

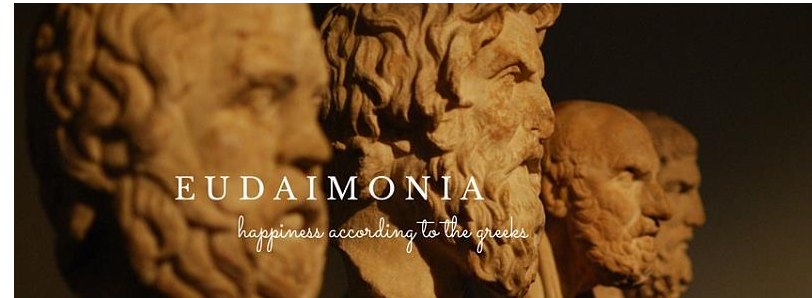
Chapter 9

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

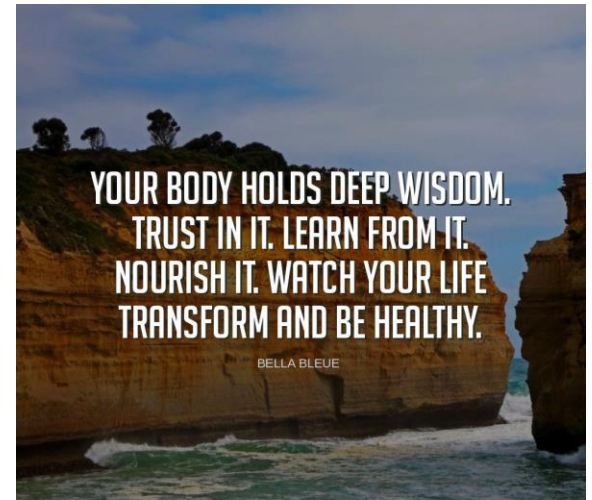
College Students View of Wise People

- 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

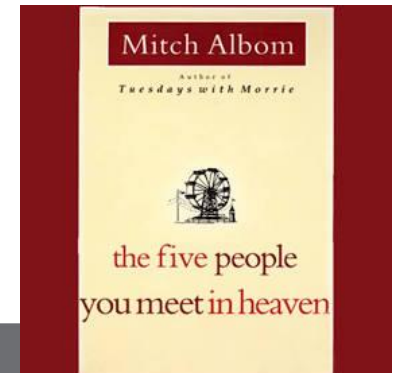
Wisdom

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

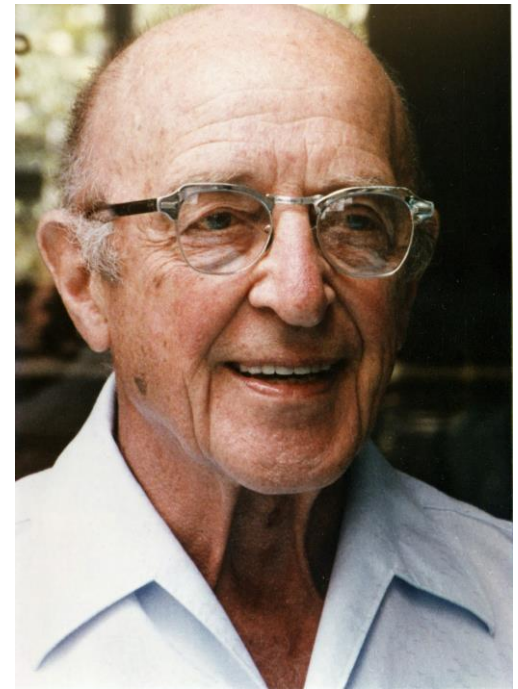
Erich Fromm: The Productive Orientation

- 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

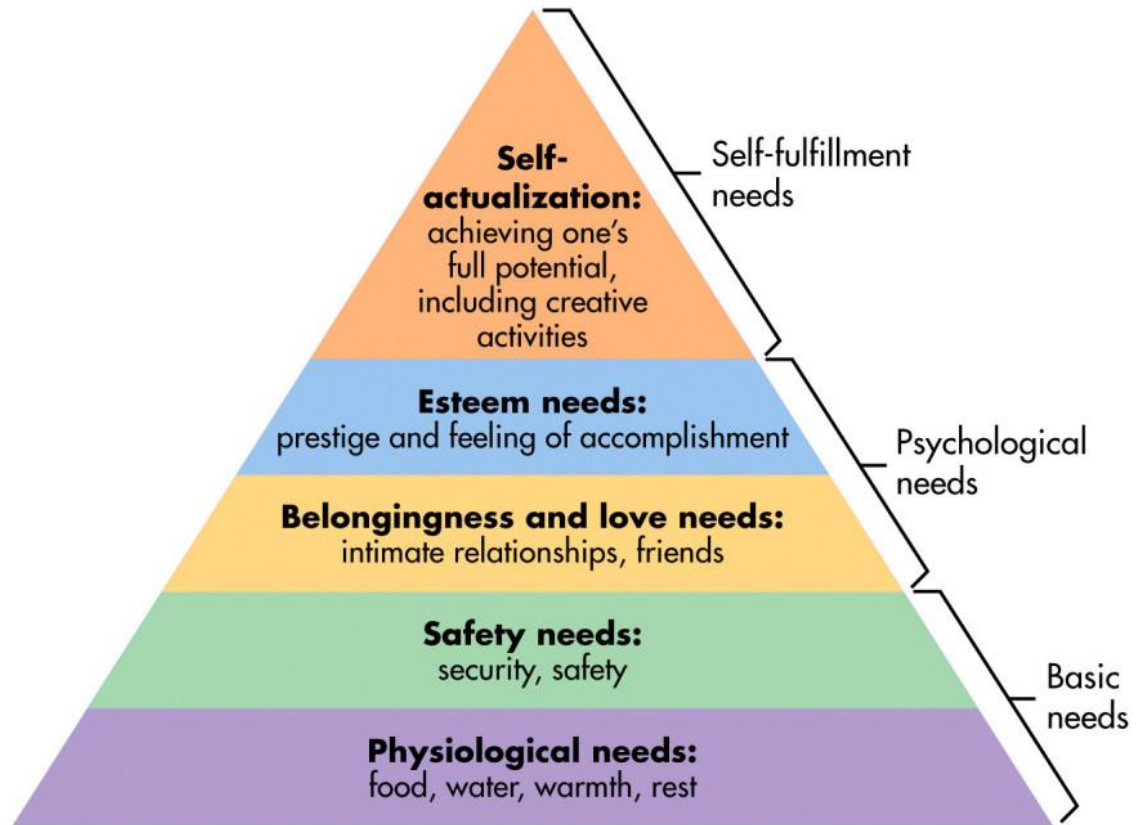
- **Self-actualization**, an *ongoing process* of development; process of fulfilling one's potential
- Exemplars were not the average person
- Not possible in our society for young, developing people...needed experience and maturity
- Argued about 1% of population reached self-actualization



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 Acculturation
 - 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

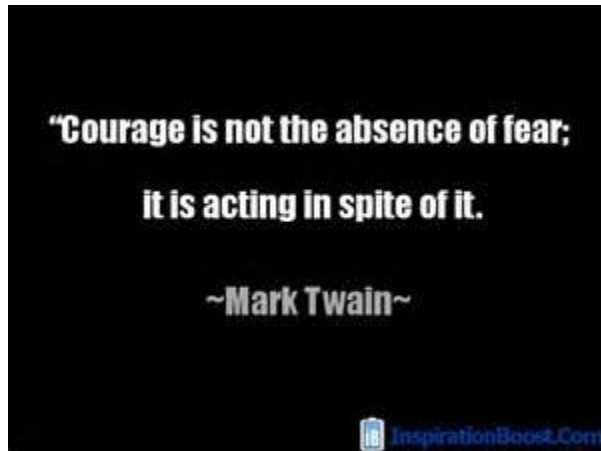
Personality Traits Important for Optimal Well-Being

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 dissent, disapproval, or rejection
- Vital Courage
 - Perseverance through disease or disability even when outcome is ambiguous

Figure 9.2 Exemplars of Three Types of Courage



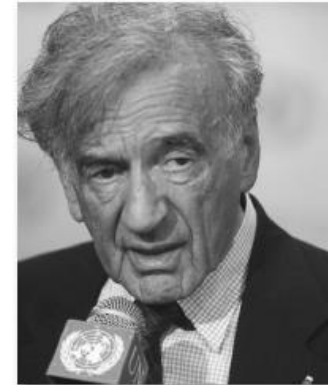
Moral Courage

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 Weisel 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](#)

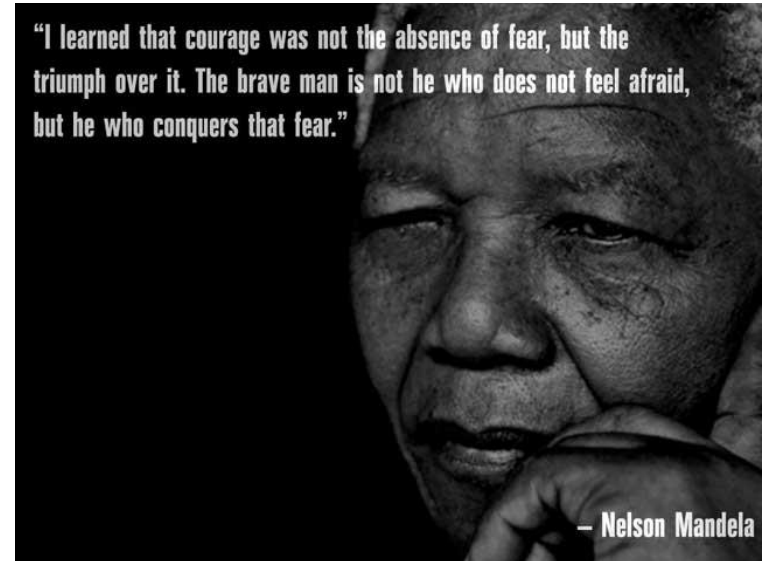


Moral Courage



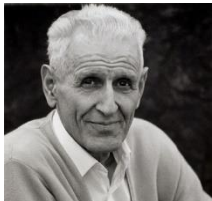
Moral Courage

- 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 that 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



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

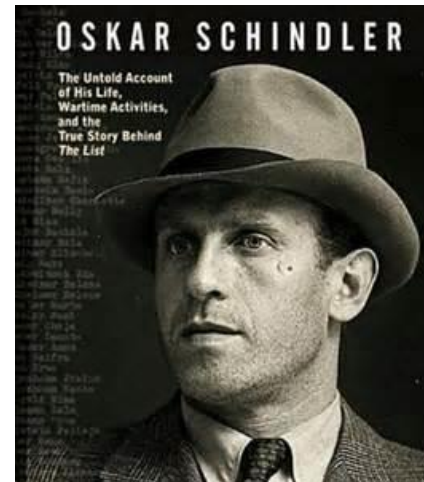
- ❖ Greitemeyer and colleagues (2007)
 - Civil Courage:
 - Brave behavior accompanied by anger and indignation that intends to enforce societal and ethical norms
 - Separate from altruism in that bodily harm is risked

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

