

How to Thrive

POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY PRACTICES FOR HAPPIER LIVING

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What makes life worth living?

How do we overcome obstacles in life?

What makes us thrive?

A walk with a 4-year-old...

Ohhhhhh, what an amazing house!

What an amazing garbage can!

Oh wow, what a wonderful tree!

Look at the rocks!

I hear a bird!

I hear a wind chime!

Mom, do you hear that dog? It's perfect!

I hear a truck!

Do you feel the wind? It is so soft!

Look at the beautiful cactus!

Look! Two trucks.



“The skills of becoming happy turn out to be almost entirely different from the skills of not being sad, not being anxious, or not being angry.”

Martin Seligman

Positive Psychology

- The study of what makes life worth living, or human flourishing.
- Supplement to the traditional ‘disease’ model of psychology.

What makes us resilient?

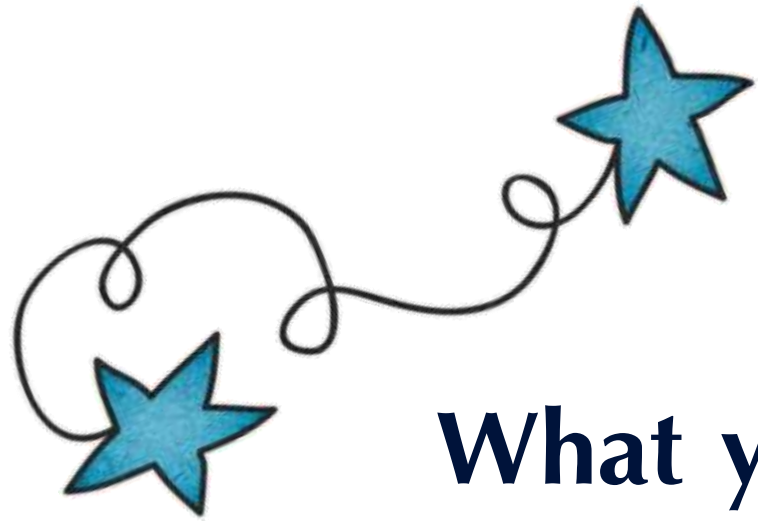
How can we build strength and virtue?

How do we live the good life?

As it turns out, there's an answer to that.

happiness = genetics + life circumstances + what you do/think

- Genetics = 50%
- Life circumstances = 10%
 - But sometimes we act (and think) like they're ***everything***.



What you do/think = 40%



And when we do enough of the right things...

- **We flourish.**

- Feeling engaged in meaningful pursuits, good relationship, enjoyment and satisfaction in life, and feeling a sense of accomplishment with what you do.

- **PERMA – model for flourishing**

“**P** is positive emotion, **E** is engagement, **R** is relationships, **M** is meaning and **A** is accomplishment. Those are the five elements of what free people chose to do. Pretty much everything else is in service of one of or more of these goals. That's the human dashboard.”

Martin Seligman

Positive Emotion

- Do you know what makes you feel happy?
- Do you know how to use positive emotion to pull you out of a negative emotion or give you other ways to respond?
- Can you call upon positive emotions even during difficult experiences?
- Positive emotions might include:
 - Gratitude.
 - Creative stimulation.
 - Mastering a difficult task.
 - Engaging in meaningful activities.
 - Creating lasting memories.

Engagement

- Awake and purposeful in life.
- Being willing to initiate, create, and savor experiences.
- Being absorbed in an activity.
 - Flow = that experiencing of being “in the zone,” losing track of time in an activity.
- Choosing to connect.

Relationships

- Identify, engage in, and nurture true positive relationships.
- Want to give to the relationship.
 - Reciprocity in that giving.
- Positive relationship qualities.
 - Quality time.
 - Feel seen and heard.
 - Able to repair rifts.
 - Appreciation for one another.
- Celebrate one another's successes.
- Feeling trust and feeling safe to share important thoughts, feelings, and information.

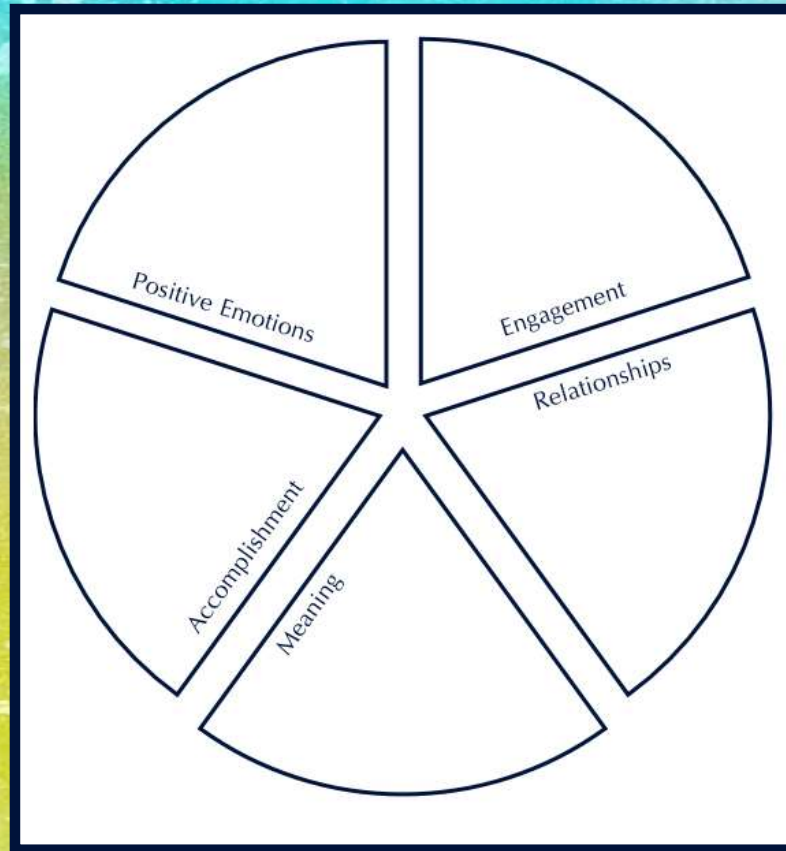
Meaning

- Finding ways to connect to something bigger in this world.
- Something that produces sense of worth and purpose.
- Actions with intention.
- Finding meaning in good and bad times.

Accomplishment/Achievement

- The degree to which attempts to do something bring a sense of accomplishment or achievement.
 - Recognize your accomplishments.
 - Do it without comparing to someone else.
- Allowing yourself space and time to enjoy the moment of accomplishment.
- Pursuing goals for yourself.

PERMA Break



Take 5-10 minutes to fill in your PERMA chart.

How to use PERMA

- Try to incorporate elements of PERMA into your life.
- Notice how they work together.
 - Engaging in activities might bring you closer to achieving a personal goal.
 - Celebrating even small victories is experienced as a positive, meaningful emotion.
 - Choosing to connect with a loved one creates a meaningful memory.

Use your strengths

- We all have a special blend of signature strengths.
 - Don't take them for granted!
- Boost the strengths you have.
- Build on new ones.
- Call on your strengths to solve problems.
- Notice your strengths in daily life.
- VIA Survey of Character Strengths (see link in resource packet).

24 SIGNATURE STRENGTHS



Savor

- Noticing, appreciating, and enhancing positive experiences.
 - Soaking it up.
 - Basking in the memory.
 - Celebrating it with others.
- Savoring locks you in that moment, and you'll remember it for years to come.
- Helps you feel gratitude.
- Continue to get the benefit of new things and life circumstances.

How to savor

- Savor 3 ways:
 - Spontaneously as it happens.
 - Plan it – and do not cancel on yourself!
 - Make it a habit – build in time to savor something small every day.
- When you savor:
 - Let go of negative thinking as much as you can.
 - Focus on all senses.
 - Fully immerse yourself in all positive aspects of that moment.
 - With every breath deepen and extend that feeling.
 - Write about the experience.

Savor Break

For 5-10 minutes, immerse yourself in a positive memory. Picture that moment as vividly as possible. Try to elicit each of your five senses in this memory. When you're done, write about the experience.

Gratitude

- Deep appreciation for the goodness in life.
- Gratitude is an action + a feeling.
- Consistently linked to lasting happiness, better coping with negative events, and better health.
 - See things in a larger perspective.
 - Go with the flow more.
- Gratitude today for gratitude tomorrow – practicing gratitude day by day leads to enhanced gratitude over time.

Gratitude exercises

- Gratitude journal = list 3 good things once a week.
- Mental subtraction = write about life without something you currently value.
- Start saying thanks.
- Gratitude letter = write a letter to someone you do or don't intend to send.
- Web of gratitude = think about all of the people/resources involved in bringing you something you enjoy (e.g., your cup of coffee).

Gratitude Break

What's one beautiful thing you've seen in nature this week?

What's one beautiful man-made thing you've seen this week?

What's one example of beautiful human behavior you've seen this week?

Optimism

- Seeing the future in the best possible light and viewing oneself as having some control in achieving these good things.
- We also feel more optimistic when we reminisce about times in the past when we felt connected and purposeful.

Why optimism?

- Isn't it better to prepare for the worst?
- Isn't it better to be realistic?
- Isn't this just turning a blind eye or being unprepared?

Why optimism?

- Lower depression, stress, and health concerns, better sleep, better problem solving, more hope, greater recognition of personal agency.
- Builds resilience to life stress.

“I’m a failure.” → “I haven’t seen how this ends yet.”

“I can’t do anything right, I’m letting everyone down” → “You’ve got this, keep it up!”

Ways to boost optimism

- Best possible self = imagine and write about your best possible future self.
- Optimism to-do list = list 3 things you're looking forward to every day.
- Create something to look forward to.
- Reminisce about the past.
- Put on sentimental music.
- Learn to see the world with optimism.
 - “I can make good things happen.”
 - “Good things can last.”
 - “Good things can happen in many areas of my life.”

Optimism Break

What are 3 things you're looking forward to tonight/tomorrow?

“There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle.”

Albert Einstein

Awe

- Feeling that you're in the presence of something vast that challenges your understanding of the world.
- Nature, art, a mind-blowing idea, an impressive feat, acts of great skill or virtue.

Why awe?

- Awe can increase well-being by giving you the sense that you have more time available/reducing the feelings of being pressured for time.
- Feeling pressured by time linked with unhealthy eating, less engagement in leisure time, and depression.
- Awe temporarily reduces our need for certainty.

How to practice and build awe:

- Awe walk = walk around and notice the world with a sense of awe. (Remember a walk with a 4-year-old.)
- Notice and appreciate nature.
- Visit places, watching videos, reading books, looking at images that inspire awe.
- Awe narrative = write about a time you felt awe.

Self-Compassion

- Treating yourself with warmth, kindness, and understanding.
 - Treat yourself as you would a friend.
- 3 elements:
 - Mindfulness (“I am hurting right now”).
 - Acknowledge shared human experience of pain (“We all hurt sometimes.”).
 - Self-kindness (“What do I need right now?”).

Compassionate self-talk

“This hurts.” or “This is a moment of suffering.”

“Suffering is a part of life.” or “I am not alone. We all struggle in life.”

“May I be kind to myself.”

“May I accept myself as I am.”

“May I be strong.”

“May I forgive myself.”

How to practice self-compassion

- Warm, kind gesture to self
 - Hands over heart, gently squeezing hands together, or hugging self.
- Words of kindness to self.
- Ask yourself how you would treat a friend.
- Self-compassion break = take a few minutes to think about a difficult situation and offer yourself compassion.
- Self-compassion letter = write a letter to yourself about a challenging situation and talk to yourself as you would to a close friend.

Next steps...

- What's your biggest takeaway?
- What is one step you're going to take to live the good life?