Positive Psychology/Gratefulness

Fredrickson 2001: The Role of Positive Emotions in Positive Psychology

* Overview of the theory behind how positive emotions affect positive psychology
* Posits ‘Broaden-and-Build’ theory
  + Positive emotions broaden people’s momentary ‘thought-action repertoires’
  + This leads to building up personal resources.
    - Physical resources
    - Intellectual resources
    - Social and Psychological resources
  + Results in greater subjective well-being
* Proposes that capacity to experience positive emotions is a FUNDAMENTAL human strength central to how humans can flourish!

How do positive emotions help individuals/communities/societies to flourish?

* Lvl 1: Positive emotions mark successful flourishing/optimal well-being
  + If there’s positive emotions happening, there is NOT negative emotions happening!
  + The balance of positive and negative emotions has been shown to be indicative of individual judgements of subjective well being.
    - Kahneman (1999) posits that ‘objective happiness’ can be measured by tracking and aggregating momentary experiences of good and bad feelings (also see Fredrickson 2000c)
* Lvl 2: Positive emotions don’t just SIGNAL flourishing, but directly help PRODUCE flourishing!
  + And not just in the present moment of pleasant feeling, but over the long term as well!
  + Thus, positive emotion is worth cultivating, not just as an ‘end state’ but as a means of achieving growth and improved SWB over time.

Perspectives on emotions and affect

* Emotion is a SUBSET of affective phenomena as a whole
* Emotion is a ‘multicomponent response tendency’ that unfolds over a relatively short period of time
  + Generally beginning with subject assessment of the meaning of an event (either good or bad). This appraisal can be conscious or unconscious.
  + This then results in a series of responses, such as subjective experience, facial expression, cognitive processes, and physical changes.
* Affect is a more ‘general’ concept, referring to consciously accessible feelings
  + Affect is WITHIN emotions, sure, but also within other phenomena, suich as sensations, attitudes, moods, and even traits!
* Differences b/w emotion and affect include
  + Emotions are typically about a personally meaningful circumstance while Affect can be free-floating or have no objective focus.
  + Emotions are seen as brief and engage the multiple-systems described above while affect is more ‘long-lasting’
  + Emotions fit into categories like fear, anger, joy, etc. , in contrast, affect is either positive or negative.