

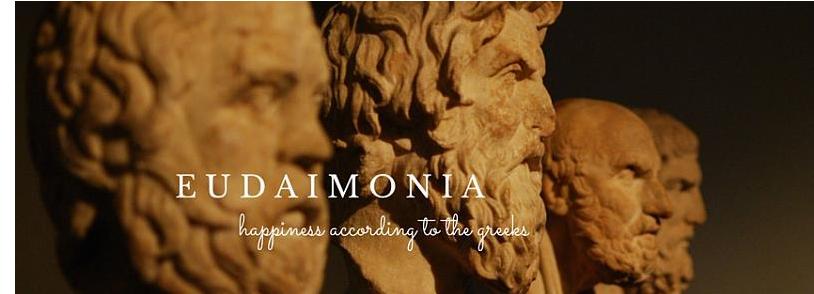
Chapter 9

Models of Optimal Well-Being



Models of Optimal Well-Being

- Focus on this chapter: Eudaimonia perspective of well-being
 - Personal growth
 - Optimal self-development
 - Search for meaning
 - This perspective assumes primary goals in life involve search for personal growth and meaning; happiness and positive emotion are regarded as by-products of that search



Wisdom

- Wisdom
 - Greek philosophy
 - Wisdom is the ultimate goal of life
 - Jewish tradition
 - Wisdom is a venerated quality associated with highly ethical life
- Research psychologists avoided the topic of wisdom

Wisdom

Preliminary wisdom about Wisdom

- Unique positive result of long developmental processes
- Implies knowledge that is social, interpersonal, and psychological
- Difficult for the average person to attain
- Kramer: elements of wisdom: openness to experience and capacity to reflect on and grapple with difficult existential life issues



Wisdom

Preliminary wisdom about Wisdom

- J. Webster measures wisdom with five components
 - Openness to experience
 - Emotional regulation
 - Healthy coping with critical life experience
 - Reminiscence and reflectiveness
 - Self-effacing sense of humor that recognizes life ironies



Wisdom

Preliminary wisdom about Wisdom

- Wink and Helson's two forms of wisdom
 - Practical wisdom (good interpersonal skills, clarity of thinking, greater tolerance, generativity)
 - Transcendental wisdom (deals with limits of knowledge, rich complexity of the human experience, sense of transcending the personal and individual aspects of human experience)

Wisdom

Preliminary wisdom about Wisdom

- Kunzmann and Strange's three basic ways of defining wisdom
 - Mature personality development
 - Post-formal reasoning
 - Expanded form of pragmatic or practical intelligence

Wisdom

Preliminary wisdom about Wisdom

- Bangen, Meeks, and Jeste's elements or traits usually associated with wisdom
 - Knowledge of life
 - Prosocial values
 - Self-understanding
 - Emotional homeostasis
 - Tolerance
 - Openness
 - Self-understanding
 - Sense of humor



Wisdom

Preliminary wisdom about Wisdom

- Bassett Theory of Emergent Wisdom

Wisdom emerges out of a complex series of interactions among various wisdom-related capabilities and abilities



Wisdom

Preliminary wisdom about Wisdom

- Summary

Researchers agree it is not simply the presence of certain traits or variables or elements; it is the way they interact



Wisdom

Preliminary wisdom about Wisdom

- Wisdom is not the inevitable outcome of advanced age
- Seen more often in at least middle-aged persons
 - Certain age-related changes may be a hindrance to wisdom unless one actively pursues its development (e.g., declining cognitive resources)
- Relationship between age and wisdom may be specific to culture
 - Note: your textbook has one sentence on research on age and wisdom with participants from US and Japan...highly recommend you read the original source to understand their comment in the book
- Wisdom is not intelligence as measured by IQ tests

College Students View of Wise People



- Top 15 People identified as wise:
 - Gandhi, Confucius, Jesus Christ, ML King Jr., Socrates, Mother Theresa, Solomon, Buddha, Pope, Oprah Winfrey, Winston Churchill, Dalai Lama, Ann Landers, Nelson Mandela, Queen Elizabeth

College Students View of Wise People

- 6 Attributes that characterize a wise person
 - Reasoning ability
 - Look at problem and solve using logic, apply knowledge to problems, integrate info in new ways, possess much knowledge
 - Sagacity (knowledge)
 - Keen understanding of human nature, thoughtfulness, fairness, good listening abilities, knowledge of self, and placing value on advice and knowledge of others
 - Learning from ideas and the environment
 - Places value on ideas, is perceptive, and learns from others' mistakes

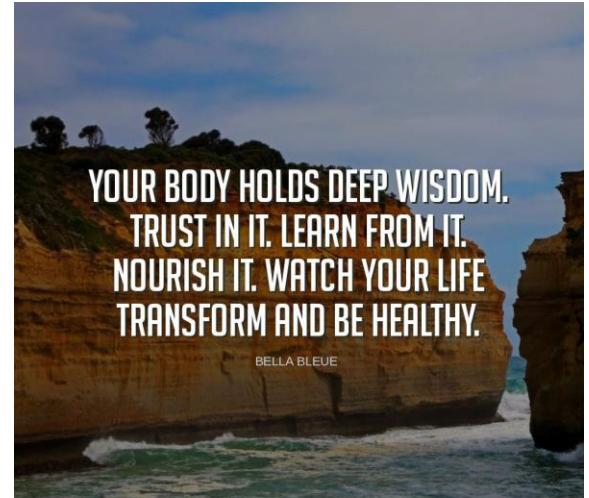
College Students View of Wise People

- 6 Attributes that characterize a wise person
 - Judgment
 - Has good, sensible judgment at all times, takes a long-term view, and thinks before acting and speaking
 - Expeditious use of information
 - Learns and retains information from experience, willingness to change one's mind based on new experience
 - Perspicacity (perceptive)
 - Demonstrates perceptiveness, intuition, ability to see through things, read between the lines; and discern the truth and the right thing to do

Wisdom

Wisdom and Well-Being

- Significantly correlated with
 - life satisfaction
 - sense of mastery
 - purpose in life and
 - greater physical well-being for both men and women



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Wisdom

Wisdom and Well-Being

- Wise people show emotional and motivational preferences that enhance well-being
 - e.g., being inspired by a situation to come up with novel solution to a problem, rather than have anxiety and panic
- Wise persons prefer cooperative conflict-management styles, rather than “I win, you lose”

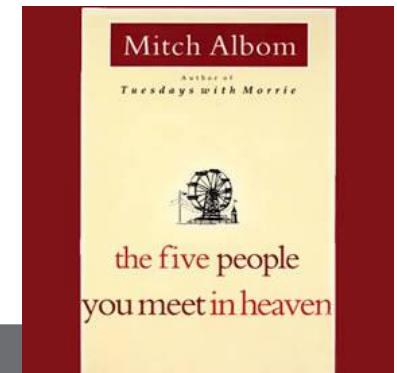
Wisdom: Perspectives

- Life Stage Approach
- Postformal Cognitive Development
- Wisdom as a specific type of excellence

Wisdom

Wisdom as a Stage of Life

- Erik Erikson's perspective on wisdom



Ego Conflict		Age	Virtue
Adaptive	Maladaptive		
Trust	Mistrust	Infancy	HOPE
Autonomy	Shame/doubt	Early childhood	WILL
Initiative	Guilt	Play age	PURPOSE
Industry	Inferiority	School age	COMPETENCE
Ego identity	Role confusion	Adolescence	FIDELITY
Intimacy	Isolation	Young adulthood	LOVE
Generativity	Self-absorption	Adulthood	CARE
Ego integrity	Despair	Old age	WISDOM

Source: Created from material found in Erikson, E., Erikson, J., & Kivnick, H. (1986). *Vital involvement in old age*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton. Compiled by William Compton, PhD.

Wisdom

Wisdom as Postformal Cognitive Development

- Jean Piaget Theory of Cognitive Development
- Formal-operational thinking (last stage)
 - Thinking is more practical, flexible, dialectical/logical
- Wisdom as a stage of cognitive thought that goes beyond formal operational thinking...a more highly complex style of problem solving
- Wisdom is partially driven by a fear of appearing foolish

Wisdom

Wisdom as a Form of Excellence

- Define wisdom as a specific type of excellence in the performance of one's life
- Similar to confluence approach utilized in study of creativity (ie, multifaceted)
- Joint product between individual and their environment
- Complex, highly differentiated, and associated with diverse cultural meanings, which make it very challenging to empirical study

Wisdom

Wisdom as a Form of Excellence: The predictors of wisdom (Baltes and Staudinger)

- 4 predictors of wisdom
 - Intelligence (accounted for about 2% of variance in wisdom)
 - Personality dispositions (about 2%)
 - Cognitive styles (about 15%)
 - Creativity and thinking styles (those related to evaluating and comparing issues, and tolerating ambiguity)
 - Life experiences (about 15%)

Wisdom

Aristotle: Wisdom as the “Master” Virtue

- Wisdom was the “master virtue” that allowed a person to discern which virtues were most important and how the various virtues should be balanced in life
- Appropriate development of strengths in one’s virtues allowed for the cultivation of *practical wisdom*
- Practical e.g., when is honesty the best policy; when is courage foolhardy or a virtue
- Wise people pursue “good life” by eudaimonic strategies that seek meaning and purpose in life as primary goal, and positive emotionality as secondary

Wisdom

How to Cultivate Wisdom (Difficult to teach wisdom)

1. Practice dialectical and reflective thinking skills about difficult problems (practice thinking about all sides of a problem)
2. Read writings of important thinkers
3. Familiarize self with literature and art that deal with human situation
4. Read biographies of wise people
 - Empathy and compassion, necessary aspects of wisdom
 - Greater emotional regulation

Early Psychodynamic Ideas on Optimal Personality

Alfred Adler

- Innate striving for prosocial interactions and altruistic concern for others drives self-realization
- Gemeinschaftsgefühl
 - “social interest” a feeling of intimate relationship with humanity, empathy with human condition, sense of altruism
- People are inherently social beings



Early Psychodynamic Ideas on Optimal Personality

Carl G. Jung

- An innate potential for optimal mental health that needs to be actualized
- *Collective unconscious* deeper than the personal unconscious
 - Archetypes, contents of the collective unconscious



Early Psychodynamic Ideas on Optimal Personality

Carl G. Jung

- *Collective unconscious Archetypes*
 - The process of individuation, or self-realization, leads to the development and refinement of what Jung called the self archetype
- Optimal mental health should transcend one's *persona (occupation or social role)*



Early Psychodynamic Ideas on Optimal Personality

Erich Fromm

- Our sense of being a fundamentally separate self creates a mind-set of both freedom and isolation...creates conflicts and anxiety (desire social connections but fear rejection; desire freedom but fear isolation)
- Healthy way to deal with fundamental conflicts and fears is to accept them as part of life
- Unhealthy methods of dealing with anxiety...Escape mechanisms



Early Psychodynamic Ideas on Optimal Personality

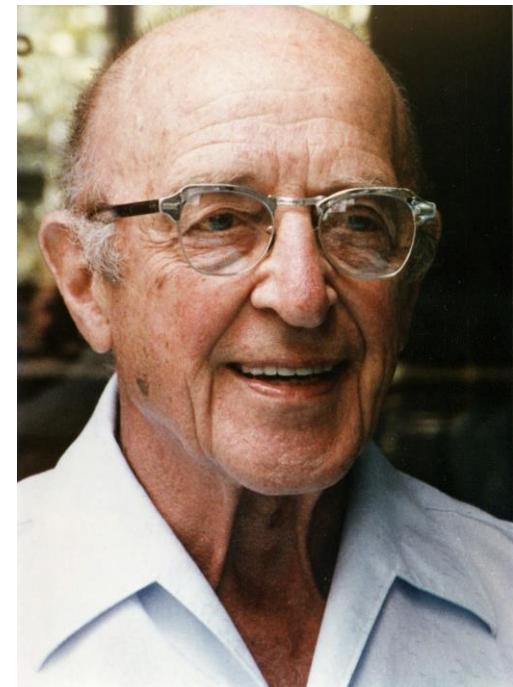
Erich Fromm: The Productive Orientation

- Ideal of optimal mental health is an orientation toward ***being*** (expression of self using openness to and awareness of experience) rather than ***having*** (hides isolation behind possessions, rigid beliefs, and diversions designed to protect people from the truth)
- Production of a real self

Humanistic Perspectives

Carl Rogers and the Fully Functioning Person

- *Self-actualizing tendency*: An innate need to develop our potentials
- Given the right circumstances, people find ways to fulfill potentials that will be both socially responsible and personally fulfilling
 - Problems come when we deny our own experiences of self in order to gain conditional acceptance from other people



Humanistic Perspectives

Carl Rogers: The fully functioning person

- Psychological adjustment exists when relevant experiences of person are integrated into a coherent and flexible self-concept
 - Three major and two auxiliary criteria to characterize the fully functioning person
 - (1) openness to experiences
 - Aware of internal and external stimuli; don't use defense mechanisms
 - (2) existential living (being present or mindful)
 - (3) trust in one's own organismic experiences (intuition, instincts)
- These three result in (4) a sense of freedom and (5) enhanced creativity

Humanistic Perspectives

Carl Rogers and the Fully Functioning Person

Rogers argued that when people exist in environments defined by unconditional love, empathic understanding, and genuineness, they grow psychologically toward their fullest potential

YOU DON'T NEED
SOMEONE TO
COMPLETE YOU.
YOU ONLY NEED
SOMEONE TO
ACCEPT YOU
completely.

Humanistic Perspectives

Rogers: Living as a Fully Functioning Person

- Movement is toward *being* what one actually *is* (not being more...with insecurity or defensiveness; not being less with guilt or self-deprecation)
 - Movement is toward self-direction, openness to experience, acceptance of others, and trust in self
- Way of approaching and even welcoming life experiences

Humanistic Perspectives

Rogers: Living as a Fully Functioning Person

- Research on self-concordance based on Rogers's theory

Self-concordance is found when there is high congruence between one's personality and one's goals...In order to have higher congruence, it is necessary to become aware of one's true self, what one really wants in life, and how to strive toward those goals

Humanistic Perspectives

Abraham Maslow and Self-Actualization: Early studies of self-actualizing people

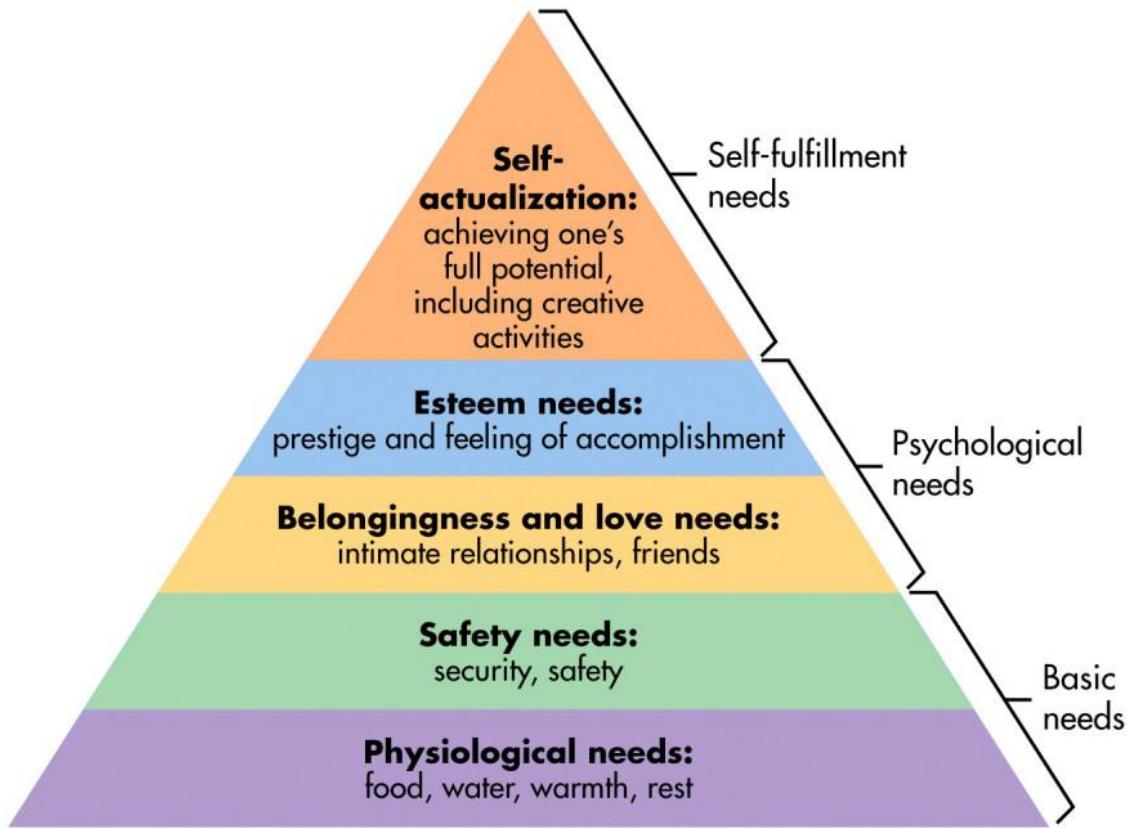
- **Self-actualization**, an *ongoing process* of development; process of fulfilling one's potential
- Exemplars were not the average person
- Not possible in our society for young, developing people...needed experience and maturity
- Argued about 1% of population reached self-actualization



Humanistic Perspectives

Maslow's Hierarchy of Inborn Needs

- Theory proposed that personality developed based on basic human needs



Humanistic Perspectives

Abraham Maslow and Self-Actualization: Maslow's Hierarchy of Inborn Needs

- Preconditions necessary for satisfaction of the needs
 - Specific freedoms (e.g., speech)
 - Necessary ethical principles (justice, honesty)
- Needs *to know* and *to understand* formed a second smaller needs hierarchy
- Need for aesthetic expression for some as well

Humanistic Perspectives

Abraham Maslow and Self-Actualization: Motivation in Self-Actualizing People

- Deficiency needs or D-needs (1-4)
- Being needs or B-needs (SA)
 - B-needs more motivating than D-needs for self-actualizing people
 - B-needs: truth, justice, beauty, wholeness, richness, playfulness, meaningfulness, goodness

Humanistic Perspectives

Abraham Maslow and Self-Actualization: Motivation in Self-Actualizing People

- Tension between security and growth
 - Max de Pree “The greatest thing is, at any moment, to be willing to give up who we are in order to become all that we can be”
- Jonah complex
 - Idea that our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measures...Maslow suggests that as we let our light shine, we unconsciously give others permission to do the same

Humanistic Perspectives

Maslow Personality Traits of Self-Actualizing People

- 15 traits, self-actualizers don't show all 15
- Self-actualizers not perfect, but were free of neurotic anxieties and conflicts
- Five categories
 - Openness to experience
 - Autonomy
 - Resistance to Aculturation
 - Positive relationships with others
 - Strong ethical standards

Humanistic Perspectives

Maslow Personality Traits of Self-Actualizing People

- Openness to experience
 - More efficient perception of reality and more comfortable relations with it
 - Acceptance (self, others, nature)
 - Continued freshness of appreciation
 - Spontaneity
 - Creativeness
 - The mystical experience: the oceanic feeling (peak experiences)

Humanistic Perspectives

Maslow Personality Traits of Self-Actualizing People

- Autonomy
 - Autonomy, independence of culture and environment (self-esteem not based on how others thought of them)
 - Quality of detachment, the need for privacy

Humanistic Perspectives

Maslow Personality Traits of Self-Actualizing People

- Resistance to Enculturation
 - Able to examine culture more objectively and see the contradictions, inconsistencies, and errors that existed

Humanistic Perspectives

Maslow Personality Traits of Self-Actualizing People

- Positive relationships with others
 - Social interest...empathy, compassion
 - Interpersonal relations more intense, profound
 - Philosophical, unhostile sense of humor
 - Problem-centering

Humanistic Perspectives

Maslow Personality Traits of Self-Actualizing People

- Strong Ethical Standards
 - Democratic character structure
 - Rank, class, status, education attainment...listen to all who might have something worthwhile to say
 - Discrimination between means and ends
 - Strong sense of ethics and morality is what Maslow intended this to mean
 - Clearly differentiated right from wrong and lived according to those values

Humanistic Perspectives

Abraham Maslow and Self-Actualization: Research on Self-Actualization

- Complicated to review, some support, some not
- Little empirical evidence for ascendancy of needs
- More support for self-actualization as metric for well-being
 - Higher scores on measures of self-actualization reflect greater well-being

Humanistic Perspectives

Abraham Maslow and Self-Actualization: How to Be More Self-Actualizing

- Recommendations follow the 15 personality traits
- Determine what motivates you and try taking more growth-producing risks (not thrill-seeking risks as those are satisfying D-needs)
-

Purpose in Life, the Quiet Ego, and Personal Growth

Purpose in Life

- Well-being may be best understood by looking at purpose in life (Kashdan & McKnight)
 - Purpose in life different from sense of meaning...having a sense of purpose catalyzes our sense of meaning
- Three pathways to creating a sense of purpose
 - Through proactive effort in goal pursuits
 - By a transformative life event that give clarity to a person's life
 - With social learning by observation of other people
 - Research: engagement with any pathway led to greater well-being

Purpose in Life, the Quiet Ego, and Personal Growth

Jack Bauer and the Quiet Ego

- Quiet ego
 - A concept of maturity
 - A self-identity that transcends egoism and identifies with a less defensive, balanced stance toward the self and others
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263698405_The_Quiet_Ego_Scale_Measuring_the_Compassionate_Self-Identity
 - Image: self-assured, humble, wise
- Louder/noisier ego
 - Interprets world as more individualistic, immediate, concrete, and defined more by the external world
 - Image: brash, self-focused, more concerned with own welfare

Purpose in Life, the Quiet Ego, and Personal Growth

Personal Growth Initiative

- An active, intentional engagement in the process of personal growth
- People high on personal growth
 - More open to experiences
 - Seek improvement in themselves
 - Have strong sense of self-direction
 - Pursue enduring goals
- People with high level of personal growth initiative know the direction they would like to grow, appear able to capitalize on opportunities for growth, seek opportunities for creativity and adaptive solutions

Purpose in Life, the Quiet Ego, and Personal Growth

Personal Growth and Human Potential

- Personal growth therapy or human potential
- Normal psychological and social adjustment don't represent a goal
- Techniques of therapy or workshops
 - Designed to tap creative potential
 - Build self-confidence
 - Increase motivation for success
 - Communicate better with others
- Human potential interventions not adequately assessed for effectiveness

The Optimal Personality: Common Themes

Marie Jahoda and Ideal Mental Health

- Six criteria and associated subcategories
 - Attitudes toward self (self-acceptance, -confidence, -reliance)
 - Growth, development and self-actualization
 - An integrated personality
 - Autonomy
 - Perception of reality (no distortions, greater social sensitivity)
 - Environmental mastery (successful adaptation to situational demands and expectations)
- Ryff's theory of Psychological Well-Being based on Jahoda's work

The Optimal Personality: Common Themes

Personality Traits Important for Optimal Well-Being

- Openness to experience
- Curiosity
- Exploration
- Absorption
- Courage
 - Four dimensions of courage

The Optimal Personality: Common Themes

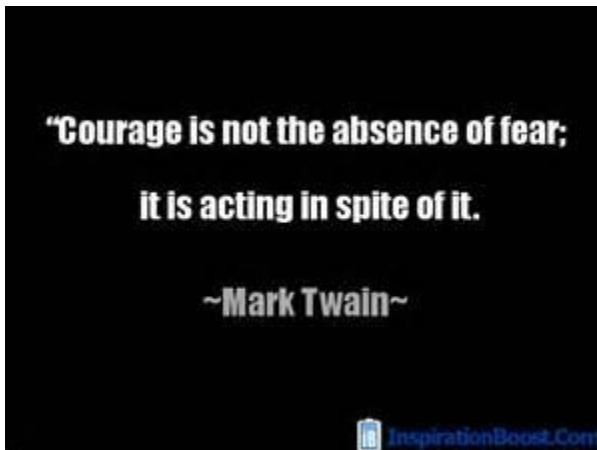
Personality Traits Important for Optimal Well-Being

Four dimensions of courage

- 1) willfulness and intentionality
- 2) mindful deliberation
- 3) objective substantial risk
- 4) a noble or worthy end

Theories of Courage

- ❖ Courage appreciated in many cultures



- ❖ At least 18 different conceptualizations of courage

Implicit Theories of Courage

❖ O'Byrne, Lopez, & Peterson (2000)

- Courage perceived as:

- an attitude
- a behavior
- mental strength
- physical strength
- risk-taking
- role of fear

Implicit Theories of Courage

- ❖ Values In Action system (Peterson and Seligman)
- ❖ Courage (core human virtue) comprising the following strengths:
 - ❖ Valor
 - ❖ Taking physical, intellectual, and emotional stances in the face of danger
 - ❖ Authenticity [This Is Me song](#)
 - ❖ Representing self to others and self in sincere fashion
 - ❖ Enthusiasm/zest
 - ❖ Thriving/having sense of vitality in challenging situation
 - ❖ Industry/perseverance
 - ❖ Undertaking challenges and tasks and finishing them

Implicit Theories of Courage

- Physical Courage
 - Maintain societal goals by using physical behavior in the pursuit of socially valued goals
- Moral Courage
 - Behavioral expression of authenticity in the face of the discomfort of dissention, disapproval, or rejection
- Vital Courage
 - Perseverance through disease or disability even when outcome is ambiguous

In

Figure 9.2 Exemplars of Three Types of Courage

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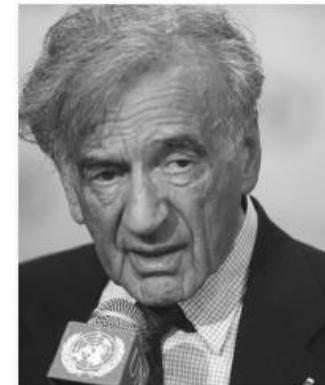
Moral Courage

Rosa Parks stood up to injustice when she sat in a seat in the front of a Birmingham bus during a time of extreme prejudice.



Physical Courage

Firefighters completing a training exercise prepare for their life-threatening work.



Vital Courage

Elie Wiesel devoted his life to fighting for human rights after he survived youth in a concentration camp.

Sources: Rosa Parks: © Reuters/CORBIS; Firefighters: Comstock/Thinkstock; Ellie Wiesel: © Ramin Talaie/Corbis.

Physical Courage

- ❖ Capt. Sullenberger and the “Miracle on the Hudson” (2009)
Interview 5 years later



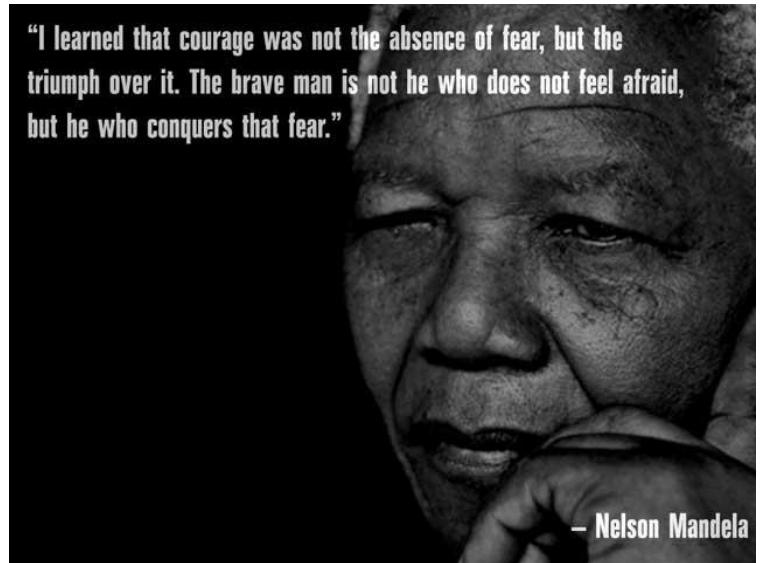
Moral Courage



Moral Courage

- Moral courage is “Standing up for values...the willingness to take a tough stand for right in the face of danger...the courage to do the right thing...the quality of mind and spirit than enables one to face up to ethical challenges firmly and confidently without flinching or retreating” (Kidder, 2006, p.72)
 - Kidder directs the Institute of Global Ethics

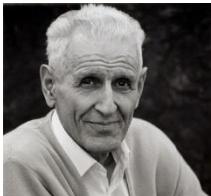
“I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear.”



– Nelson Mandela

Kidder Moral Courage: 3 Components

- Commit to core set of moral values and principles
- Recognize we are likely to experience and face danger by standing up for these principles
 - Physical threat, loss, rejection, shame, or disappointment
- Must be willing to endure that danger and continue to do what we know is right, even if it means loss, disapproval, or shame
 - Dr. Jack Kevorkian, publicly championed a terminal patient's right to die via physician-assisted suicide



Vital Courage

- ❖ Physicians, nurses, and other health professionals
- ❖ Chronically ill adolescents
- ❖ Case study: Army veteran Melissa Stockwell



Melissa Stockwell

- [Melissa Stockwell](#)
- [Interview](#)
- Her initial thoughts after waking up in the ER in Iraq after a roadside bomb took her leg was being thankful to have her life
- When she got to Walter Reed Army Medical Center she thought she was one of the lucky ones



Implicit Theories of Courage

- ❖ Putman (1997)
 - Psychological courage:
 - strength in facing one's destructive habits
 - a form of vital courage
 - Paucity of training for psychological courage

Empowering Women...sorry, not sorry

- Pantene Sorry, Not Sorry Commercial

Implicit Theories of Courage

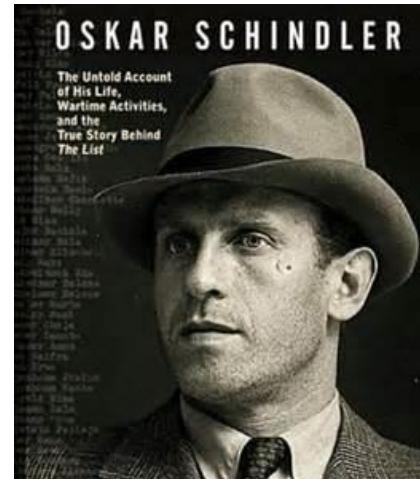
- ❖ Greitemeyer and colleagues (2007)
 - Civil Courage:
 - Brave behavior accompanied by anger and indignation that intends to enforce societal and ethical norms
 - Separate from altruism in that bodily harm is risked

Courageous Altruism

- Studied non-Jewish “rescuers” and “bystanders”
- Differed in terms of:
 - Social responsibility
 - Empathic concern
 - Risk taking
 - Altruistic moral reasoning



Miep Gies (hid Anne Frank)



Undoing Fear Conditioning

- When life knocks you down, get back up...as quickly as you can!
- Memories are unstable/malleable for a short period of time, where if we add another experience it may create a new memory...alter consolidation of memory
- New experience may not have to be so quick...Recent research suggests that each time a memory is retrieved, it is once again unstable for a brief period until it is reconsolidated
 - [Erasing Fear Memories](#)

Practical Applications: Learning to Face Fear

- View fear as a guide
 - View fear as normal, not something to avoid
 - Accept it, welcome it
 - There is a difference between fear and panic
 - [Navy SEALS Mental Training](#)
 - Moderate levels of fear may sharpen focus and decision making
- View fear as an opportunity
 - To develop courage, self-esteem, a sense of mastery
- Focus on the goal or mission
 - Looking ahead for a bigger view of the situation
 - [Sullenberger Miracle on the Hudson](#)
 - “challenge of a lifetime” and also provided “opportunities”



Practical Applications: Learning to Face Fear

- Acquire information about what is feared
 - Helps to build self-efficacy
 - Practice, practice, practice so not as overwhelmed or surprised by the unknown

Practical Applications: Learning to Face Fear

- Learn and practice the skills necessary to master the fear
 - Helps to build self-efficacy...mastery experience
 - [Navy SEALS How to get over a wall](#)
 - David Belle and Parkour [An Interview](#)
- Face fear with friends and colleagues
- Face fear with spiritual support
- Get someone or an organization to push you



Practical Applications: Learning to Face Fear

- Face fear with friends and colleagues
- Face fear with spiritual support
 - Milton Klarsfeld, Albany businessman, WWII POW, upon capture was placed in a box for 10 days where he nearly starved to death. It was during this time that he planned out the rest of his life. It gave him hope for the future.
- Get someone or an organization to push you



Chapter 10



Religion, Spirituality, and
Well-Being

A Sense of Meaning and Purpose

Definitions

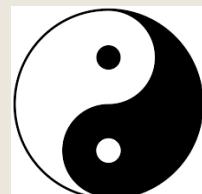
- Spirituality
 - *Personal or group search for sacred in life*
- Religion
 - *Search for sacred within traditional context (e.g., formal religious institution)*
- Both refer to a need to relate to something greater than oneself and often require transcendence

A Sense of Meaning and Purpose

Vertical transcendence: fostering relationship with higher being
e.g., Judeo-Christian God

Horizontal transcendence: forming a relationship with a force that is more immanent in the world, less often a spiritual being

e.g., Tao: the absolute principle underlying the universe, combining within itself the principles of yin and yang and signifying the way, or code of behavior, that is in harmony with the natural order



A Sense of Meaning and Purpose

Religion and Subjective Well-Being

- Greater religiousness—better mental health, higher subjective well-being
 - *Better emotional well-being*
 - *Lower rates of delinquency, alcoholism, drug abuse, and other social problems*
 - *Greater happiness, life satisfaction*
 - *Decrease death anxiety*

A Sense of Meaning and Purpose

Religion and Subjective Well-Being

- Greater religiousness—better mental health, higher subjective well-being
- Mediators
 - Women, African American, and older show stronger relationship between religiousness and well-being
- Public religious participation or active involvement in religious activities are key
- May be that allegiance to a belief system is the core psychological process involved

A Sense of Meaning and Purpose

Religion and Health

- Greater religiousness—fewer illness, lower rates for cancer and heart attacks, recover more quickly from illness/surgery, greater tolerance for pain
- Why? Lower BP, better immune functioning, reduced stress and worry; “learned hardiness”
- Most important predictor of improved health status: ability of religion to provide a sense of meaning and purpose or sense of coherence
- Results stronger for women and for active participation

A Sense of Meaning and Purpose

Why is Religion Related to Well-Being?

- Provides social support
 - *From religious group members, from God*
 - *Major religions share 5 ethical directives*
 - “golden rule” do unto others
 - Better to give than receive
 - Express gratitude
 - Forgiveness encouraged
 - Discourage comparisons of self and others and encourage acceptance

A Sense of Meaning and Purpose

Why is Religion Related to Well-Being?

- Supports healthy lifestyles
 - *Prohibition of risky health behaviors*
- Promotes personality integration
 - *Mental traits—intelligence, emotions, impulses, volitions, native and acquired reactions organized and integrated into a unity*
- Promotes positive emotions
 - *Emotions: gratitude, forgiveness, awe, love, compassion, humility, sense of peace*

A Sense of Meaning and Purpose

Why is Religion Related to Well-Being?

- Provides unique coping strategies
 - *Provides hope*
 - *Offers reasons for stressors*
 - *Prayer*
- Provides sense of meaning and purpose
 - *Ultimate meaning (addressed in next section)*

A Sense of Meaning and Purpose

Meaning and Subjective Well-Being

- Sense of meaning in life predicts well-being (positive emotion, joy love, vitality), leads to healthier behaviors, acts as a buffer against negative effects of stress
- Meaning in life is major criterion for eudaimonia
- Presence of meaning related to increase well-being, but *search for meaning* decreases happiness
 - "*Search*" for meaning indicates that it's missing

A Sense of Meaning and Purpose

Types of Meaning

- Religion offers larger perspective on human life and gives explanations for unexpected events, offers hope
- Personal/situational meaning derived from elements of personal life
- Cosmic meaning or global meaning, extent to which human life fits into some overall coherent pattern
- Meaning is a process rather than a product

A Sense of Meaning and Purpose

Ways to Create Meaning: Greater Harmony, Coherence, and Congruence

- Greater meaning created when there is increased harmony, coherence, and congruence among the various aspects of our identity and life goals
- Religious attitude can pull elements of life into a consistent direction
- Creating meaning is a process of reducing discrepancy between our current situation and global meaning
 - *Process accomplished by renewing sense of control, predictability, and order, or restoring belief that benevolence, justice, and fairness exist in some way in both humanity and cosmos*

A Sense of Meaning and Purpose

Ways to Create Meaning: Be of Service to Others or Dedicate Oneself to a Worthy Cause

- By helping others we make a difference in the world
- Dedicating to cause larger than us can create a sense of meaning



A Sense of Meaning and Purpose

Ways to Create Meaning:
Creativity

- Creation of something new gives life significance
- Scientific creativity also gives meaning and purpose
- Creativity can lead to self-discovery, creating new self-identity



A Sense of Meaning and Purpose

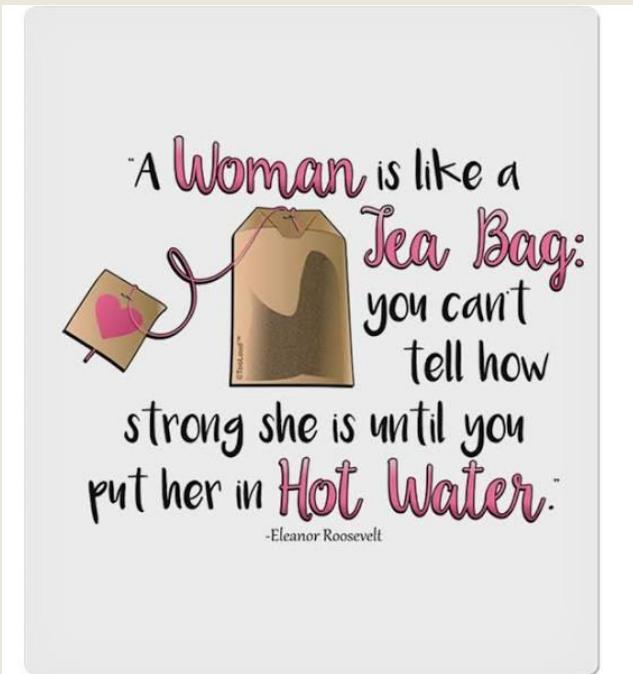
Ways to Create Meaning: Live Life as Fully and Deeply as Possible

- Desire to experience life fully can provide sense of active participation and involvement
- Does not refer to obsessive effort to seek pleasure

A Sense of Meaning and Purpose

Ways to Create Meaning: Suffering

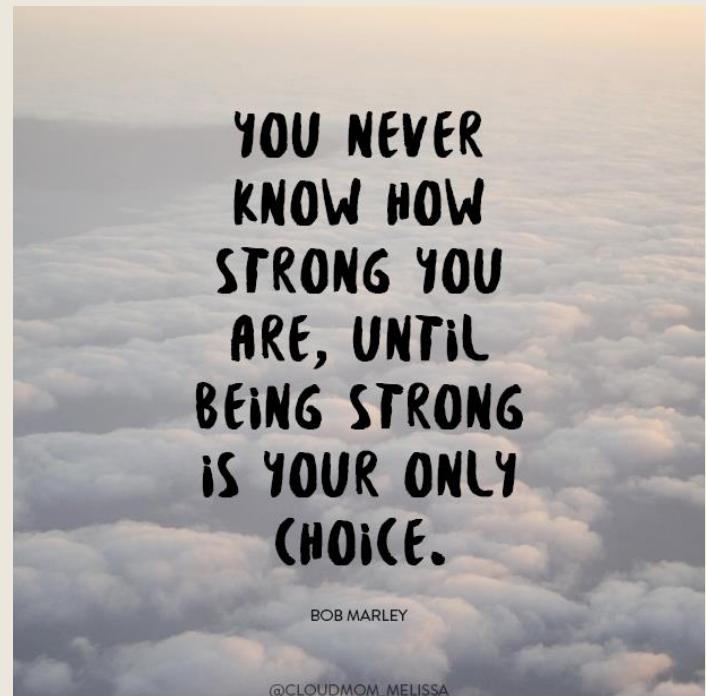
- Our approach to suffering determines experience of meaning in life
- Under difficulties, people reevaluate their lives and transform themselves
- Religions dictate that suffering stimulates spiritual growth



A Sense of Meaning and Purpose

Ways to Create Meaning:
Suffering: Potential Benefits

- Increased self-confidence
- Opportunities for enhanced interpersonal relationships
- Avenues for changing one's philosophy of life or style of creating meaning



A Sense of Meaning and Purpose

Ways to Create Meaning: Religious Experiences

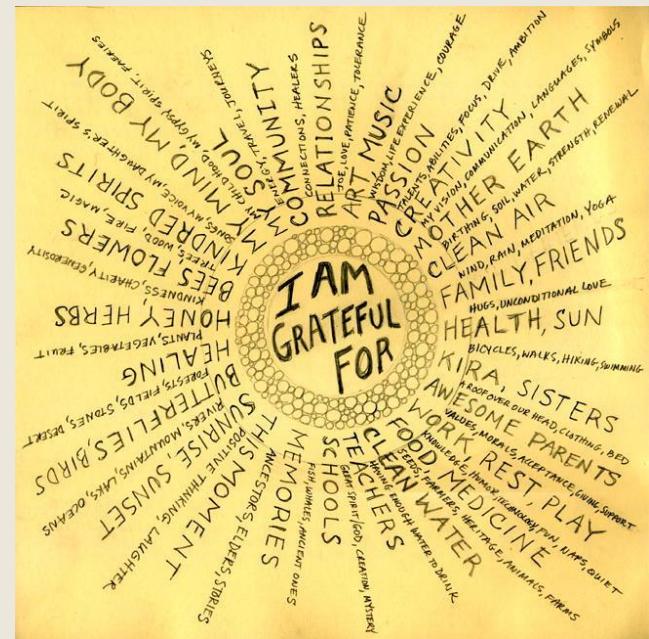
- Profound experiences increase sense of meaning in life



The Sacred Emotions

Gratitude and Appreciation

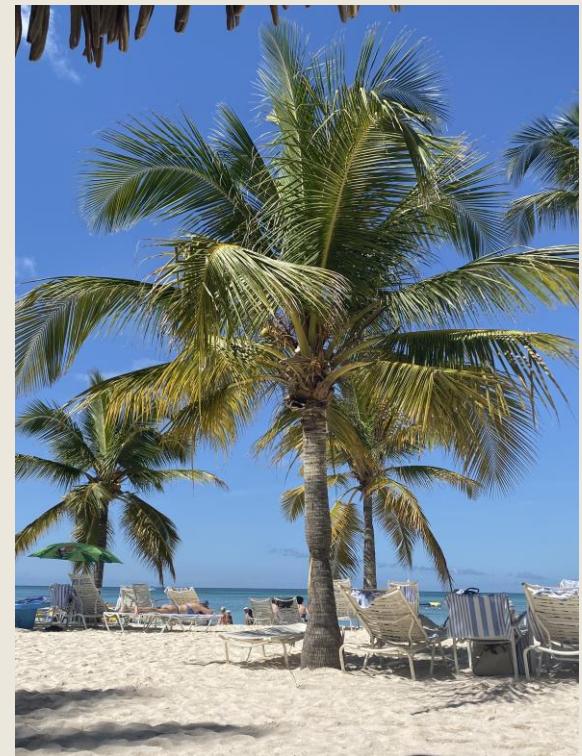
- Gratitude is greatest of virtues and parent of others (Cicero)
 - Researchers are divided whether gratitude is emotion or attitude
 - Grateful people tend to be happy people
 - Gratitude can be nurtured through practice
 - *Gratitude letter*
 - *Gratitude journal*



The Sacred Emotions

Gratitude and Appreciation

- Gratitude can maintain and enhance personal relationships
- Gratitude related to greater life satisfaction, optimism, and more positive and less negative emotionality
- Gratefulness related to wanting to give back to others...can expand outward and benefit the world



The Sacred Emotions

Gratitude and Appreciation

- Appreciation helps notice people and life experiences and acknowledge their value...gifts
- Appreciation is a combination of awe and gratitude



The Sacred Emotions

Gratitude can also come from non-human actions or events

e.g., surviving a natural disaster



*“Forgiveness is the fragrance that the violet
sheds on the heel that has crushed it.”*

Mark Twain

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The Sacred Emotions

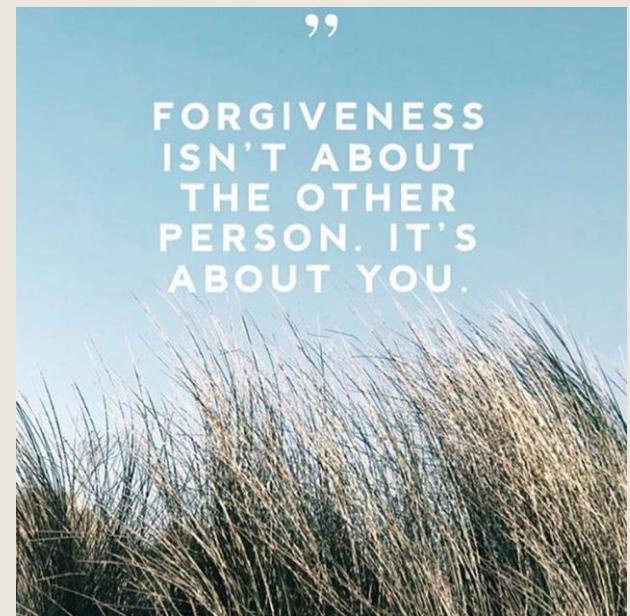
Forgiveness

- Many definitions: consensus is that forgiveness is beneficial
- Without forgiveness, anger and resentment take over and can be a cycle of hostility and desire for revenge
- Research scenarios: Women more likely to forgive than men, children less willing to forgive than adult, older adults more likely “let bygones be bygones”

The Sacred Emotions

Forgiveness

- Aspects of Forgiveness
 - *Cognitive (changing negative judgments)*
 - *Emotional (overcoming resentment)*
 - *Behavioral (ending indifference)*
- Forgiveness means overcoming the hurt, resentment, and aggression that accompany being the target of abuse



The Sacred Emotions

Forgiveness

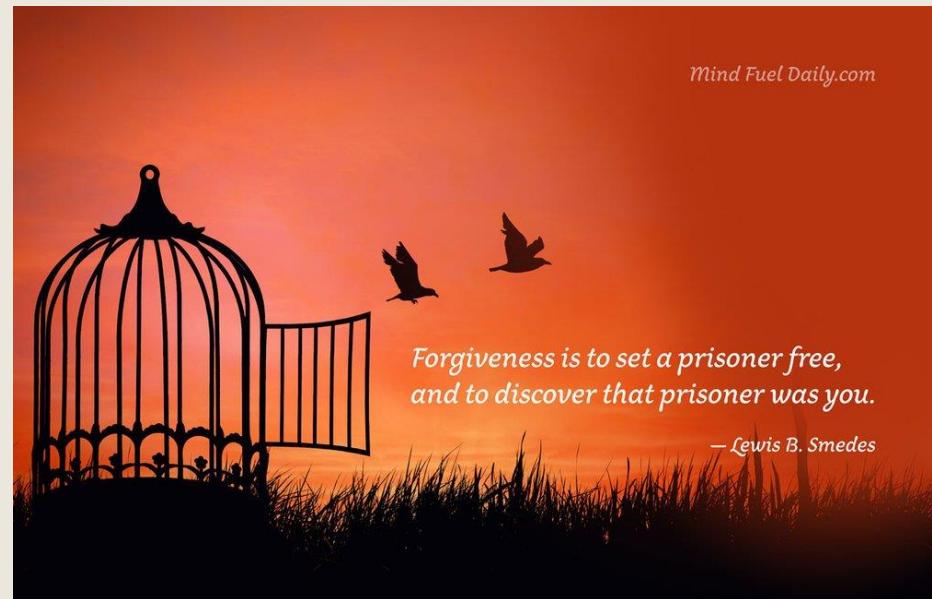
- Forgiveness is NOT:
 - *Simply tolerating or forgetting an injustice*
 - *Using denial or suppression*
 - *Forgetting, denying, or minimizing the hurt*
 - *Condoning what was done*
- Allows us to move on from transgressions
- Forgiveness promotes well-being
- Should enhance shared humanity and may deepen a connection with others and increase one's compassion



The Sacred Emotions

Forgiveness: Phases of Forgiveness

- Uncovering phase
- Decision phase
- Work phase
- Deepening phase



The Sacred Emotions

Forgiveness: Phases of Forgiveness

- Uncovering phase
 - *How resentment, anger, hurt is exerting destructive impact on life*
- Decision phase
 - *Making a choice to try to forgive*
- Work phase
 - *Reframe incident, accept hurt, try to find empathic understanding for why offender did what they did*
- Deepening phase
 - *Try to gain deeper sense of meaning*

Forgiveness

Cognitive-Affective Transformation
(Tangney and Colleagues)

- Freely choosing to “cancel the debt” & give up the need for revenge
- Giving up negative emotions is key
- Removing self from the victim role

The Sacred Emotions

Forgiveness: Self-forgiveness

- Role of blame and guilt
- “I did a bad thing.”
- Involves taking responsibility for bad act or actions, then let go and move forward
- We must take responsibility for our behavior and also make amends to the other person
- Then, let go of self-absorption and self-criticism

The Sacred Emotions

Compassion and Empathy

- Ability to connect deeply with others
- Compassion, empathy, and altruism often go together
- Empathy helps build positive relationships
- In Buddhist tradition, two hallmarks of well-being are compassion and wisdom

**“A life not lived for
others is not a life.”**
— Mother Teresa



Joseph Ranseth
Speaker, Author, Transformationist

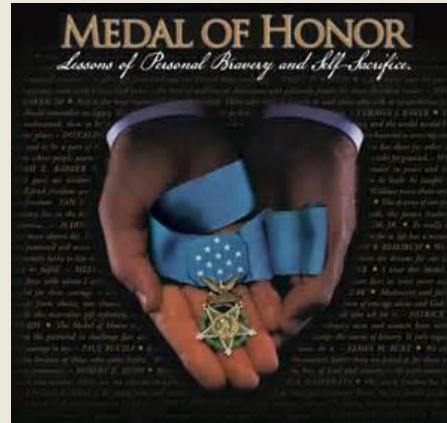
The Sacred Emotions

Self-compassion

- Being kind toward oneself is better way to change behavior
- Self-compassion makes us happier, optimistic, wiser
- Self-compassion adults had greater motivation for self-improvement

Altruism

- ❖ Behavior aimed at benefitting another person
- ❖ Volunteerism - a related concept



Congressional Medal of Honor

- USA highest military honor
- Awarded for personal acts of valor that go above and beyond the call of duty
- Awarded by the President
- 3 versions: 1 for Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard, 1 for Army, 1 for Air Force
- Created in 1861 during Civil War
- 3508 recipients of the Medal of Honor.
 - Today there are 71 Living Recipients of the Medal of Honor.
- March 25th National Medal of Honor Day
- <http://www.cmohs.org/>



Altruism

- ❖ Motivated by:
 - ❖ Personal egotism
 - ❖ Empathy...desire to benefit another
- ❖ Other suggested motivations:
 - ❖ Collectivism: valuing group over self
 - ❖ Principalism: moral integrity



3 Types of Altruism

- Reciprocity-based
 - *Usually egotistic because perform a helping behavior in the hope that the other will help you*
- Care-based
 - *Help because of feelings of empathy for recipient*
- Kin-based

DOING GOOD DOES YOU GOOD

Evidence shows that helping others can have a positive effect on your own mental health and wellbeing.



Mental Health
Foundation



Altruism – The Egotism Motive

- ❖ The motive to pursue some sort of personal gain or benefit through targeted behavior
- ❖ One of the most influential of all human motives



Altruism – The Egotism Motive

- ❖ We care for others because it benefits us
- ❖ Many argue that all altruism is motivated by egotism
 - underlying personal benefit even if not intended

Altruism – The Egotism Motive

- ❖ General forms of egotism: helping others can lead to:
 1. Public praise or material reward
 2. Avoid social or personal punishments for failing to help
 3. Lessen personal distress at seeing another's trauma

Altruism – The Empathy Motive

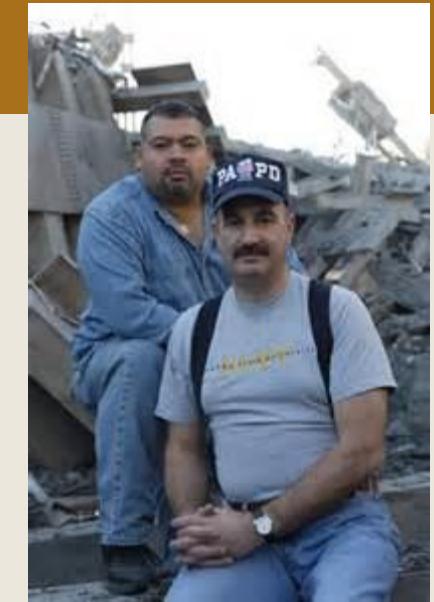
- ❖ Empathy is an emotional response to the perceived plight of another person
- ❖ *Feel what the other person is feeling*
- ❖ *May entail a sense of tenderheartedness*



Altruism

■ Jason Thomas

- Was in Long Island
- Had been out of Marines
- Put on fatigues and drove to NYC



■ Dave Karnes

- Accountant; was in Wilton CT; left work
- 23yr Marine veteran
- Drove to church and asked them to pray that God would lead him to survivors
- Reinlisted



Will Jimeno and John McLoughlin

A Tribute to Heroes

The Sacred Emotions

Humility

- Being humble allows us to
 - Acknowledge mistakes
 - Openness to others' opinions and ideas
 - Appreciate ways people contribute to the world
- Humility helps us to live life of quiet joy, satisfaction, wisdom, and contentment

Religious Experiences

- Religious experiences may be intensely positive
- Positive emotions tend to accompany religious experiences
- Transcendent experiences make people feel they have entered higher state of consciousness

Religious Experiences

Elation and Awe

- Elation: experiences of momentary joy; our response to an act of moral beauty, such as witnessing an act of compassion
- St. Francis of Assisi
- Viewing these acts can produce positive emotions
- For some people, these moments reorient their lives



St. Francis of Assisi

- In the year 1206, Giovanni Bernadone, the 23-year-old son of a wealthy merchant, went on a pilgrimage to St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. He could not help noticing the contrast between the opulence and lavishness within—the brilliant mosaics, the spiral columns—and the poverty of the beggars sitting outside. He persuaded one of them to exchange clothes with him and spent the rest of the day in rags begging for alms. It was one of the first great empathy experiments in human history.
- This episode was a turning point in the young man's life. He soon founded a religious order whose brothers worked for the poor and the lepers, and who gave up their worldly goods to live in poverty like those they served.

<https://www.yesmagazine.org/health-happiness/2014/11/07/empathy-heroes-st-francis-john-howard-griffin-patricia-moore/>

Religious Experiences

Elation and Awe

Awe: deep appreciative wonder

- Conditions that favor awe
 - *Time for reflection*
 - *Capacity to slow down*
 - *Capacity to savor the moment*
 - *Focus on what one loves*
 - *Capacity to see big picture*
 - *Ability to trust in the unknowable*

Religious Experiences



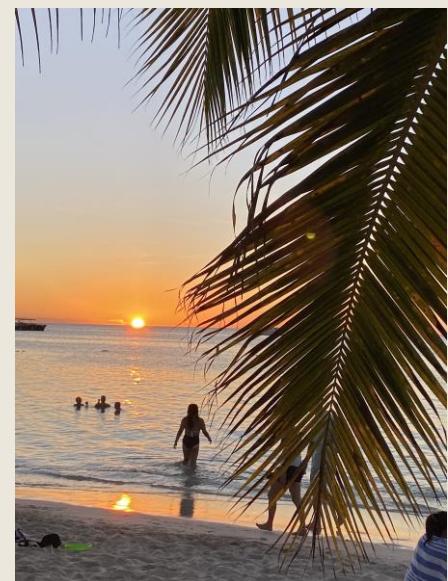
Wonder

- Closely related to awe, linked with qualities of imagination, surprise, and aesthetics
- Opening of heart to joy, gratitude, and love
- Regarded as a key to heights of human personality

Religious Experiences

Wonder

- Experiences categorized into three distinct groupings
 - *Physical (objects, processes within nature; Grand Canyon, sunset)*
 - *Personal (interactions with people or their work; infant)*
 - *Metaphysical (intense musing on meaning; think about earth's creation)*



Religious Experiences

Peak-Experiences (Maslow)

- Brief moments of intense experience
- Involve intense joy, wonder, appreciation
- Experience connection to larger spiritual reality
- Elements of peak-experiences could become almost permanent aspects of daily experience
- Resacralization—restoring sense of sacred to ordinary world

Religious Experiences

Conversion

- Occasionally, religious experiences lead to transformation (St. Francis of Assisi)
- Reorients person's life in different direction
- Highly personal and almost impossible to induce

Contemplative Spirituality

Transpersonal Psychology

- Spiritual experiences deserve serious scientific attention
- Transpersonal psychotherapy aims at daily experience of liberation or enlightenment
- Accepts first-person narrative accounts of spiritual experiences

Contemplative Spirituality

Mysticism

- These experiences show reality different from everyday experience
- Experience is typically ineffable
- Involves sense that profound knowledge has been revealed
- Experienced beyond understanding of time and space

Contemplative Religious Traditions

Monastic Christianity

- Most easily recognized in Catholic monastic practices
- Centering prayer is alternative to MBCT

Contemplative Religious Traditions

Kabbalah

- Mystical tradition of Judaism
- Has insights concerning human personality and personal growth
- Connected the Kabbalah to meditation and transcendent experience

Contemplative Religious Traditions

Buddhism

- Considers change as irrefutable truth of human existence
- Despite this, we crave stability and complete end to worry
- This is the cause of unhappiness, Buddhism asserts

Contemplative Religious Traditions

Buddhism: Nirvana and Enlightenment

- Happiness can be found in meditative practice
- Nirvana translates to “extinction of thirst”
- To realize Nirvana is to be released from all needs and desires

Contemplative Religious Traditions

Meditation in Spiritual Traditions

- Two basic styles
 - *Vipassana or insight meditation*
 - *Concentration meditation*

Mysticism and the Brain

Neurotheology

- Brain activity in Tibetan Buddhist monks was recorded during meditation
- Found recognizable patterns of brain activity
- Among people tested, a Tibetan monk had the most intense shift toward the brain pattern

Mysticism and the Brain

An Unusual Route to Transcendent Experiences

- Jill Bolte Taylor suffered a stroke that affected left hemisphere of her brain
- Left hemisphere functions of rationality, analysis, and language were silenced
- “I felt a sense of euphoria as I lost the boundaries of my body,” she said

Mysticism and the Brain

Entheogens and Religious Experiences

- Substances used to foster religious experiences are called entheogens
- Certain drugs induced these experiences
- Mind-altering drugs offer intriguing research opportunity

Psychological Theories of Religious Maturity

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Religiousness

- Extrinsic religiosity
- Intrinsic religiosity

Psychological Theories of Religious Maturity

Stages of Religious Cognition

- Fowler's six stages move from simple to complex notions of faith
- Stage transitions allow believers to see contradictions of their faith
- The last stage is universalizing faith

Psychological Theories of Religious Maturity

Psychodynamic Perspectives on Religion

- Explain processes of creating mature spirituality
- Healthy and unhealthy religiousness can be distinguished by one's relationship to unconscious

Psychological Theories of Religious Maturity

Psychodynamic Perspectives on Religion: Carl Jung on Religion and Spirituality

- Spirituality is rooted in need to connect with something larger
- We must increase awareness of specific archetypes in collective unconscious
- Meaningful way to express understanding is through images, symbols, or rituals

Psychological Theories of Religious Maturity

Perspectives on Morality and Ethics

- Moral behavior depended on strong ego to control innate forces
- Physiological and cognitive factors combine to influence moral behavior
- People had better morality when around clean environments

Chapter 11

Positive Institutions and Cultural Well-Being



Employee Engagement and Job Satisfaction

Definition of employee engagement

- Positive, work-related state of mind, dedication, and absorption
- Characterized by energy, involvement, and efficacy (which is opposite of job burnout elements of exhaustion, cynicism, inefficacy)
- Differs from job satisfaction...both involve positive focus, but engagement goes beyond with involvement, absorption, dedication

Employee Engagement and Job Satisfaction

What promotes employee engagement?

Positive emotions and work

- Positive emotionality disposition
 - High...more enthusiastic, energetic, excited about job, report higher JS
 - Zest, or approach life with anticipation, energy, excitement, a form of positive emotionality, predicts seeing work as calling and JS

Employee Engagement and Job Satisfaction

What promotes employee engagement?

Positive emotions and work

- Helps enhance problem-solving and decision-making...flexible, creative, innovative problem solving
- Contributes to positive spontaneous behavior
- Think Fredrickson's Broaden and Build Theory
- Enhances workplace achievement
 - Positive moods...more sociable, less aggressive
 - More likely to engage in OCBs

Employee Engagement and Job Satisfaction

What promotes employee engagement?

Positive emotions and work

- Happiness Advantage
 - Happiness—vocational success link
 - Some researchers suggest positive emotionality precedes and enhances workplace achievement
 - Higher confidence, optimism, self-efficacy, likability, sociability are advantageous

Employee Engagement and Job Satisfaction

Positive emotions and work

- Explanations
 - Positive emotions linked with approach-oriented behaviors
 - More likely to enter novel situations, interact with others, pursue new goals
 - More engaged with work
 - Less burnout, less emotional exhaustion, less absenteeism, less turnover
 - More popular, gain more social support
 - Engage in more helpful behavior



Employee Engagement and Job Satisfaction

Positive emotions and work

- Psychological Capital: combination of:
 - Self-efficacy
 - Hope
 - Optimism
 - Resiliency



Employee Engagement and Job Satisfaction

What promotes employee engagement?

More *frequent* positive emotions or more *intense* emotions?

- Frequency of positive emotions more important than the intensity, because bursts (e.g., motivational seminar) are short lived, so need more frequent
- Create work environments that induce positive emotions more consistently

Employee Engagement and Job Satisfaction

What promotes employee engagement?

It's not just a job, it's a calling

- Three views of occupation (Wrzesniewski and colleagues)
 - Job
 - Work is necessary to earn a living
 - Career
 - Jobs facilitate achievement motivation, stimulate need for competition, enhance prestige
 - Calling
 - Job is source of personal fulfilment
 - See job as having a socially useful purpose



Employee Engagement and Job Satisfaction

What promotes employee engagement?

It's not just a job, it's a calling

- Calling...related to individual success, resilience, and job satisfaction
- Features of calling
 - Action orientation (emphasis on *doing*)
 - Clarity of purpose, direction, meaning, personal mission
 - Prosocial intention (desire to make world a better place)

Employee Engagement and Job Satisfaction

What promotes employee engagement?

It's not just a job, it's a calling

- People who regard their work as calling reap benefits
 - Focused career decision making
 - Higher motivation
 - Increased job satisfaction
 - Lower stress and frustration
 - Stronger organizational commitment
 - Better organizational citizenship behavior

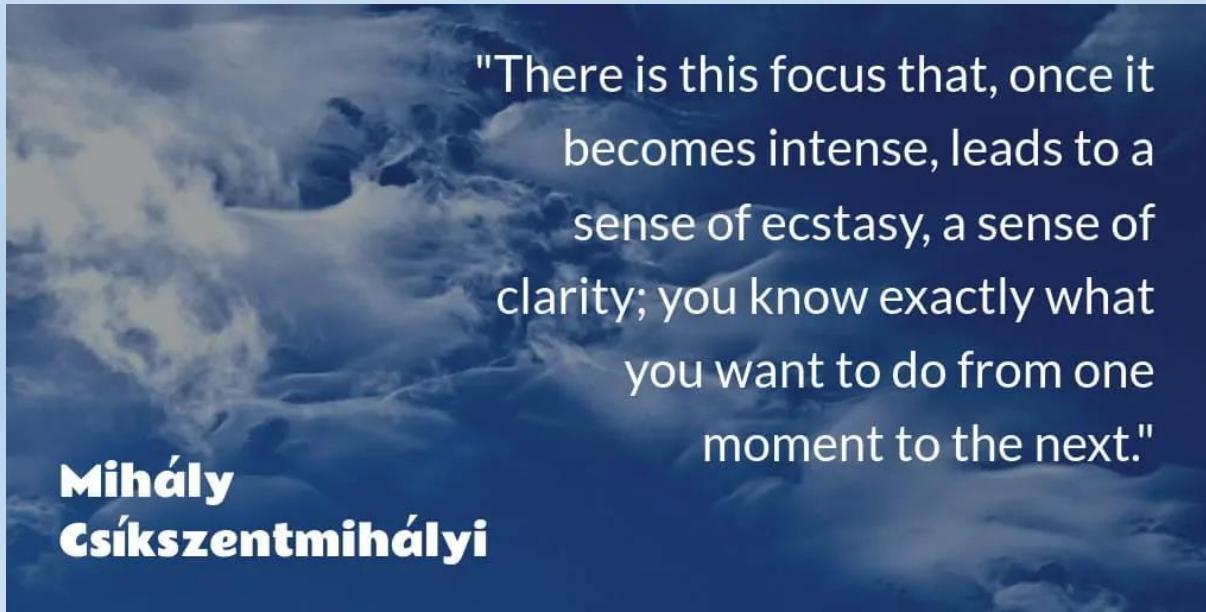
Potential Downside:
challenge to balance
passion for work with
family, social, and
leisure activities

Employee Engagement and Job Satisfaction

What promotes employee engagement?

Being in flow at work

- People who enjoy their jobs report being in a state of flow during work
 - Recall: high skills match high challenge
- More flow experiences is the key to job satisfaction



Employee Engagement and Job Satisfaction

What promotes employee engagement?

Being in flow at work

- Job Characteristics Model: Five core elements that influence workers' attitudes and behavior
 - Skill variety
 - Task identity
 - Task significance
 - Autonomy
 - Feedback
- May be aspects of work that are instrumental in being able to find flow at work

Employee Engagement and Job Satisfaction

Strengths-based approach to engagement

Myths of career satisfaction and success

- Gallup and personal strengths, talents
 - Traits, abilities, interests, skills that show us at our best and make us unique
 - Identified myths that inhibit us
 - Myth 1: Fixing weakness better than fostering and building strength
 - Myth 2: People can do anything they put their minds to
 - Better to know your limitations and work with them

Employee Engagement and Job Satisfaction

Strengths-based approach to engagement

Focus on your strengths

- Examine strength and work upon it
- Weaknesses should be recognized and managed
- Focus on one strength and as it develops, other strengths rise in salience

Employee Engagement and Job Satisfaction

Strengths-based approach to engagement:

Recognize your strengths

- Strength has five characteristics
 - Yearnings
 - Utilize strength...feel intrinsic satisfaction
 - Learning comes easier
 - Extraordinary performance...maybe even flow
 - Performance seems to take less effort

Employee Engagement and Job Satisfaction

Strengths-based approach to engagement

The development of strengths

- Strengths develop best in relation to other persons
 - Interpersonal support, understanding, empathy, and commitment to relationships help strengths grow
- Strengths develop best when we have deep commitment for future or even a life passion

Employee Engagement and Job Satisfaction

Strengths-based approach to engagement

Appreciative Inquiry

- Opposite of problem-solving, which is focus on what's wrong, to focus on what works in org and strengths already present
- Works on strengths, focuses on positive development

Employee Engagement and Job Satisfaction

Strengths-based approach to engagement

Appreciative Inquiry

- AI 4-D cycle used to move to positive solution by first identifying “affirmative topic” or “positive core”
 - *Discover* what works well already
 - *Dream*, envision positive future
 - *Design*, planning the processes that will work
 - *Destiny*, implementing the design

Employee Engagement and Job Satisfaction

Employee engagement: A positive work environment

Job characteristics and well-being

- Job Characteristics Model
 - Recall skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, feedback
- Important for job satisfaction
- Factors of work environment

Employee Engagement and Job Satisfaction

10 Elements of Well-Being

- Opportunity for personal control
- Opportunity for skill use
- Reasonable externally generated goals
- Variety
- Environmental clarity
- Availability of money
- Physical security
- Supportive supervision
- Opportunity for interpersonal contact
- Work is valued by society

Employee Engagement and Job Satisfaction

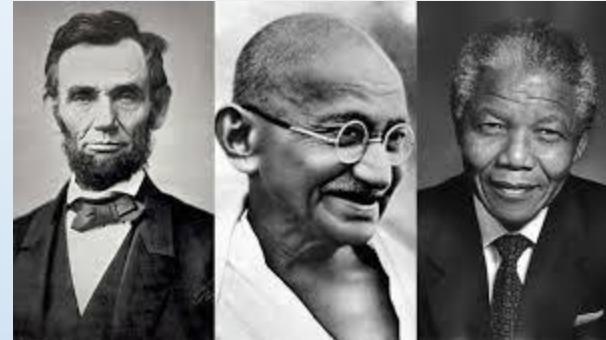
Leadership

- Key factor for fostering engaged employees and flourishing organizations
- Great Person theories: Heroic individuals successfully motivate others; “leaders are born, not made”
- Transformational leadership approach
 - Transformational leaders increase self-confidence, intrinsic motivation, and self-expectation among group leaders

Employee Engagement and Job Satisfaction

Transformational Leadership

How are transformational leaders effective?



- Leaders possess a vision that is discrepant from the status quo, resonates with followers
- Leaders have optimism and excitement about future
- Leaders value individuals for unique talents and seek to maximize their self-actualization
- High in dedication and hard work
- High integrity
- Provide clear directives and specific feedback
- Possess charisma

Careers That Use Positive Psychology



Careers That Use Positive Psychology

Positive Psychotherapy

- Focus on enhancing of positive traits, building strengths, helping clients find untapped resources for positive change
- Solution-focused therapy
 - Help clients find strengths
 - Set realistic goals for newer healthy behaviors
- Well-being therapy
 - Help clients restructure the way they think about aspects of their lives

Careers That Use Positive Psychology

Positive Psychotherapy

- Acceptance and commitment therapy ACT
 - Teaches how to actively accept and embrace experiences with mindful awareness and equanimity, to commit to building best life, and to operate from their core values

Careers That Use Positive Psychology

Positive psychotherapy: Positive clinical psychology

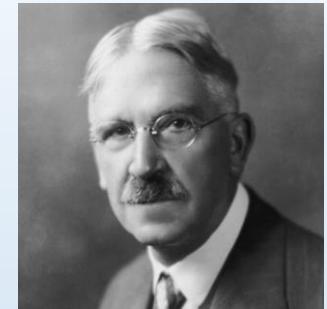
- Focusing on strengths and competencies as foundation for psychotherapy work
- Strengths of all effective therapy: instill *hope*
 - Additionally: instill courage, insight, optimism, authenticity, perseverance, and ability to dispute one's own negative thinking
- Such interventions increase well-being, decrease symptoms of depression

Careers That Use Positive Psychology

Positive psychotherapy: Life coaching

- Consultant to help attain goals
- Help reach a major decision, mark a new direction, find better way to personal fulfillment
- No consistent standards for certification or training

Careers That Use Positive Psychology



Positive Psychology in Schools

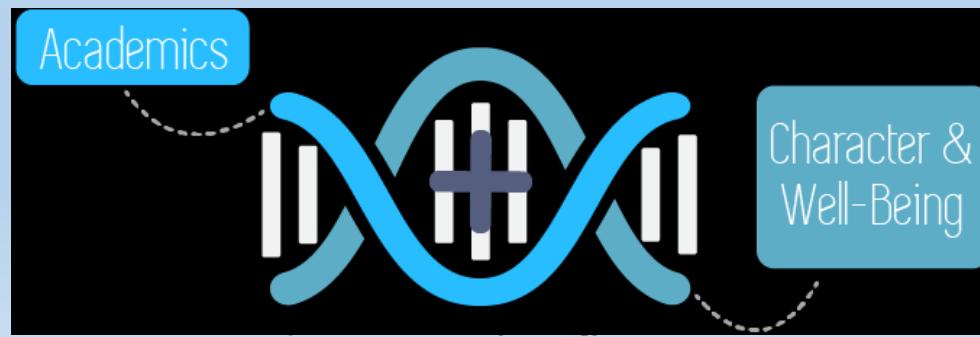
- John Dewey
 - Argued schools should be places that foster a desire to learn, expand one's potentials, and instill a desire to live and work cooperatively with others
- Dewey's ideas + PosPsyc → IPEN
- International Positive Education Network
- Goals of IPEN

Careers That Use Positive Psychology

Positive Psychology in Schools

- Goals of IPEN

- Fulfill intellectual potential of students
- Develop character strengths
- Support collaboration
- Change government education policy



Careers That Use Positive Psychology

Social entrepreneurs

- Create solutions that have social value
- Socially responsible
- Encourage social transformation
- Qualities of social entrepreneurs
 - Empathy
 - Elevated sense of moral judgment

Muhammad Yunus, Social Entrepreneur

- Muhammad Yunus is a Bangladesh social entrepreneur, banker, economist, and civil society leader who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for founding the Grameen Bank and pioneering the concepts of microcredit and microfinance. These loans are given to entrepreneurs too poor to qualify for traditional bank loans



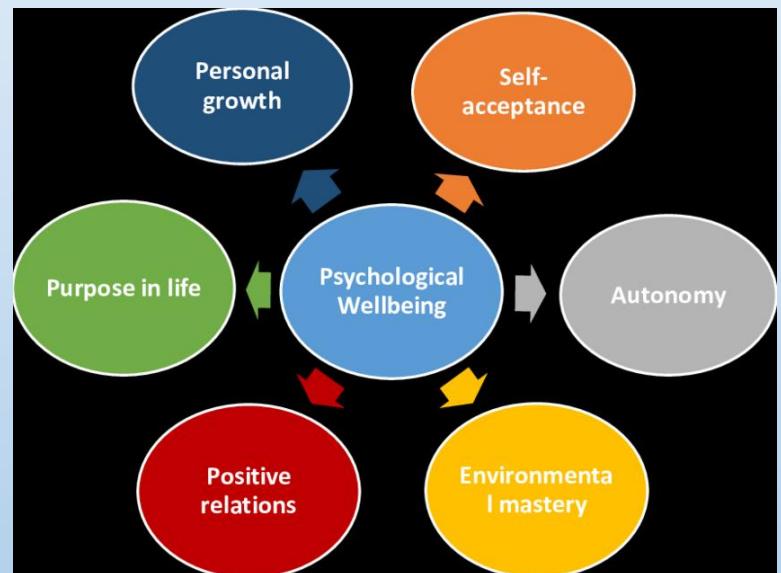
Careers That Use Positive Psychology

Academic programs in positive psychology

- Positive psychology blended into programs:
 - Psychology
 - Teaching, business, or law
 - Masters in Applied Positive Psychology (MAPP) program
- PhD programs in positive developmental and positive organizational psychology

Positive Communities

- Complete Mental Health Classification should include:
 - Emotional well-being (subjective WB)
 - Psychological well-being
 - Social well-being



Positive Communities

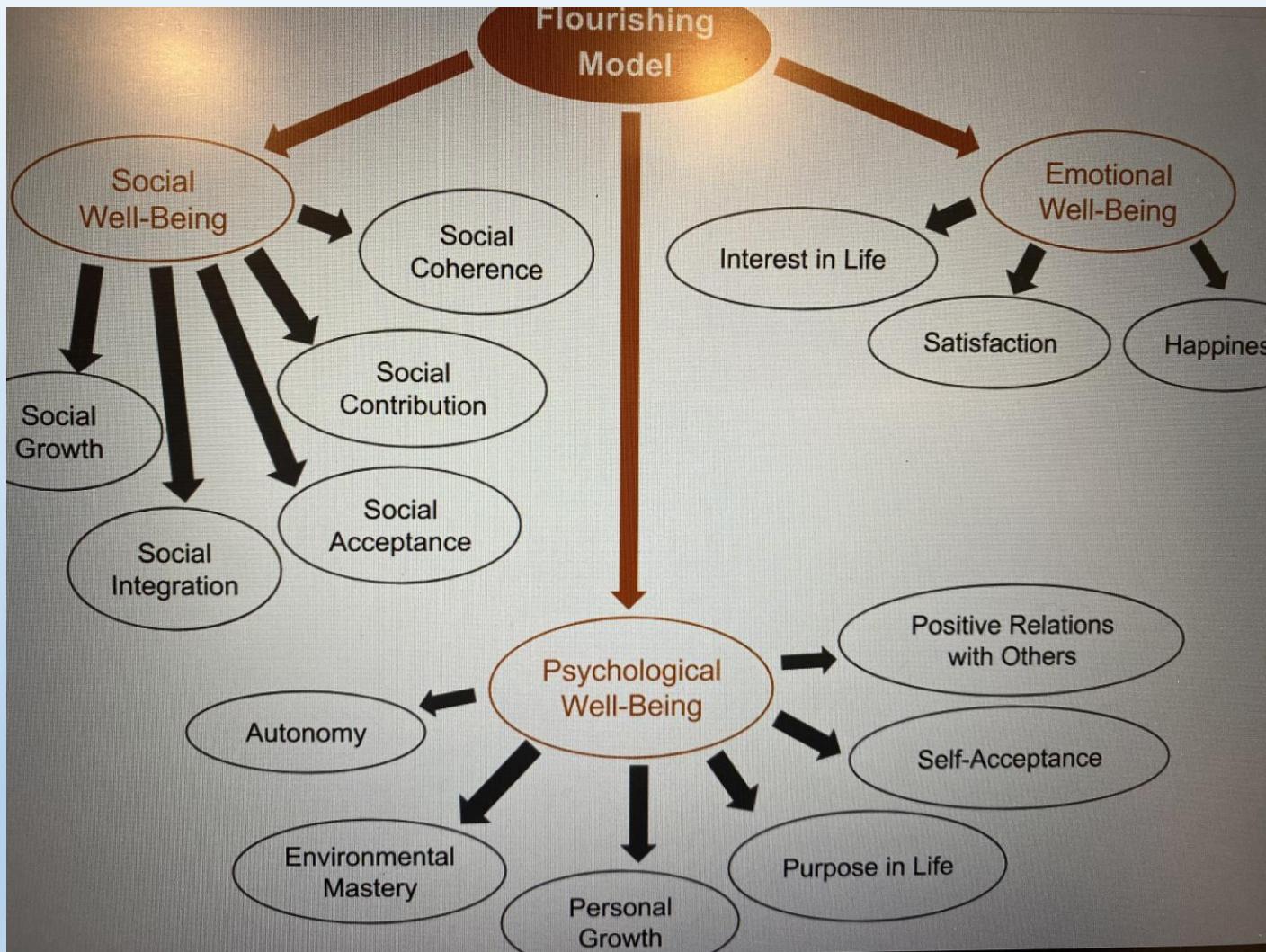
5 Dimensions of Social well-being

- Social acceptance
 - Positive attitudes toward others
- Social actualization
 - Believing society has capability of developing and evolving into a better place
- Social contribution
 - Belief daily activities contributes and is valued by community
- Social coherence
 - Degree to which society seems to be understandable, predictable, and logical
- Social integration
 - Degree to which feel part of community and how much support and commonality one feels toward others

Positive Communities

Social well-being

- Positive correlation with measures of happiness, life satisfaction, generativity, optimism, perceptions of neighborhood trust and safety, and subjective perceptions of one's physical health and degree of community involvement
- Distinct way of judging our own sense of well-being



Positive Communities

Flourishing communities nurture social environments/promote well-being in 4 ways

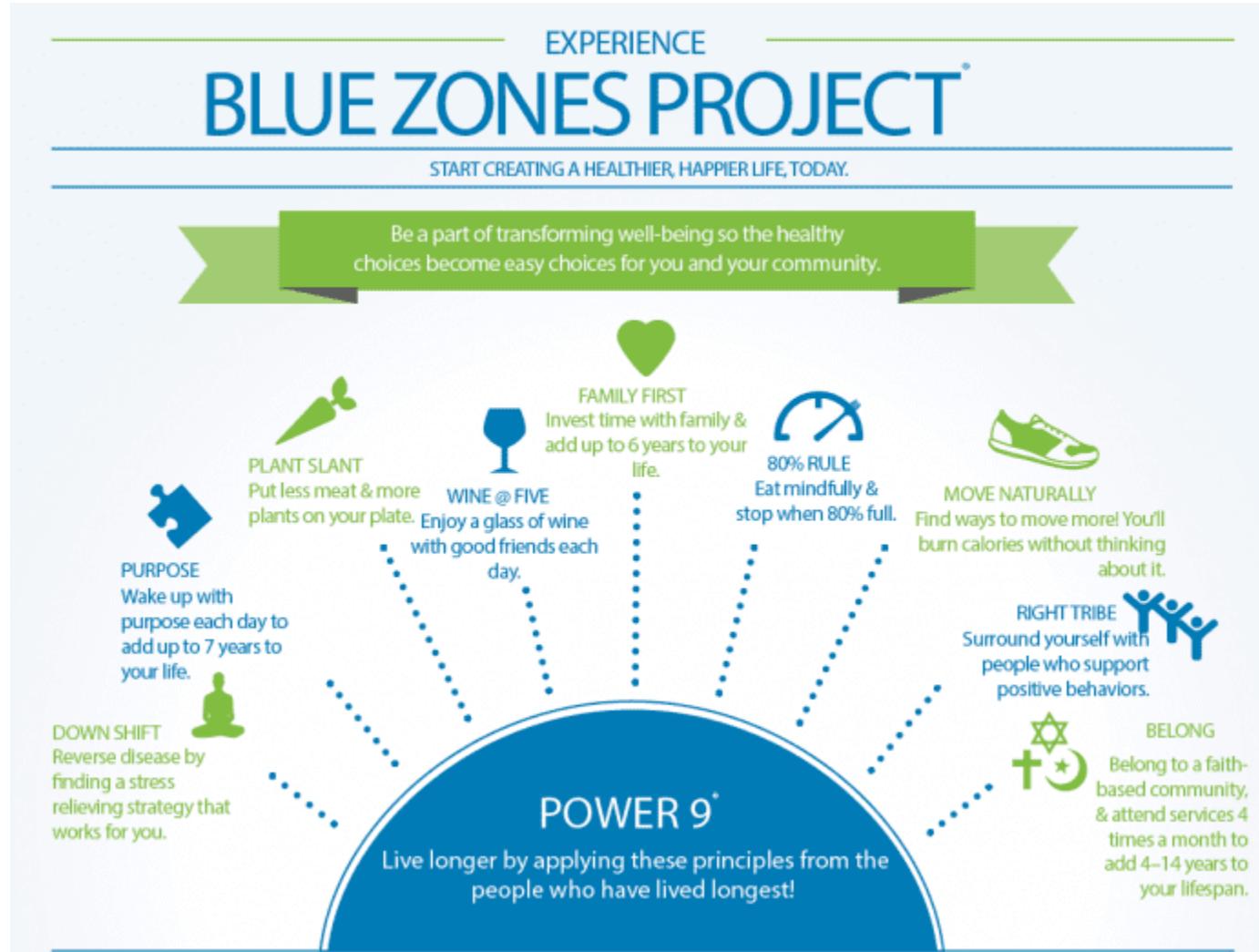
1. Minimize biological and psychological toxic events
e.g., family abuse, poor access to healthy food
2. Teach prosocial and self-regulatory behaviors
3. Monitor and limit opportunities for problem behavior
e.g., neighborhood watch
4. Foster psychological flexibility by allowing people to make their values explicit and to act in the service of their values

Positive Communities

Flourishing communities

- High and low synergy cultures
 - Degree to which activities are mutually reinforcing among members and enhance well-being
- Well-being differences in many aspects
 - By state, city, geographical region, country
- Importance of education for well-being
 - Level is minor contributor to well-being, but people who live in city with more highly educated residents tend to report greater well-being

Blue Zones of Happiness (Dan Buettner)



Positive Communities

Social contagion:

The power of social networks

- Spreading of behaviors and emotions

- e.g., the more people around you who start putting on weight, the more you will...I think the opposite is working for my family: I grow fruits and veggies and have them with every home cooked dinner



Positive Communities

Social contagion: The power of social networks

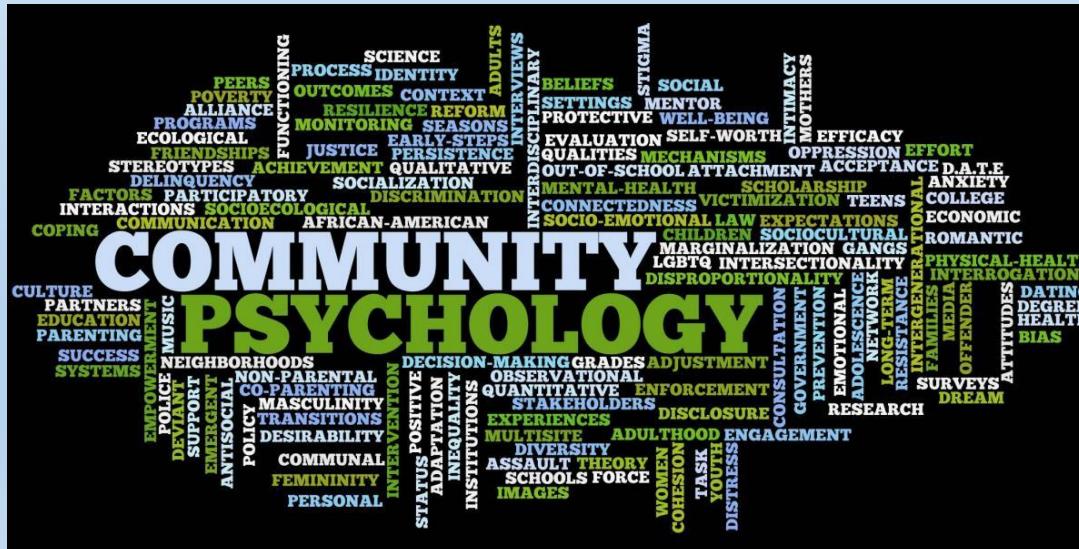
- Spreading emotions through social networks
- Happiness spread throughout social networks
- Cooperate behavior cascades in social networks
 - Smiling
 - Practicing random acts of kindness



Positive Communities

Community psychology

- Role of environment and social world in creation of problems and their solution
- Study of the person in social context



Positive Communities

Community psychology

- Three foundations of community psychology
 - Cultural relativity
 - Affirms that social rules, mores, and standards may differ among different cultural groups
 - Diversity
 - Affirms that in many societies, the reality of cultural diversity presents the need to recognize that differences among community subgroups will continue
 - Ecology
 - Affirms that people exist in a constant interplay of intricate relationships with their environment

Positive Communities

Community psychology: Empowerment

- Enable the marginalized or underprivileged to increase personal and political power
 - Taking charge of their lives
 - Enhances efficacy and self-determination
- *Learned empowerment*
 - Learn to exert a degree of control over environment
 - One form is collective efficacy: sense of social cohesion that creates local friendship networks and a sense of agency or willingness to intervene in making community better
 - Sense of trust and willingness develop

Positive Communities

Community psychology: Community interventions

- Emphasis on positive interventions
- Help improve personal lives and the communities
- Creation of “village” movement
 - Elderly “village” movement
 - Assistance with chores, shopping, transportation

Positive Communities

Volunteerism

- More engagement with communities
- Rewards associated with kinds of volunteering
- Reasons of volunteering
 - Altruism
 - Seek to gain knowledge and understanding
 - Desire to enhance self-esteem
 - Social pressures
- Result greater if volunteer has prosocial values

Cross-Cultural Subjective Well-Being

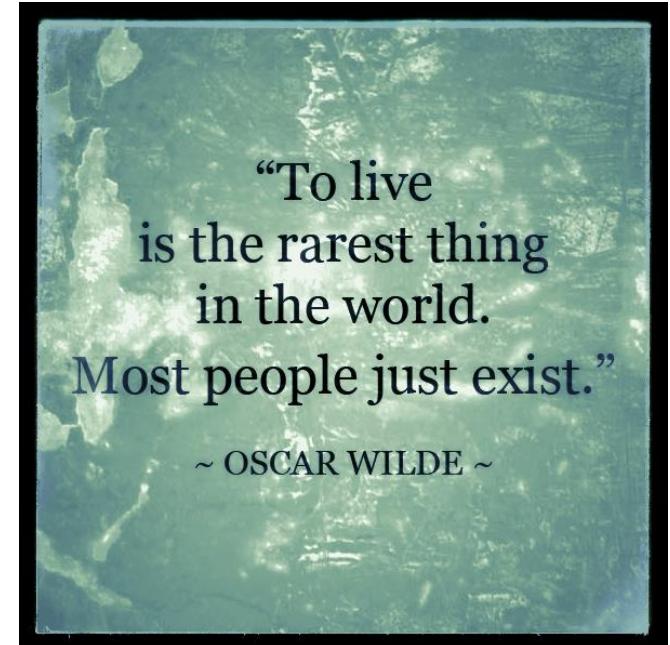
- Culture: set of attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors shared by a group of people, communicated from one generation to the next
 - All cultures have a concept for the emotion of happiness, but differences in how it is understood, expressed, experienced
- Different measures of well-being
 - World Database of Happiness
 - United Nations Human Development Indicators
 - Gallup World Poll
 - Happy Planet Index

Chapter 12

A Look Toward the Future of Positive Psychology

How Do We Recognize a Life Well-Lived?

- Past research has assumed happiness and life satisfaction are the major criteria for understanding the good life
- Allport believed that well-being is achieved through a willingness and eagerness to experience all that life has to offer plus the drive to expand one's sense of self.



How Do We Recognize a Life Well-Lived?

- Researchers agree positive emotionality should be part of life well-lived, and should also include things such as prosocial values and working toward socially desirable goals
- Keep in mind the independent predictors of well-being such as positive thinking, optimism, compassion, and forgiveness can be either adaptive or problematic depending on the social context in which they operate
- Happiness should never be a goal, but rather a probable consequence of full involvement in life

Theories That Integrate Multiple Perspectives

Dov Shmotkin and Well-Being Modules

- Model of subjective WB in adulthood that addresses both positive and negative emotions
- Sense of well-being
 - Created out of a dynamic system designed to foster “a favorable psychological environment in the face of an actually or potentially hostile world.”

Theories That Integrate Multiple Perspectives

Dov Shmotkin and Well-Being Modules

- Subjective well-being is built from various modules
 - Self-awareness of WB
 - Influenced by need fulfillment, ratio of pos to neg thoughts, attainment of important goals
 - How we report WB to others (this second module is a factor in self-awareness of WB too)

Theories That Integrate Multiple Perspectives

Dov Shmotkin and Well-Being Modules

- Subjective well-being is built from various modules
 - Relationships among evaluative dimensions of well-being
 - Positive-negative emotions
 - Life satisfaction-affect balance
 - Dispositional optimism
 - How we define our place on these dimensions and combine them creates our definitions of happiness and WB
 - Narrative well-being
 - Stories we tell about our own lives

New Research Methods

- WB needs to be studied with multiple measurement instruments and newer research strategies that better represent the complexity of human behavior
- SUMM
 - Scientific understanding through multiple methodologies
- Action research
 - Involves participation of both researchers and participants in collaborative problem-solving, often involving multiple interventions

New Research Methods

Qualitative Research

- Use of unstructured or semi-structured techniques to gather data
 - Interviews, focus groups, case studies, participant observation
 - Book notes example of meditation research where researcher engages in meditation and then self-reflects
 - Sounds much like introspection in early 1900s that was heavily criticized because no empirical way to see what was in the mind (and this led to rise of behaviorism)

New Research Methods

Qualitative Research

- Examining the impact of historical time period and sociocultural contexts
 - Constructivist methods: e.g., how people interpret their world when seeking WB
- Useful in developing conceptions of healthy individual and group functioning
- Ideal for exploring under-researched areas

New Research Methods

Systems Theory

- Integrated systems of mind
 - View people more holistically
 - Integrated systems of mind, body, emotions and cognition
 - See humans as integrated organisms described by subsystems: physical, emotional, intellectual, behavioral and spiritual
- Describes complex causal relationships among a variety of different factors

New Research Methods

Systems Theory: The “Billiard Ball” model of causality

- Explaining behavior as stimulus-response
- Start exercise → enhanced mood → meet people who provide positive feedback → more positive mood, greater self-esteem; decreases stress → greater sense of WB

New Research Methods

Systems Theory: Beyond the Billiard Ball

- Reciprocal determinism
 - Enhanced mood, self-esteem could increase probability that exercise will continue...does exercise cause better mood or does better mood cause more exercise
- Causality is no longer unidirectional
- Causality is at least bidirectional (A causes B) and possibly transactional (causality is function of relationship between A and B)
- A holistic perspective on psychological well-being

New Research Methods

Systems Theory: Personality Integration

- Human systems model of personality integration
- Emotion is a function of all the subsystems
 - Biochemical, physiological, precognitive (e.g., dreams), cognitive, person to person, person to environment
- Holism

New Research Methods

Systems Theory: Kennon Sheldon and Systems Theory

- Discusses biological processes, influence of society and culture on behavior
- Different levels of cultural influences on well-being

Integrate Positive Psychology With Psychology

- Focus on working on both strengths and weaknesses
- Changing one's thought patterns from negative to positive interpretations
- Need to bring positive psychology into greater collaboration with other areas of psychology

The Question of Values

- Values should be removed as much as possible from science
- Conceptualizations of well-being rest on beliefs
- Science of values
- Scientific choice limits how well-being will be defined and measured

From Compton's grandmother's bedside table...throughout the coming year, may you have:

- Enough happiness to keep you sweet
- Enough trials to keep you strong
- Enough sorrow to keep you human
- Enough hope to keep you happy
- Enough failure to keep you humble
- Enough success to keep you eager
- Enough friends to give you comfort
- Enough wealth to meet your needs
- Enough faith to banish depression
- Enough determination to make each day better than yesterday