

Positive Psychology & all of us

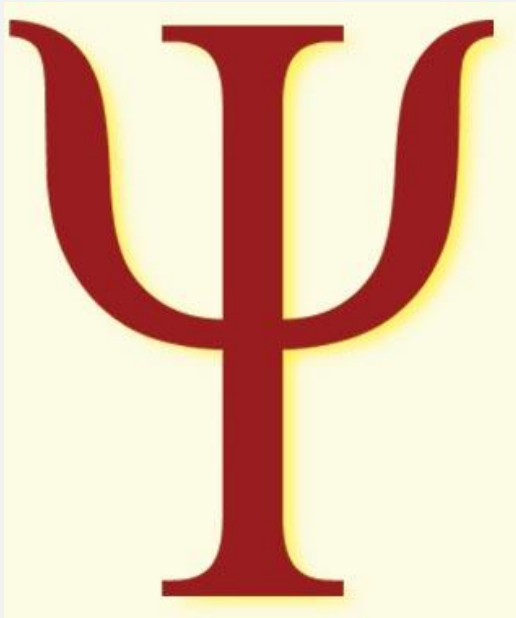
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Content

- **Psychology in the early days**
- **The Birth of Positive Psychology**
- **Definition of Positive Psychology**
- **Basic Themes and Assumptions of Positive Psychology**
- **Pillars of Positive Psychology**
- **Signature Strengths and Virtues**
- **Wisdom Therapy**

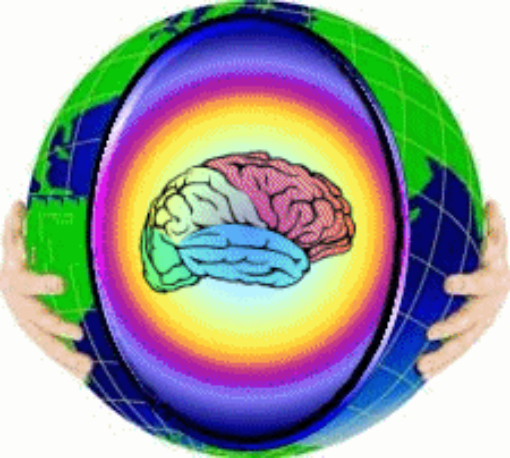
Psychology in the early days



Past assumptions about human behaviour that they are driven by aggression, egoistic self-interest, and pursuit of simple pleasures

Psychology in the early days

- Has focused mainly pathology and the cure for mental illness
 - no real cures, until the discovery of psychopharmacology in the 1950s
- Also focused on development of intelligence, to find and nurture genius and talent
 - Made changes to environments of school, workplace, and families to help creativity, to tap potentials; Few studies on genius and talent
- Has tried to make normal life more fulfilling
 - Has ignored people's need for challenges to test skills, opportunity for learning new ideas and developing talents, and freedom to reinvent themselves



The Birth of Positive Psychology

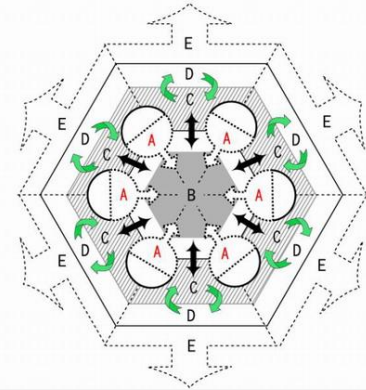
- Named in 1998 by Martin Seligman
- Proposes to correct imbalance and challenge the pervasive assumptions of the disease model
- Not abandoning past psychology on understanding of human problems
- Human goodness and excellence are as authentic as disease, disorder and distress
- Focuses on strength and weakness, building the best things in life and in repairing the worst, fulfilling the lives of healthy people and healing wounds of the distressed

Definition of Positive Psychology

“Positive psychology is the scientific study of optimal human functioning that aims to discover and promote factors that allow individuals and communities to thrive”

(Seligman, 2000)

Basic Themes and Assumptions of Positive Psychology



Strengths and Virtues are central to Well Being

- ✓ Good character of virtues, values, and character development--e.g., honesty, fidelity, courage, tolerance, self-control

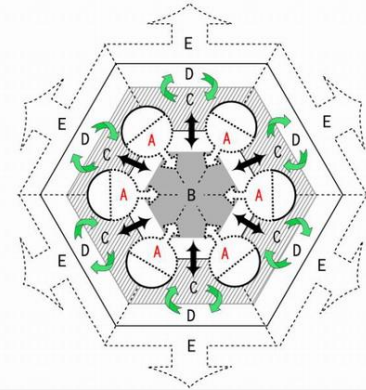
Persons exist in Social Contexts

- ✓ Well being is a pursuit in social environments

Importance of Positive Emotions to both Mental and Physical Health

- ✓ Satisfaction with life
- ✓ More rewarding interpersonal relationships
- ✓ More productive at work
- ✓ Helpful to others
- ✓ Attain goals in life
- ✓ Physical healthier, more resistant to illness, may live longer

Basic Themes and Assumptions of Positive Psychology



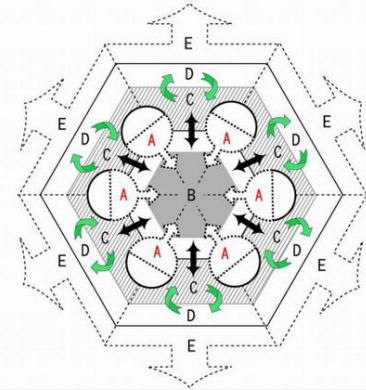
The Predictors of Positive Emotions are unique

- ✓ Elimination of negative emotions \neq inclusion of positive emotions, but = state of neutral emotionality
- ✓ Process is needed to move from negative emotions to positive emotions

Negative Emotions are still important

- ✓ E.g., for survival
- ✓ Cannot eliminate fear, pain, anxiety, etc.
- ✓ Tragic elements in life enrich human experience

Basic Themes and Assumptions of Positive Psychology

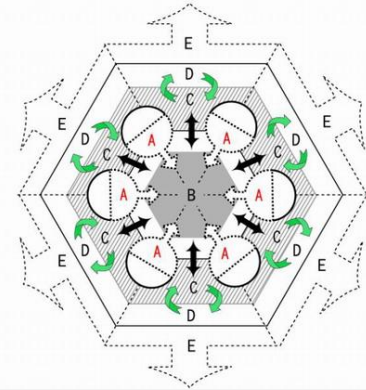


All Positive Emotions are not the same

- ✓ Bodily Pleasure is the good feeling from satisfying needs and meeting expectations; e.g. food
- ✓ Higher pleasures are experiences that feel good but are more cognitively complex and tend to have more lasting effect on mood; e.g., joy, excitement
- ✓ Enjoyment involves meeting expectations of fulfilling a need and then goes beyond those expectations to create something new, unexpected, or even imagined
- ✓ Hedonism—basic motivation force behind most human behaviours
- ✓ Eudaimonic well being—being true to one inner self

Role of Science in the Study of Well Being

Basic Themes and Assumptions of Positive Psychology



The Good Life

- ✓ *Not about having wealth, power, prestige, beauty*
- ✓ A combination of positive connection to others, positive individual traits, and life regulation qualities

People are highly Adaptive and desire Social Relationships

People can thrive and flourish

- ✓ Be good parents
- ✓ Treat others with some degree of respect
- ✓ Love those close to them
- ✓ Find ways to contribute to society and welfare of others
- ✓ Live life with integrity and honesty

Pillars of Positive Psychology

- Positive subjective experiences
- Positive individual traits
- Positive institutions

Theoretically:

Positive institutions facilitate the development and display of positive traits, which in turn facilitate positive subjective experiences





Pillars of Positive Psychology

- At the subjective level, looks at positive subjective states or positive emotions
 - Happiness
 - Joy
 - Satisfaction with life
 - Relaxation
 - Love
 - Intimacy
 - Contentment
 - Optimism
 - Hope
 - Feelings of energy
 - Vitality
 - Confidence
 - Laughter



Pillars of Positive Psychology

- At the individual level
 - Courage
 - Persistence
 - Honesty
 - Wisdom
 - Aesthetic sensibility
 - Creative potentials
 - Excellence
- At the group or societal level
 - Civic virtues
 - Healthy families
 - Healthy work environments
 - Positive communities
 - All citizens



Can you make yourself lastingly happier?

Table 4.1. Positive Correlations With Happiness and Life Satisfaction

Zero to Small	Moderate	Large
age	number of friends	gratitude
gender	being married	optimism
education	religiousness	being employed
social class	level of leisure activity	frequency of sexual intercourse
income	physical health	percent of time experiencing positive affect
having children	conscientiousness	test-retest reliability of happiness measures
ethnicity (majority versus minority)	extraversion	happiness of identical twins
intelligence	neuroticism (negative correlation)	self-esteem
physical attractiveness	internal locus of control	

Discover and renew
your signature strengths and
virtues

VIA Classification of Character Strengths and Values

- VIA = Values in Action Institute created by Mayerson Foundation in 2000
- Contains 24 character strengths organized under 6 core values
- <http://www.viastrengths.org/>

VIA Classification of Character Strengths and Values

1. Strengths of **Wisdom** and Knowledge

- Creativity
- Curiosity
- Love of Learning
- Open-mindedness
- Perspective



VIA Classification of Character Strengths and Values

2. Strengths of Courage

- Authenticity
- Bravery
- Persistence
- Zest



VIA Classification of Character Strengths and Values

3. Strengths of Humanity

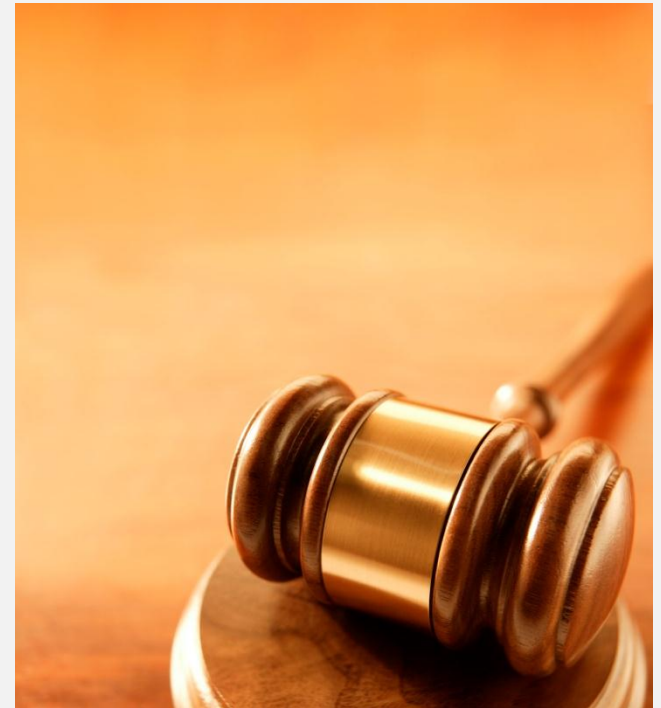
- Kindness
- Love
- Social intelligence



VIA Classification of Character Strengths and Values

4. Strengths of Justice

- Fairness
- Leadership
- Teamwork



VIA Classification of Character Strengths and Values

5. Strengths of Temperance

- Forgiveness/Mercy
- Modest/Humility
- Prudence
- Self-regulation



VIA Classification of Character Strengths and Values

6. Strengths of Transcendence

- Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence
- Gratitude
- Hope
- Humour
- Religiousness/Spirituality



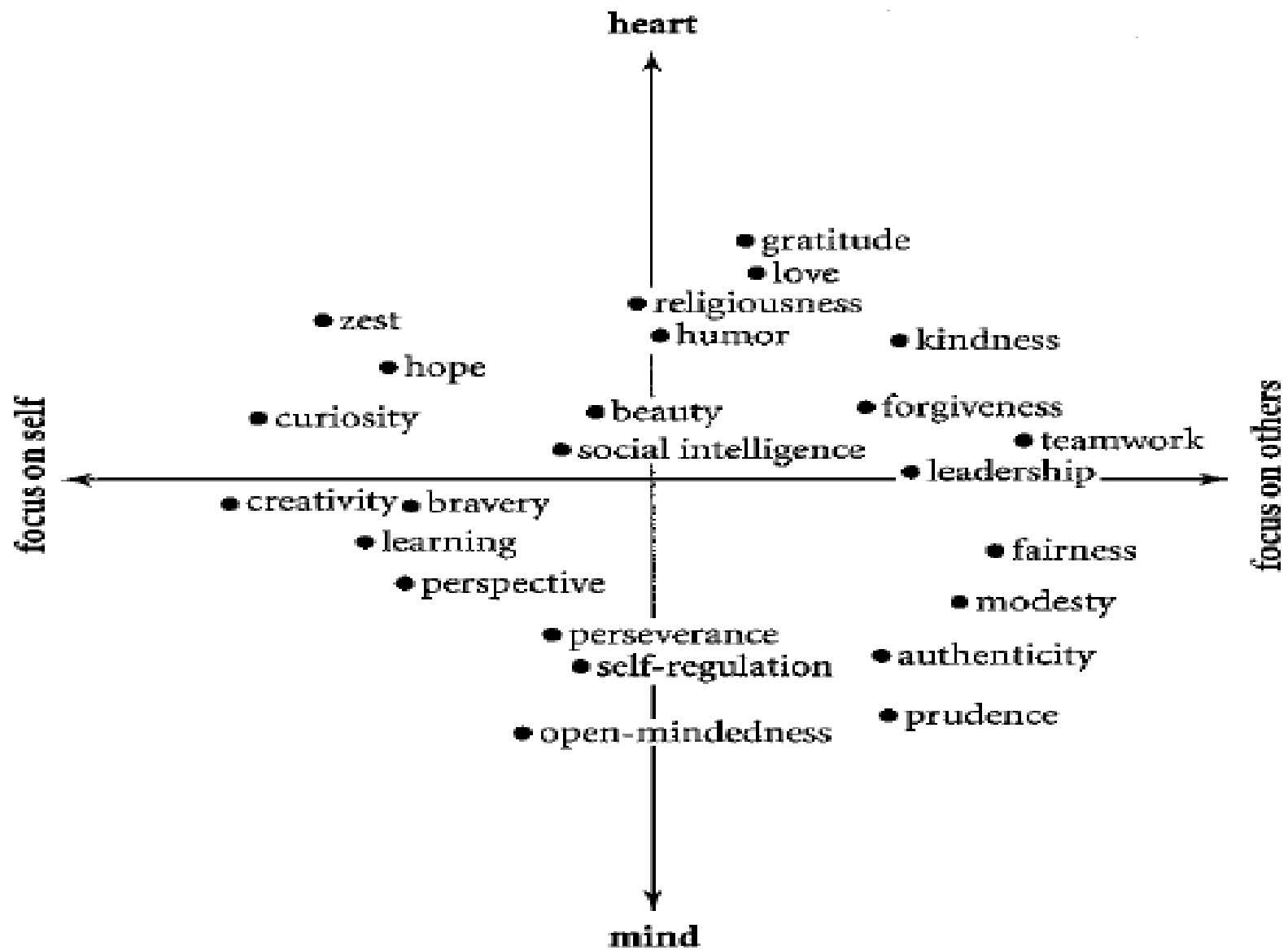


Figure 6.3. Tradeoffs Among Character Strengths

The farther apart are two strengths, the less likely it is that the same person habitually shows both.

Possible Criteria for a Signature Strength

- a sense of ownership and authenticity (“this is the real me”) vis-à-vis the strength
- a feeling of excitement while displaying it, particularly at first
- a rapid learning curve as themes are attached to the strength and practiced
- continuous learning of new ways to enact the strength

- a sense of yearning to act in accordance with the strength
- a feeling of inevitability in using the strength, as if one cannot be stopped or dissuaded from its display
- the discovery of the strength as owned in an epiphany
- invigoration rather than exhaustion when using the strength
- the creation and pursuit of fundamental projects that revolve around the strength
- intrinsic motivation to use the strength

Positive Psychology Therapy

- APPLIED POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY THERAPY (APPT): EMPOWERMENT INSTEAD OF "CURING"
- [T.Ronen](#) Department of Psychology, Tel-Aviv University, Tel Aviv, Israel
- The founders of Positive Psychology promoted the study of the "positive end" of human functioning such as happiness, strengths, virtues etc'. One of the major findings of a decade of research on the positive side of human behavior, cognitions and emotions is that the positive aspects are qualitatively different from the negative aspects on a number of dimensions (e.g., negative emotions occur automatically whereas one has to be active in order to produce positive emotions). Hence, we **propose a new approach to psychotherapy that is based on current conceptualization of positive psychology: Applied Positive Psychology Therapy (APPT)**. It is a meta theory for a therapeutic approach based on positive psychology principles. More specifically, **APPT is based on the following assumptions:**
The long range goals of most human beings are to feel good and be psychologically satisfied.
- **Failures** to materialize these goals are not a function of deep seated pathologies but **lack of skills or knowledge how to materialize these goals.**
- The goal of therapy is not to cure clients from their pathologies (i.e., the "causes" of their anxieties, phobia, or aggression) but **to train them in self-control skills and other skills** that would enable them to achieve psychological well being in the most effective way and in harmony with their long range goals.

Positive Psychology

- CONSTRUCTIVISM AND POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY: CONTRIBUTION OF DEPATHOLOGIZING METATHEORY AND PRACTICE
- [A.Henriques](#) Sociedade Portuguesa de Psicoterapias Constructivistas, Lisbon, Portugal
- What do **Constructivism and Positive Psychology**, both movements of recent coinage, share? On some fundamental metaphoric assumptions, constructivism shares with positive psychology the **humanist legacy**, and **an acknowledgement of the creative potential in human beings**. Through practical approaches **focusing** not on the need of treatment and correction, but on the **developing potential of subject's experiences, personal constructs, and emotions**, constructivism shares with positive psychology a less negative and pathologizing view of psychological problems. This and other assumptions characterizing constructivism are presented as good contributes to theoretical and methodological developments both in positive psychology and psychotherapy in its different settings.

Posttraumatic Embitterment Disorder

- PTSD applied to almost any type of psychological reaction, including events not life-threatening;
 - Need for other classification
- PTED: a reaction to negative life events that are insulting and humiliating with feelings of helplessness; is disabling and burdensome.
- Symptoms include: **prolonged feelings of embitterment, intrusive thoughts, hyperarousal, feelings of dejection, phobic avoidance of places or people related to negative event, suicidal ideation, homicidal thoughts/fantasies**
- Often reject help for disorder

Wisdom Psychology

- Has made great progress in recent years in life span psychology
- Wisdom includes at least personality, knowledge, experience, expertise, person-relatedness (Synder, & Lopez, 2005)
- Wisdom can be defined as expertise in coping with difficult or unsolvable life problems (Linden, 2008)

Wisdom Therapy

- A form of cognitive therapy based on wisdom psychology
- Treatment involves presenting the patient with vignettes of unsolvable life problems and teaching patient to attain:
 - a change of perspective
 - empathy with the aggressor
 - serenity (balanced emotions)
 - acceptance of unwanted emotions/uncertainty
 - factual knowledge
 - contextualism (past, present , future)
 - value relativism of aspirations
 - long-term perspectives

Readings available at

<http://www.ppc.sas.upenn.edu/publications.htm>

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