

Positive Psychology: a Focusing approach

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What are the benefits of Focusing on the Positive?



Positive experiences

- Counter our negativity bias.
- Increase our capacity to think more clearly.
- Improve the ratio of positive to negative experiences.
- Correlate with better health and longevity.

What is Positive Psychology?

- The scientific study of the strengths and virtues that enable individuals and communities to thrive.
- Martin Seligman and others propose that in addition to studying pathology, we also study the qualities that make life worthwhile (such as resilience, compassion, joy, and happiness).



Seligman's Pathways to Authentic Happiness

1. The Pleasant Life - Positive Experiences and Emotions
2. The Good Life- Flow and Engagement
3. The Meaningful Life

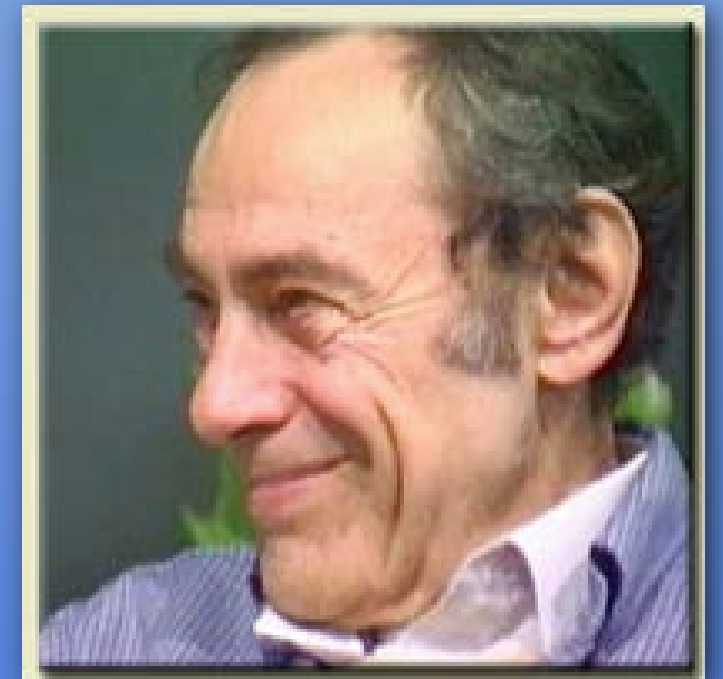
Seligman's Pathways to Well-Being: "PERMA"

1. Positive Experiences and Emotions
2. Engagement
3. Relationships
4. Meaning
5. Accomplishment

Focusing

Gene Gendlin

- Our bodies are wise.
- They will “speak back” to us if we bring friendly, compassionate, respectful attention to whatever we find.



“The body is not only a structure, it is also the living we are doing in the situations we are in. The body is remaking itself in the behaving and meaning and thinking and feeling.”

“Every bad feeling is potential energy toward a more right way of being if you give it space to move toward its rightness.”

- Focusing is a non-analytic method where we bring a special kind of awareness within.
- Focusing can be done alone but is better done with a listener.



Movements of Focusing

- Use “Making/Clearing a Space”.
- Invite a felt sense to form.
- Wait for something to emerge that comes directly from the felt sense.
- Through a resonating process, find a match between the felt sense and words or images.
- The process naturally leads to a bodily release of tension and inherent forward movement.

What happens when you combine Focusing with Positive Psychology?

- You generate the positive from bodily knowing, not from concepts.
- You more fully inhabit the positive experience and savor it.
- You have access to the deeper meaning.
- You are invited to explore a life-forward direction.



Myths about integrating Positive Interventions into your sessions

- That the positive is separate from the negative.
- That you will need to change your whole orientation.



Effective interventions of well-being counseling

1. Inquire about the positive in clients' lives in intake or first session (Ex. What brings you alive? When are you at your best? What are your talents or personal strengths?)
2. Notice when the positive arises, pay attention to it and when appropriate, invite the client to savor it.
3. Help clients discover meaning in their experiences.
4. Help clients cultivate an inward friendliness and acceptance of what is.



5. Introduce 'Making/Clearing a Space' to gain perspective.
6. Recognize opportunities to facilitate a life-forward direction.
7. Reflect your client's strengths.
8. Introduce the practice of gratitude.



Ways to increase Happiness

“Happiness is when what we say and what what we think and what we do are in harmony.” Gandhi

- Turn a good thing into a good experience and savor it.
- Stay mindfully in the present moment.
- Use positive experiences to soothe negative experiences.
- Know and utilize your Signature Strengths.
- Develop a Gratitude Practice.





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