal relationships
 - Intrapersonal relationships
- Review several body-based interventions
- Conclusions



The body and what we do to it



- How we treat it
- How we move it
- How we sooth it
- How we feed it
- How we dress it
- How we decorate it
- How we connect to it

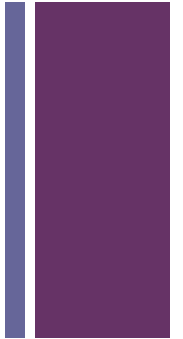


***All have an impact on our Hedonic
and Eudaimonic well being***

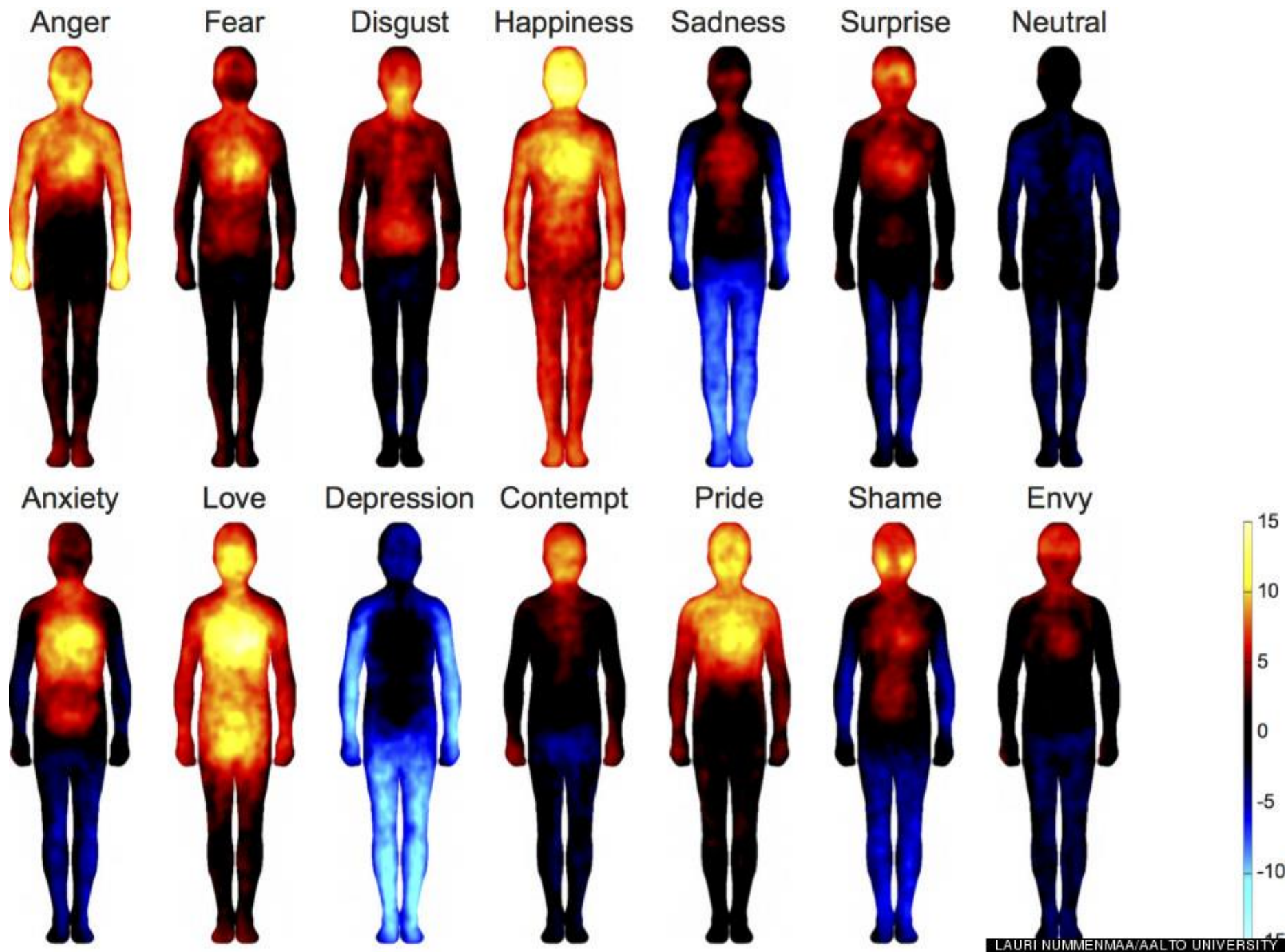


+ STRETCH!

+ Embodiment



- Embodiment is defined as:
 - a) ‘an awareness of and responsiveness to bodily sensations’ (Impett et al., 2006, p. 40)
 - a) ‘thoughts, feelings and behaviours are grounded in sensory experiences and bodily states’ (Meier, Schnall, Schwartz & Bargh, 2013, p. 2)
- Body awareness focuses on a person’s ability to correctly and confidently identify and engage with body sensations as well as link these to emotions (Mehling et al., 2009)
- Brani, Hefferon, Lomas & Ivtzan (2014) found a positive relationship between body awareness and subjective wellbeing (SWB) within the normal population



+ Embodied cognition

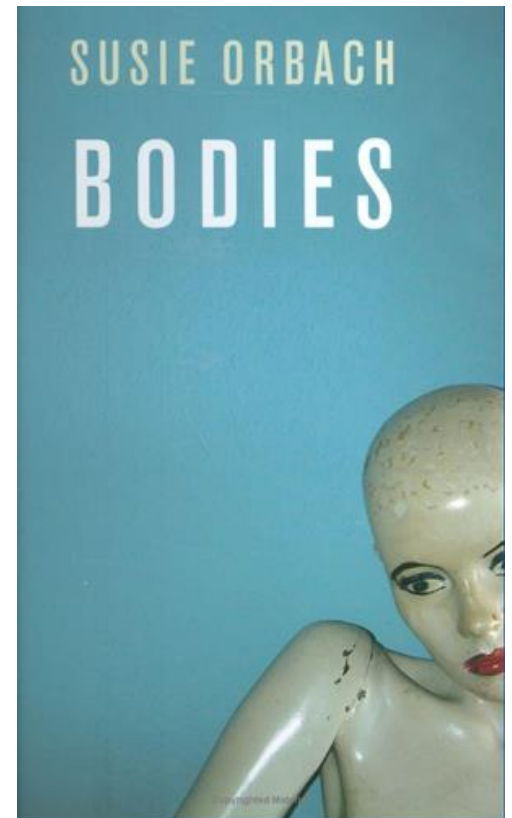
- The influence of bodily states, actions and the environment on cognition
- Bodily experiences influence perceptions and judgments of a situation

“the brain is not the sole cognitive resource we have available to solve problems...our bodies and their perceptually guided motions through the world do much of the work required to achieve our goals, replacing the need for complex internal mental representations”

(Wilson & Golonka, 2013, p. 1)

+ Dis-embodiment in 2014

- Indifference towards the body (Frank, 1998)
- Increasingly negative relationship with the body (Orbach, 2012)
- Increase in:
 - elective aesthetic procedures (BAAPS, 2011)
 - negative body image (YMCA report, 2012; Impett et al.)
 - eating disorders across genders (Orbach, 2012)
 - self harming (Favazza, 2011)
- Dysappearing (Frank, 1995; Stam, 1998)



Interpersonal relationships

- We are embodied creatures
- Touch is the first way we learn to communicate from birth
- Arguably the sense that has biggest impact on our well being
- Significantly reduces psychological and physiological distress (e.g. cortisol levels; blood pressure)
- Increases Serotonin, Dopamine and Oxytocin
- Touch and strangers



(Gallace, 2012; Harlow & Zimmermann, 1959; Grewen, Anderson, Girdler, & Light, 2003; Light, Grewen, & Amico, 2005; Grewen, Girdler, Amico, & Light 2005; M. Matsunaga et al., 2009) Gallace & Spence, 2010; Diego, Field, & Hernandez-Reif, 2008; Dieter, Field, Hernandez-Reif, Emory, & Redzepi, 2003; Diego et al., 2002; Field et al., 1998; Field et al., 1997; Field, Quintino, Hernandez-Reif, & Koslovsky, 1998; Hernandez-Reif, Dieter, Field, Swerdlow, & Diego, 1998; Hernandez-Reif et al., 2000; Moyer, Rounds, & Hannum, 2004; Field, Hernandez-Reif, Diego, Schanberg & Kuhn, 2005; Diego et al., 2001; Hernandez-Reif et al., 2005; Hernandez-Reif et al., 2004; Field, Hernandez-Reif, Diego, Schanberg, & Kuhn, 2005)



Happiness

+ (Joy)



Anger

+



Gratitude

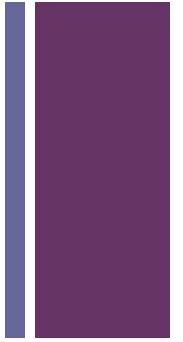
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Reflections?

+

HAPPINESS (JOY)
ANGER
GRATITUDE

+ Embodied rapport



- Quality of social interactions
- Behavioural synchrony:
 - a) coordination of movement that occurs between individuals
 - b) during social interaction
 - c) similarity of manner, style and temporal rhythm of movements
- Synchrony can create a sense of “oneness” and compassion

+ Embodied emotion: Love 2.0

(Fredrickson, 2013)

- Love is a momentary experience that changes the physiological nature of the two individuals who experience micro-moments
- Positivity resonance:
 - a) a sharing of one or more positive emotions between you and another
 - b) synchrony between you and the other person's biochemistry and behaviours
 - c) a reflective motive to invest in each others wellbeing that brings mutual care (p. 17)
- Your BODY and another BODY is imperative for the connection to occur



+ STRETCH!



Intrapersonal relationships



Body Image:

“self-perceptions and attitudes (i.e. thoughts feelings and behaviours) with regards to the body (Avalos, Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2005, p. 285) as well as how people experience their own embodiment” (Cash, 2008)

- Negative body image is associated with increased incidences of:
 - eating disorders
 - depression
 - negative affect
 - social anxiety
 - lower confidence in relationships
 - risky health behaviours
 - lower overall psychological well being

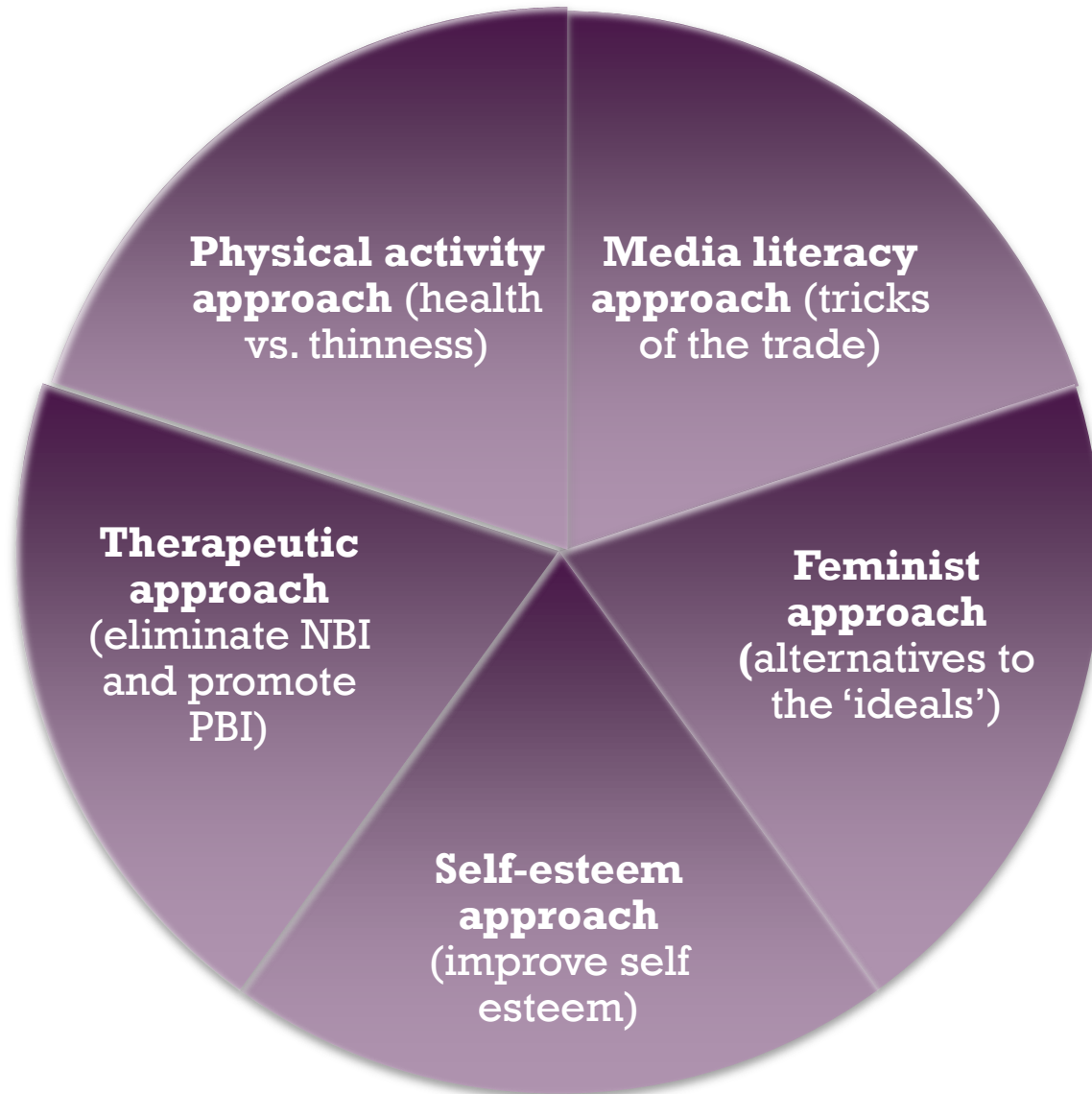
(Swami et al., 2010; Avalos et al., 2005)

+ Positive Body Image (PBI)

- The absence of a negative body image does not necessitate a positive body image (Tylka, 2011; Cash, 2004)
- Individuals with high levels of PBI report:
 - higher levels psychological and social well-being (e.g. optimism, self esteem and adaptive coping)
 - intuitive eating
 - better sexual functioning (Tiggemen & McCourt, 2013; Williams et al., 2004)



+ Promoting PBI





+ Body-based Interventions



Body Awareness Therapies



- Enhancing a person's body awareness (Mehling et al., 2011)
- Help find better ways for people to “live in their body”
(pp 174-175)
- Body psychotherapy: the body itself can be used as a tool for healing and well-being (Rothschild, 2000)
- Learn to ‘make friends’ with these somatic sensations= use them as a gauge to enhance functioning

+ Dance Movement therapy (DMT)

- DMT is a body-based treatment which believes that movement and emotions are linked
- Clients are asked to express their emotions and thoughts through dance where the therapist must then help interpret them
- DMT can and has been used in a variety of illnesses and disorders

E.g. as an adjunct to cancer care reconnecting the patients to their bodies after invasive treatment

+ Physical activity

- Physical activity is a 'stellar' method of intervening to promote well-being (Hefferon & Mutrie, 2012)
- *Reduces* the risk of developing several diseases (e.g. Heart disease, stroke)
- *Produces* both hedonic and eudaimonic experiences of well-being including: positive emotions, self esteem, body image, cognitive functioning, psychological wellbeing, posttraumatic growth, flow, purpose in life, etc.
- Mens sana in corpore sano: Healthy body = healthy mind (Somatopsychic Principle)
- Build psychological and emotional strength via the building of physical strength (Faulkner, Hefferon & Mutrie, In press)



+ Yoga

- **Yoga** is one of the most renowned mind-body exercises
- Promotes engagement with body sensations and awareness (Impett, Daubenmier & Hirschman, 2006)
- Engagement in short and longer-term yoga interventions can increase:
 - positive mood
 - energy
 - satisfaction
 - confidence
 - mindfulness
 - self-compassion
 - enhanced sleep quality
 - well being
 - embodiment
 - overall quality of life
- Yoga has also been found to decrease stress, anxiety, anger, depression, back pain and reduce the experience of symptoms of clinical treatments (e.g. cancer) (Field, 2011; Hefferon; 2013)



Further Body-based interventions



- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Autogenic training
- Mindfulness body scans

Embodied adaptations to the main PPI's (Hefferon, in press)

Intervention	Embodied adaptation
Gratitude	For one week, individuals are asked to write down three things that they are grateful for in relation to body functionality (what their body did well). If desired, participants can reflect on other aspects they are grateful for that are connected to Positive Body Image (e.g. support system, uniqueness) (see Holmqvist & Frisén, 2012).
Best Possible Pelf (BPS)	Individuals can adapt this writing exercise in many ways. First, they can focus on writing about a Best Possible Embodied Self (BPES) e.g. future aspirations about activity levels, health, body awareness, etc. Secondly, participants can engage in this exercise by utilising 'embodied writing' techniques, which challenge participants to 'write from the inside out' (see Anderson, 2001).
Random Acts of Kindness	On one day this week, individuals are asked to commit 5 different random acts of kindness where they explicitly set up the environment for the possibility of positivity resonance (see Fredrickson, 2013).
Character Strengths	For one week, individuals are asked to use their 'Top 5' strengths in order to manipulate their physical activity routine. For example, if a top strength is 'love and be loved', they can try and join an exercise class with a friend, thereby supporting their need for connection. If one of the top strengths is 'spirituality', they can move their activity outdoors to be closer to nature (see Hefferon & Mutrie, 2012).
Mindfulness	This exercise asks participants to move away from viewing their body as something to objectify. Over the next week, individuals are asked to take ten minutes out to engage in a body scan, connecting sensations to emotions and increasing body awareness (see Cash, 2008).



Conclusions



- The body plays a crucial role in our ability to experience both hedonic and eudaimonic well-being
- Positive psychology must start to focus on what goes on 'below the shoulders'
- Interventions aimed at enhancing well-being should also contain somatic components (e.g. body awareness) which will encourage an understanding of the body and its impact on flourishing

*“The body is a ‘marvel of nature’
but it is the one marvel of nature
that we least stop to observe.”*



(Aldersey-Williams, 2013, p. xviii)



Thank you!

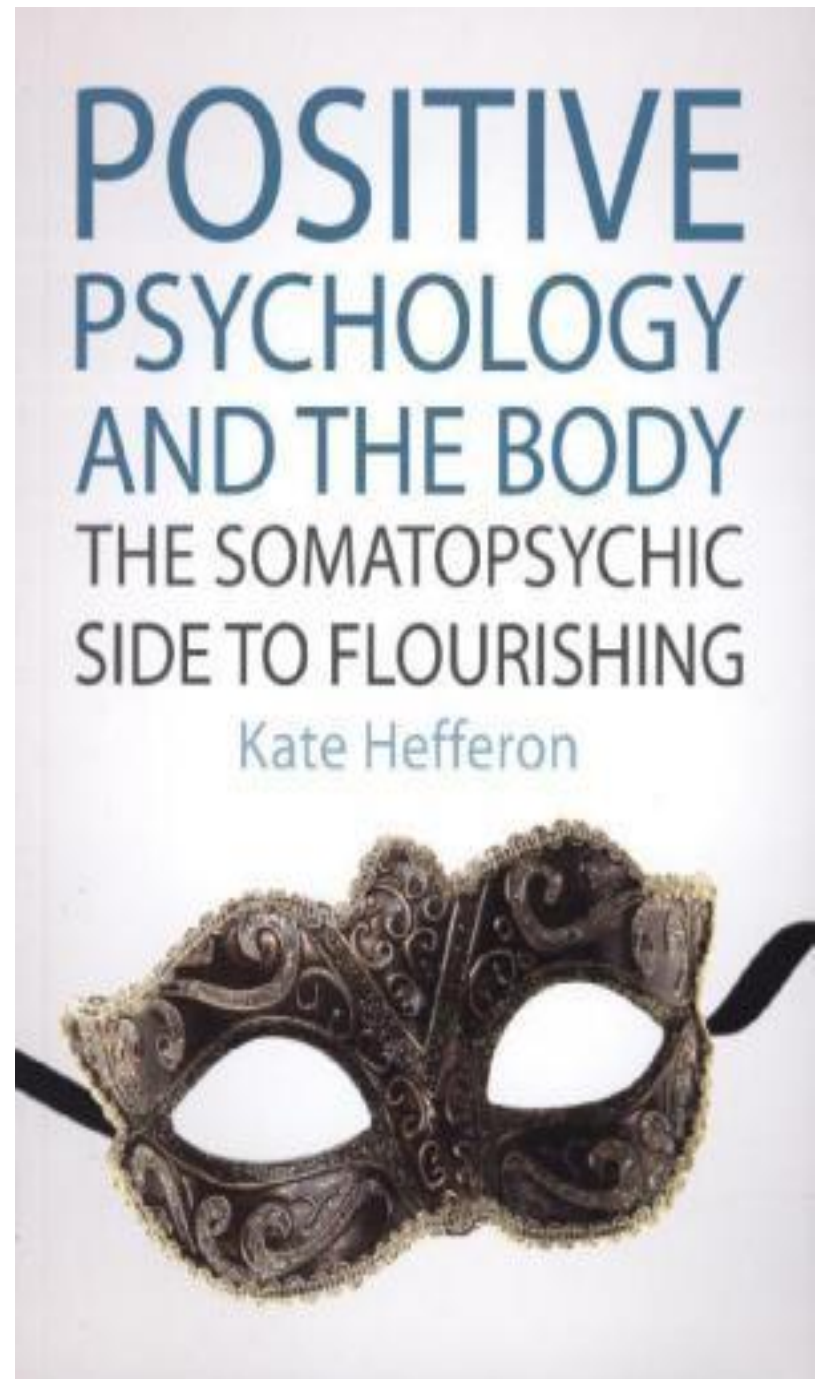
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+ Resources

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+ **STRETCH!**