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Positive Psychology "Three Good Things in Life" and Measuring Happiness, Positive  
and Negative Affectivity, Optimism/Hope, and Well-Being

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I want to thank everyone I have met on my journey. Thank you. May everyone find fulfillment and love in the present moment.

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## Abstract

Positive psychology is the study of human strength, resilience, and optimal human functioning. The goal of positive psychology is to make people happier by understanding and building positive emotion, gratification and meaning. The constructs of happiness, hope, optimism, well-being, resilience and flow are examined in how they relate to positive psychology. The "three good things in life" exercise was implemented with participants and participants completed pre and posttest measurements on happiness, positive and negative affect, hope/optimism, and well-being. The "three good things in life" exercise consisted of having participants journal each night for one-week three things that went well that day and why. The results suggest that the "three good things in life" exercise may increase happiness and optimism/hope. Results also showed that the satisfaction with life scale scores remained the same, a decrease in positive affect scores, and increased negative affect scores. Overall, the changes in the mean scores were small. Implications for the results and further study are elaborated on. The positive psychology field can benefit from further study to examine where its developments can be implemented successfully and where it can be further enriched.

Positive Psychology "Three Good Things in Life" and Measuring Happiness, Positive and Negative Affectivity, Optimism/Hope, and Well-Being

Positive psychology's major constructs and goals are reviewed and examined. Positive psychology's constructs of happiness, hope, optimism, well-being, resilience, and flow are specifically focused on. Positive psychology interventions and knowledge can serve the whole school. The role of the school counselor based on the recommendations of the American Counseling Association (ACA) and the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) is explained along with the ACA's professional counseling definition. The "three good things in life" exercise was implemented with faculty and staff at the high school level and the results are reported and discussed. Additionally, where the positive psychology field is heading and related concepts in motivation and emotion are considered.

*Introduction to Positive Psychology- Major Principles*

Positive psychology is the study of human strength, resilience, and optimal human functioning (Seligman, 2002). Seligman (1998) asserted that "we have discovered that there is a set of human strengths that are the most likely buffer against mental illness: courage, optimism, interpersonal skill, work ethic, hope, honesty and perseverance." The mantra of positive psychology must be to "*develop the strengths and manage the weaknesses*" (Lopez & Snyder, 2003, p. xiii). Positive psychology's central objective is facilitating happiness and subjective well-being (Seligman, 2002). Happiness and well-being are defined as referring to both positive feelings, such as joy or serenity, and to positive states such as those involving flow or absorption. A goal of positive psychology is to understand and explain happiness and subjective well-being and to accurately

predict factors that influence such states (Seligman, 2002). As put into practice in the counseling field, positive psychology is concerned with enhancing subjective well-being and happiness, rather than the remediation of deficits (Carr, 2004).

### *Positive Emotions*

Seligman (2002) divided positive emotions into three categories: those associated with the past, the future, and the present. Seligman (2002) described the main positive emotions associated with the past as satisfaction, contentment, fulfillment, pride and serenity. The positive emotions associated with the future to include optimism, hope, confidence, faith and trust. Seligman (2002) divided positive emotions concerned with the present in two distinct classes: momentary pleasures and more enduring gratifications. These pleasures include both bodily and higher pleasures. Bodily pleasures are considered to come through the senses. Feelings that come from bodily senses, beautiful smells and tasty food fall into this category.

Higher pleasures come from more complex activities and include feelings such as bliss, glee, comfort, ecstasy and ebullience. Gratifications differ from pleasures in that they involve states of absorption or flow. These gratifications are considered to come from engagement in activities that involve using what Seligman (2002) labeled one's signature strengths. Flying, teaching and helping others are examples of such activities. Seligman (2002) described signature strengths as personal traits associated with particular virtues. Seligman (2002) has created a list of these virtues in his Values in Action Classification of Strengths.

Seligman and Csikszentihalyi (2000) described positive psychology as a science of human strengths. They divided positive traits into an individual level and a group

level. At the individual level positive individual traits are "...the capacity for love and vocation, courage, interpersonal skill, aesthetic sensibility, perseverance, forgiveness, originality, future mindedness, spirituality, high talent, and wisdom" (p. 5). At the group level, positive group traits are "...about the civic virtues and the institutions that move individuals toward better citizenship: responsibility, nurturance, altruism, civility, moderation, tolerance, and work ethic" (p.5). Seligman and Csikszentihalyi (2000) called for counselors and psychologists working with families, schools, religious communities, and corporations to develop climates that foster these strengths. Positive psychology is involved in finding and increasing human strengths at the individual level and the group level. An important aspect in the progressing of the field of positive psychology is to define the positive emotions and to find ways to help increase them.

### *Happiness*

Andrew and McKennell (1980) defined happiness as consisting of affective and cognitive factors. These factors represent the emotional experience of joy, elation, contentment and other positive emotions on the one hand, and the cognitive evaluation of satisfaction with various life domains on the other. Argyle and Crossland (1987) believed that happiness consists of three main components: the frequency and degree of positive affect or joy; the average level of satisfaction over a period; and the absence of negative feelings, such as depression and anxiety. Happiness is subjective to each person and people have different ways of defining what is happiness to them. There are nonetheless common predictors of happiness and significant relationships between happiness and thoughts and behaviors.

A number of positive predictors of happiness have been identified. Researchers

have found that the following positive traits appear to predict happiness. They are social competence (Argyle & Lu, 1990), social skills and cooperativeness (Lu & Argyle, 1991), satisfaction with relationships with people from whom support has been received (Lu & Argyle, 1992) and engagement in a serious leisure activity (Lu & Argyle, 1994). Three of the happiness predictors are associated with social skills and positive relationships with others and this speaks to the importance of positive relationships with others being a part of helping to make a person happy. Eysenck (1983) provided another definition of happiness, he stated that,

Happiness is a thing called stable extraversion... the positive affect in happiness seemed to be related to easy sociability, with a natural, pleasant interaction with other people,... then it only makes sense that happiness can be associated with extraversion.

Researchers have also found support for significant relationships between happiness and certain factors. Happiness may be partly made up of a persons self-esteem; how people view themselves (Lu & Argyle, 1991), how people choose to think and behave by the way they choose to cope with situations; their coping styles (Rim, 1993), and whether people believe they have power over events in their lives or if things are outside their control; their locus of control (Francis, 1999). Other researchers have also assisted in creating theoretical frameworks for happiness constructs by focusing on positive affect and well-being.

### *Positive Affect and Well-Being*

Affect is concerned with how someone feels and the emotional state they are in. There are two primary dimensions of mood that consistently emerge in studies of

affective structures and these two structures are positive affect and negative affect (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). Positive affect indicates the degree that a person feels enthusiastic, active, and alert (Watson et al.). A person with high positive affect is said to be in a state of high energy, full concentration, and pleasurable engagement (Watson et al.). Furthermore, low positive affect is described as being characterized by sadness and lethargy (Watson et al.). Negative affect is defined as a general dimension of subjective distress and unpleasurable engagement that included a variety of aversive mood states, including anger, contempt, disgust, guilt, fear, and nervousness, with low negative affect being a state of calmness and serenity (Watson et al.). A number of theories have been developed that examine the influence of positive affect on personal well-being and growth.

Fredrickson (2002) developed the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions to describe how positive affect experiences both signal personal well-being and also contribute to personal growth and development. A number of studies have provided empirical evidence for the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2002; Isen, 2000). Fredrickson (2002) stated that the broaden-and-build theory posits that positive emotions broaden momentary thought-action repertoires and this creates opportunities for building enduring personal resources, which in turn offers the potential for personal growth and transformation by creating positive or adaptive spirals of emotion, cognition and action. Positive affect may assist a person in their personal growth and that is an important goal in positive psychology and all counseling in general. A concept touched on by Fredrickson (2002) is personal well-being and this is an important construct in positive psychology.

Researchers who have studied subjective well-being have identified two features of well-being. One feature is an emotional aspect that consists of independent positive and negative affective components (Diener & Emmons, 1984). The second feature is a cognitive or judgmental part that is referred to as life satisfaction (Andrews & Withey, 1976).

Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin (1985) referred to life satisfaction as a global evaluation by the person of his or her life and it appears that individuals "construct" a standard, which they perceive as appropriate for themselves, and compare the circumstances of their life to that standard. This illustrates the subjective nature of the judgment and the fact that people may be more or less satisfied with different domains of their lives, and even if they are more or less satisfied with different domains in their lives, overall they may be satisfied or dissatisfied. It appears important to study both the affective component of well-being and the cognitive/judgmental component of well-being to obtain a measure of overall life satisfaction because it may help understand happiness and our ability to increase happiness, where as Tatarkiewicz (1976) wrote, "...happiness requires total satisfaction, that is *satisfaction with life as a whole*" (p. 8). Two additional concepts that are important to the goal of helping people flourish are hope and optimism.

### *Hope and Optimism*

Hope and optimism can be important constructs in a person's well-being. Scheier, Carver, & Bridges (1994) referred to optimists as people who tend to hold positive expectancies for their future; while pessimists are people who tend to hold more negative expectations for the future. Research suggests that optimism is beneficial for physical

and psychological well-being. Aspinwall and Taylor (1992) found that optimistic persons appeared to adjust more favorably to important life transitions than those who had pessimistic outlooks. Scheier et al. (1989) reported that optimistic men who underwent coronary artery bypass surgery evidenced a more rapid physical recovery after their surgery and reported a higher quality of life 6 months postoperatively than did the more pessimistic men in the study. Additional benefits of optimism have also been reported.

The manner in which optimists cope with the challenges in their lives appears to differ from the way pessimists cope. Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub (1989) stated that optimists compared to pessimists have stable coping tendencies. Optimists also differ in the manner in which they cope with serious disease and health threats (Friedman et al., 1992). Scheier, Carver, and Bridges (1994) characterized the research findings concerning optimism by stating that optimists tend to use more problem-focused coping strategies than do pessimists and that when problem-focused coping is not a possibility, optimists turn to more adaptive emotion focused coping strategies such as acceptance, use of humor, and positive reframing of the situation. Other research has found support for the positive effects of optimism and the related concept of hope.

In his review of the research on positive psychology, Carr (2004) contended that optimism and hope are positively correlated with, and are predictive of, physical and mental health as reported by a variety of measures including self-reported health, positive response to medical intervention, subjective well-being, positive mood, immunological robustness, effective coping (reappraisal, problem solving, avoiding stressful life events, seeking social support) and health-promoting behavior.

Carr (2004) described Snyder's (2000) work as describing hope as closely related to optimism and involving two main components: the ability to plan pathways to desired goals despite obstacles, and motivation to use these pathways. Hope is related to resilience because encountering barriers, planning ways around them, and then actively executing these plans is central to the genesis of hope and overcoming these barriers and adversities is resilience (Snyder, 2000).

### *Resilience*

People who regularly experience positive affect demonstrate greater resilience to adversity (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2000; Fredrickson, et al., 2003). Resilience is "the capacity to spring back, rebound, successfully adapt in the face of adversity and develop social, academic, and vocational competence despite exposure to severe stress or simply to the stress inherent in today's world" (Henderson & Milstein, 1996, p. 7). Furthermore, the "broaden-and-build" theory examines resilience. The broaden-and-build theory holds that the momentary and unpredictability characteristic of positive states over time builds resilience that allows people to flexibly adapt to inevitable crises (Fredrickson et al., 2003) and people who regularly experience positive affect exhibit greater resilience to adversity (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2000; Fredrickson et al., 2003). The positive psychology field focuses building positive traits such as positive affect, resilience, and well-being.

### *Positive Psychology's Goals*

The positive psychology movement is devoted to nurturing well-being in individuals and communities. Seligman, Parks, and Steen (2004) believed that the ultimate goal of positive psychology is to make people happier by understanding and

building positive emotion, gratification and meaning. According to Seligman (2002), a researcher at the forefront of the positive psychology movement, happiness can be developed by identifying and using many of the strengths and traits that one already possesses- including kindness, originality, humor, optimism, and generosity. Further, Seligman (2002) believed that a person's "signature strengths" buffer him or her against misfortune and the experience of negative emotion and most importantly increase the happiness in their lives.

Seligman (2002) believed that people's signature strengths can be nurtured throughout their lives and that the benefits of doing so include benefits to people's health, relationships, and careers. The idea is to acknowledge and build on one's signature strengths. According to a review of *Authentic Happiness*, "the life-changing lesson is that by identifying the very best in ourselves, we can improve the world around us and achieve new and sustainable levels of authentic contentment, gratification, and meaning" (Seligman, 2002).

Seligman (2000) (as cited in Aspinwall and Staudinger, 2000) wrote that "fulfillments" are the outcomes that result from activities that use one's strengths and these "fulfillments" include: "(a) positive emotions (happiness, joy, contentment); (b) rewarding intimate relationships (love, friendship); (c) approval by self and others; (d) mental health and quality of life; (e) vocational satisfaction and success; (f) satisfying leisure and recreational activities; (g) positive families; and (h) positive communities" (p. 3). Building strengths are additionally important because the central hypothesis concerning strengths and the causes of clinical disorders is that certain strengths buffer against the development of certain disorders (Seligman, 2000). Positive psychology

attempts to acknowledge and build an individual's strengths and this is a different avenue to mental health than taken in the past by the psychology field.

Positive psychology focuses on mental health rather than mental illness. An objective of positive psychology is to identify characteristics and strategies that people can use. Keyes and Haidt (2003) referred to the aim of positive psychology as "to help people live and flourish rather than merely to exist" (p. 3). A major premise of positive psychology is that people have the capacity to thrive, even in the face of suffering. The three main tenets are positive emotions: happiness, contentment, well-being, optimism, and others; positive personal characteristics: resilience, goal setting, engagement, and virtues; and positive institutions and communities. Elements of the environment include families, schools, and communities and these are considered to support the development and maintenance of mental health.

#### *Research Supports Benefits of Positive Psychological Beliefs and Positive Feeling*

According to Fredrickson and Losada (2005) "to *flourish* means to live within an optimal range of human functioning, one that connotes goodness, generativity, growth, and resilience" (p. 678). This definition builds on the latest work that measures mental health in positive terms rather than by the absence of mental illness (Keyes, 2002).

Fredrickson and Losada (2005) reviewed the benefits of positive affect with empirical evidence garnered from other researchers that documented the adaptive value of positive affect. Fredrickson and Losada (2005) wrote that "beyond their pleasant subjective feel, positive emotions, positive moods, and positive sentiments carry multiple, interrelated benefits" (p. 678). Researchers have discovered many benefits of positive emotions, moods, and sentiments.

First, these good feelings alter people's mindsets: Experiments have shown that induced positive affect widens the scope of attention (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005; Rowe, Hirsch, & Anderson, 2005), broadens behavioral repertoires (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005), and increases intuition (Bolte, Goschkey, & Kuhl, 2003) and creativity (Isen, Daubman, & Nowicki, 1987). Second, good feelings alter people's bodily systems: Experiments have shown that induced positive affect speeds recovery from the cardiovascular aftereffects of negative affect (Fredrickson, Mancuso, Branigan, & Tugade, 2000), alters frontal brain asymmetry (Davidson et al., 2003), and increases immune function (Davidson et al., 2003). Third, good feelings predict healthy mental and physical health outcomes: Prospective studies have shown that frequent positive affect predicts (a) resilience to adversity (Fredrickson, Tugade, Waugh, & Larkin, 2003), (b) increased happiness (Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002), (c) psychological growth (Fredrickson et al., 2003), (d) lower levels of cortisol (Steptoe, Wardle, & Marmot, 2005), (e) reduced inflammatory responses to stress (Steptoe et al., 2005), (f) reductions in subsequent-day physical pain (Gil et al., 2004), (g) resistance to rhinovirus (Cohn, Doyle, Turner, Alper, & Skoner, 2003), and (h) reductions in stroke (Ostir, Markides, Peek, & Goodwin, 2001). And fourth, possibly because of a combination of these effects in combination, good feelings predict how long people live: Several well-controlled longitudinal studies document a clear link between frequent positive affect and longevity (Danner, Snowdon, & Friesen, 2001; Levy, Slade, Kunkel, & Kasl, 2002; Moskowitz, 2003; Ostir, Markides, Black, & Goodwin, 2000). Positive emotions, moods, and sentiments clearly have many possible benefits and the positive psychology field is focused on discovering new strengths and benefits.

Additionally, how an individual reacts to stressful life events can affect their mental health and this is also a focus of positive psychology. Taylor et al. (2000) concluded that positive psychological beliefs (e.g., meaning, control, optimism) and positive feelings (e.g., hopefulness) act as resources that likely preserve mental health during traumatic times and protect physical health as well. Taylor et al. (2000) further described research that suggests that stressful life events (e.g., a life-threatening illness) provoke positive psychological changes like an enhanced sense of purpose, meaning, and appreciation for the value of life.

#### *Positive Psychology Research Focusing on Increasing Happiness*

Positive psychology focuses on increasing individual's happiness. Research in the field of positive psychology with the goal of increasing individual's happiness by focusing on what is positive is considered by many to be new and there are very few research studies in this area. One of the researchers at the forefront of the positive psychology movement is Martin Seligman, a university professor and former president of the American Psychological Association.

Seligman (2002) defined happiness as (a) positive emotion and pleasure (the pleasant life); (b) engagement (the engaged life); and (c) meaning (the meaningful life). His recent research suggests that people reliably differ according to the type of life they pursue and, further, that the most satisfied people are those who orient their pursuits toward all three aspects of happiness, with the greatest weight carried by engagement and meaning (Peterson, Park, & Seligman, 2005).

Seligman, M.E.P., Steen, T.A., Park, N., Peterson, C. (2005) designed a study that implemented five happiness exercises and one placebo control exercise. This is one of

the first empirical studies that tested positive psychology's intervention to increase happiness and the results are promising. To clarify further, studies in the past have examined the benefits of positive thinking and strengths that have been reported on extensively in this paper, but research is new in the area of concentrating specifically on building positive thinking and strengths. One exercise focused on building gratitude, two focused on increasing awareness of what is most positive about oneself, and two focused on identifying strengths of character. Two of the exercises increased participants' self-rated happiness and decreased depressive symptoms self-ratings for six months (Seligman et al., 2005).

These two exercises were the "using your signature strengths in a new way" and the "three good things in life" exercise. In the "using your signature strengths in a new way," participants were asked to take an inventory of character strengths online at [www.authentichappiness.org](http://www.authentichappiness.org) and to receive individualized feedback about their top five ("signature") strengths. They were then asked to use one of these top strengths in a new and different way for one week. In the "three good things in life" exercise, participants were asked to write down three things that went well each day and their causes every night for one week. In addition, they were asked to provide a causal explanation for each good thing. The results reported in the "three good things in life" exercise appear promising. Seligman et al. (2005) reported that the "three good things in life" intervention lastingly increased happiness and decreased depressive symptoms.

#### *Positive Psychology Criticism*

There are also researchers who question positive psychology's constructs. Kelley (2004) criticized positive psychology because he thought that it lacked a principle-based

conceptual foundation to guide its study of optimal youth functioning. Principally, the author believed that positive psychology does not have "...causal principals that accurately explain optimal adolescent psychological functioning" (p. 258). Kelly (2004) elaborated on his criticism by stating, "the main reason for this fact is that each positive model is based on the same faulty assumption- *that the absence of psychological well-being in adolescents is due to certain missing external factors*. Thus, each positive model proposes the need to put some missing item(s) back into you from the outside in" (Kelly 2004, p. 263).

Positive psychology can benefit from continuing to reexamine its premises and to clarify its views and understanding. In regards to Kelly's (2004) criticism, it is possible that people may have everything they need in them already, and this may be the part of positive psychology that acknowledges a person's strengths and builds on them, rather than building something from scratch.

Furthermore, there are questions surrounding whether positive psychology is indeed a new field of study and some researchers have argued that positive psychology is not a new field and it indeed has roots in counseling psychology (Lopez et al, 2006). Lopez, et al. (2006) reviewed the content of a random selection of the articles published in the Journal of Counseling Psychology (JCP), The Counseling Psychologist (TCP), the Journal of Career Assessment (JCA), and the Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Developemnt (JMCD). Lopez, et al. (2006) found that 29% of the articles they examined had a positive focus and they extrapolate from this evidence that there has been a positive focus in counseling psychology for years and they encourage their members "to reaffirm its unique positive focus by focusing more on strength in practice and research" (p. 205).

The authors detailed the history of the positive focus and reasserted their commitment to furthering the field, which can ultimately benefit all.

Additionally, counselors have worked from a well-ness model for years. The American Counseling Association and American School Counseling Association definition of counseling and goals for counselors show their commitment to focusing on a well-ness model. Along with the questions regarding who implemented the wellness model first, what is very important is continued support for increasing the positive in people so that people can be healthy, happy, and reach their potentials. An important goal is to integrate positive psychology and counseling. There are many similarities between the two and ways that they can benefit each other as disciplines and ultimately assist people live well and flourish.

*Counseling Definition: ACA Definition of Professional Counseling*

The American Counseling Association (ACA) (2005) defined professional counseling as "...the application of mental health, psychological or human development principles, through cognitive, affective, behavioral or systematic interventions, strategies that address wellness, personal growth, or career development, as well as pathology."

For school counselors, the ACA (2005) stated that

"In schools school counselors are certified professional educators specially trained in counseling interventions, theories and techniques. School counselors--as an integral part or a school's total educational program--work with students, teachers, parents, administrators, local business leaders and community leaders to help students become responsible and productive citizens. School counselors promote educational success, interpersonal skills and self-understanding."

According to these definitions, counselors and school counselors are involved assisting in their client's well-ness and personal growth and this is connected with the goals of positive psychology. Important in this mission is to examine the best strategies so that client's are getting the best possible assistance, and to inform others as to the benefits of counseling so that people can get the assistance they can grow from and it continues to be funded and viewed with respect by the community.

*American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Call For Advocacy and Accountability*

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) (1994) advocated for school counselors to become change agents and assume a leadership role in education reform, by assisting students to achieve greater academic and school success and by championing and advocating for students needs (Dahir, 2004). Along with being a change agent it is important to advocate for the counseling profession and one way to do this is by showing accountability. Myers, et al. (2002) believed that an essential question for all counselors is whether our methods "work" to help people in need.

Myer's, et al. (2002) called for a continued emphasis on action-oriented research and one action they proposed was that "research on counseling outcomes of credentialed counselors should be implemented and disseminate to demonstrate the effectiveness of our preparation and credentials." (p. 398). Accountability can assist in showing the vital role that school counselors play in the school, it may help their effectiveness, and help them to provide the best services they can to their students. In our current situation facing tight school budgets and budget cuts it is important to document the positive benefits a school counselor brings to a school so that they can provide much needed student services with a manageable student caseload.

ACA released the updated student-to-counselor ratio showing that the ratio of students to school counselors in U.S. elementary and secondary schools has increased. The U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Educational Statistics (2004) showed that the U.S. student-to-counselor ratio was at 488:1 in the 2003-2004 school year, up from 471:1 in 2002-2003. The maximum ratio recommended by ACA and the American School Counselor Association is 250:1. Only three states- Louisiana, Vermont and Wyoming- fell within the recommended ratio according to the Counseling Today November 2005 issue. One way to continue to prove school counselors worth to the public is by being accountable and showing the benefits of school counseling.

#### *Accountability*

Positive psychology research and techniques fit well with a counselor's professional identity because both are able to work from a well-ness model and focus on people's strengths. As Goodyear (1984) stated,

It is important, then that we do not forsake aspects of our profession that are uniquely ours as we struggle to become recognized as legitimate providers of mental health services. For example, our knowledge of testing distinguishes us from social workers; our foundations in vocational counseling and in working with essentially normal people distinguish us from all other mental health professions. (p. 5)

As Gale and Austin (2003) stated, "Counseling needs to move away from the stigmas of a medical, deficit model and be associated with normal development and with positive lifestyles" (p. 9). The authors named a number of professional counselors who philosophically and theoretically are more aligned with "*...normal growth and*

*development, holistic approaches, and wellness* (e.g., Darden, Ginter, & Gazda, 1996; Ivey & Ivey, 1998; Myers, Sweeny, & Witmer, 2000) than with medical or deficit models" (p. 9).

Furthermore, the authors called for the American Counseling Association (ACA) to actively promote research that would demonstrate the benefit of counseling in supporting healthy approaches to living. School counseling specifically focuses on the healthy development of all students. This makes sense because the number of student on a school counselors case load who are not seriously distressed but who can improve the quality of their lives is large in numbers. There are many students not served who can benefit. There are also many faculty and staff that can benefit from the skills and knowledge of a school counselor.

#### *Connection Between Positive Psychology and School Counseling*

A goal for school counselors is to help nurture a flourishing school community by creating and implementing interventions that promote the development of thriving students, faculty and staff because everyone in a school community is connected. School counselors are able to nurture positive emotions, positive personal characteristics and positive institutions and communities. American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) have been a proponent of school counselors and the goals of building strengths and resilience.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) believed that preventative mental health programs should be offered in schools that "...focus on decreasing risk factors and building resilience, including providing a positive, friendly, and open social environment at school and ensuring that each student has access to community and family supports that are associated with healthy emotional development" (AAP, 2004).

The AAP (2004) called for schools to "...provide numerous opportunities for positive interactions with adults so that each student has positive adult role models and opportunities to develop a healthy adult relationship outside his or her family" (AAP, p. 1). Positive psychology interventions can be used with school faculty and staff to assist them in being the best they can be and to help them be positive role models for students. Positive psychology interventions in schools may help to overcome risk factors and assist students in succeeding in school and life. The American School Counselor Association has created a national model to assist school counselors to define their objectives and goals.

National American School Counselor Association (NASCA) model stated that the goals for a school counselor are to meet each individual student's academic, career, and personal/social goals. Galassi and Akos (2004) stated that "schools and communities need to mobilize efforts to build assets if they expect children to develop into healthy, productive, and caring adults" (p. 152). One way to do this is using a positive psychology approach that emphasizes increasing what is positive about students and what is working for them, as well as helping them to change how they view situations in order to focus on what is going well as opposed to what is not (Galassi & Akos, 2004).

Positive psychology is an approach to helping that assists students to "...broaden their view of what is possible, help them to build personal resources and resiliency, and can trigger upward spirals toward well-being and positive development" (Galassi & Akos, 2004, p. 153). These goals are compatible with the goals of the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) National model. The major principles of positive psychology are the study of human strength, resilience, and optimal human functioning.

*Serving All Students*

Galassi and Akos (2004) stated "The school counselor as a developmental advocate promotes healthy youth development through direct service as well as through helping to shape asset-enhancing environments for young people" (p. 146). The National Standards for School Counseling Programs stated "the primary goal of the school counseling program is to enhance student achievement and accomplishment" (Campbell & Dahir, 1997, p. 4).

A comprehensive school counseling program is developmental and systematic in nature, sequential, clearly defined, and accountable. It is jointly founded upon developmental psychology, educational philosophy, and counseling methodology (ASCA, 1994). The school counseling program is integral to the educational enterprise. The program is proactive and preventative in its focus. It assists students in acquiring and using lifelong learning skills (Campbell & Dahir, 1997, p. 9).

The American School Counseling Association (ASCA) National Model directs counselors to serve all students and to focus on the three main areas of academic, personal/ social, and career development to help schools achieve their educational mission- student success (Campbell & Dahir, 1997). The ASCA model states that a major objective of school counseling programs is to help all students to become successful (Campbell and Brigman, 2005). All students can and should benefit from the activities and services of a comprehensive counseling program geared to facilitate academic, personal/ social and career development (Gysbers, 2001).

A major goal for school counselors is to help nurture a flourishing society by

creating and implementing interventions that promote the development of thriving students. School counselors are able to nurture positive emotions, positive personal characteristics and positive institutions and communities. It is imperative that school counselors provide service to all students and their individual needs, and not limit their services to a small percentage students. This idea of serving every student is reflected in the quote by Gysbers and Henderson (2000), “Although immediate and crisis needs of students are to be met, a major focus of a developmental program is to provide all students with experiences to help them grow and develop” (p. 26). Positive psychology may be implemented to serve all students and to help them achieve their fullest potential.

Positive Psychology's future is to search for empirically-validated therapies and to build on and increase our understanding and ability to foster strengths in people: to lead happy and fulfilling lives and to buffer against mental illness. Similar to Maslow's (1970) belief in the self-actualizing tendency in people, as stated by Lopez and Snyder (2003) "all people have psychological strengths and the capacity to attain optimal mental health" (p. 463). Goals of positive psychology and school counselors are to build on and foster increased courage, future-mindedness, optimism, interpersonal skill, faith, work ethic, hope, honesty, perseverance, the capacity for flow, and insight, and ultimately to increase the goodness in our world.

### *Current Study*

Along with serving all students it may also be important to serve faculty and staff to create a thriving school community. The researcher believed that a school works as a synergistic system and everyone can affect everyone else. School counselors are mainly there to serve students and school counselors are able to work with all members of a

school, including faculty and staff. School counselors can assist in creating a thriving school community that everyone can benefit from by working with faculty and staff to assist them in becoming happy, healthy, and well-functioning people.

The current study examined the "three good things in life" exercise with faculty and staff in order to give back something positive for the great internship experience provided to the researcher. The "three good things in life" exercise was implemented and studied were whether the exercise affected their subjective rating of their happiness, positive affect, negative affect, hope/optimism, and well-being.

The researcher hypothesized that participating in the "three good things in life" exercise would increase participants ratings of their perceived happiness, positive affect, hope/optimism, and well-being; while decreasing their negative affect rating. The researcher hypothesized this because the researcher believed that these are interrelated concepts and are all part of one's subjective happiness. The researcher also examined these concepts because the researcher believed that they may be shown to be important constructs in positive psychology and in assisting people in thriving.

This current study differs from Seligman's et al. (2005) study that found a significant increase in the participants' happiness, because those participants scored in the clinically depressed range on the pretest. Additionally, in Seligman's et al. study the participants found Seligman's website, signed up to participate on their own, and it is possible that they may have had more of a vested interest to increase their happiness. In the current study the participants were asked to voluntarily participate in the study and they all had pretest scores that were in the happy range. Furthermore, in Seligman's et al. (2005) study they only examined happiness. This current study attempts to take research

in the field of positive psychology further by examining whether participating in the "three good things in life" exercise affects participants' subjective ratings of the additional constructs of positive and negative affectivity, hope/optimism, and well-being.

## Method

### *Participants*

Eight females and two males participated in this study. The participants' ages ranged from 25 to 65 years of age. Participants were faculty and staff from a middle/upper class, high academic achieving suburban high school, and were recruited on a voluntary basis. Participants did not receive any remuneration for their participation.

### *Materials*

#### *Statement of Informed Consent*

Participants were given a Statement of Informed Consent that listed the purpose of the research project, the possible benefits and personal risks, and it stated that their participation in the research study indicated their informed consent. For the exact statement of informed consent please refer to Appendix A.

#### *Happiness measure: The Revised Oxford Happiness Scale*

The Revised Oxford Happiness Scale is a measurement device intended to assess participants' subjective experience of personal happiness. The Revised Oxford Happiness Scale consists of 29 groups of statements about personal happiness. The participant is asked to read all four statements in each group and then pick out the one statement in each group that best describes the way he/she has been feeling in the past week, including today. The scores are summed across each question; a=0, b=1, c=2, d=3. The scale states that most people score between 40 and 42. For the exact Revised Oxford

Happiness Scale please refer to Appendix B.

*Positive and Negative Affectivity measure: Positive and Negative Affectivity Scale (PANAS)*

The Positive and Negative Affectivity Scale (PANAS) is a measurement device intended to assess positive and negative affectivity. The scale consists of 20 words that describe different feelings and emotions. The participant is asked to read each item and then circle his/her appropriate answer to the extent that he/she feels that way right now (that is, at the present moment). The scale is based on a 5-point Likert type scale. Half of the words describe positive affectivity and half of the scores describe negative affectivity. For the exact PANAS Scale please refer to Appendix C.

*Well-Being measure: Satisfaction with Life Scale*

The Satisfaction with Life Scale is a measurement device intended to assess participants' subjective experience of personal well-being. The Satisfaction with Life Scale consists of five statements that the participant is asked to indicate his/her agreement or disagreement with each item using a 7-point Likert type scale. 1= Strongly Disagree and 7= Strongly agree, with the numbers in between indicating differing levels of agreement or disagreement. The participant is asked to please be open and honest in their responding. The scale states that most people score in the 21-25 range on this scale. For the exact Satisfaction with Life Scale please refer to Appendix D.

*Hope measure: The Life Orientation Test - Revised*

The Life Orientation Test - Revised is a measurement device intended to assess participants' subjective experience of dispositional optimism- a global expectation that more good things than bad will happen in the future. The participant is asked to circle the

answer that applies to him/her to show how much he/she agrees or disagrees with each of the six statements. The test consists of six statements and is rated on a 5-point Likert type scale. For the exact Life Orientation Test-Revised please refer to Appendix E.

### *Journal*

Participants were given a pad of paper as a journal to keep a written record of three things that went well that day and why they went well. The journal was used for one week. Participants were told that the journal was theirs to keep and that they would not have to share their journal responses with the researcher.

### *Procedure*

Participants were presented with the Statement of Informed Consent. Participants were then asked to journal each night for one-week three things that went well that day and why they went well. Participants were given a journal, which consisted of a writing pad, to keep a written list of their "three good things" in. The participants were told that they would not be asked to share these "three good things" with the researcher or anyone else and that the journal was theirs to keep. Participants were asked to fill out the four scales at this time and that the scales would be collected by the end of that day. The participants were told that they would be asked to fill out the same scales again one week later, and again after an additional week. The participants were given the scales one week later and the scales were collected by the end of that day. Because of time constraints to finish this research project the participants were not asked to fill out the scales again at the two-week point.

## Results

### *The Revised Oxford Happiness Scale*

Mean scores were calculated for the pretest and the posttest for all ten participants together and individually. The mean score for the pretest was 46.9. The mean score for the posttest was 47.1. Participants mean scores on the scale increased by 0.2. Most people score between 40 and 42 on the Revised Oxford Happiness Scale (Argyle, 2001).

All ten of the participant's (100%) scores changed from the pretest to the posttest. Five of the participant's (50%) scores increased and five of the participant's (50%) scores decreased. On the pretest, scores ranged from 28-64, the median was 46.5, and the mode included all of the scores. On the posttest, scores ranged from 25-61, the median was 50.5 and the mode was 39. Examining the change for each individual's pre and posttest scores individually, the pretest to the posttest scores ranged from -6 to 6, the median was 0.5 and the modes were -6, -3, and 5.

Table I

*Revised Oxford Happiness Scale Scores*

Participant #	Scale	Pretest	Posttest	Score Difference
#1	Oxford	57	51	-6
#2	Oxford	59	61	2
#3	Oxford	43	42	-1
#4	Oxford	31	36	5
#5	Oxford	49	54	5
#6	Oxford	64	58	-6

Participant #	Scale	Pretest	Posttest	Score Difference
#7	Oxford	28	25	-3
#8	Oxford	52	55	3
#9	Oxford	44	50	6
#10	Oxford	42	39	-3

*Positive Affectivity and Negative Affectivity Scale (PANAS)*

Mean scores were calculated for the pretest and the posttest for all ten participants together and individually. The positive affectivity mean score for the pretest was 33.6. The negative affectivity mean score for the pretest was 11.5. The positive affectivity mean score for the posttest was 32.6. The negative affectivity mean score for the posttest was 11.7.

The difference between the mean scores for positive affect was - 1. The difference between the mean scores for negative affect was 0.2. Nine of the ten participants (90%) scores changed on the positive affectivity scale. Three of the participant's (30%) scores increased and six of the participant's (60%) scores decreased. Seven of the participant's (70%) scores changed on the negative affectivity scale and three (30%) stayed the same. Four of the participant's (40%) scores increased on the negative affectivity scale and three of the participant's (30%) scores decreased on the negative affectivity scale.

On the positive affect pretest, scores ranged from 19 to 50, the median was 35, and the mode was 37. On the positive affect posttest, scores ranged from 22 to 46, the

median was 33.5, and the mode included all scores. Examining the change for each individual's pre and posttest positive affect scores individually, the pretest to the posttest scores ranged from -11 to 9, the median was -1.5 and the modes were -4 and 4.

On the negative affectivity pretest, scores ranged from 10 to 17, the median was 13, and the modes were 10 and 13. On the negative affectivity posttest, scores ranged from 10 to 19, the median was 11, and the mode was 10. Examining the change for each individual's negative affectivity pre and posttest scores individually, the pretest to the posttest scores ranged from -3 to 5, the median was 0, and the modes were -3 and 0. Listed below are the scores for each participant on the Positive Affectivity and Negative Affectivity Scale (PANAS).

Table II

*Positive Affectivity and Negative Affectivity Scale (PANAS) Scores*

Participant #	Scale	Pretest	Posttest	Difference
#1	Positive Affectivity	33	22	-11
#1	Negative Affectivity	14	19	5
#2	Positive Affectivity	33	31	-2
#2	Negative Affectivity	13	10	-3

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Participant #	Scale	Pretest	Posttest	Score Difference
#3	Positive Affectivity	50	46	-4
#3	Negative Affectivity	10	10	0
#4	Positive Affectivity	22	26	4
#4	Negative Affectivity	13	16	3
#5	Positive Affectivity	29	38	9
#5	Negative Affectivity	13	10	-3
#6	Positive Affectivity	37	36	-1
#6	Negative Affectivity	10	11	1
#7	Positive Affectivity	37	37	0
#7	Negative Affectivity	17	19	2
#8	Positive Affectivity	39	35	-4
#8	Negative Affectivity	11	11	0
#9	Positive Affectivity	37	32	-5
#9	Negative Affectivity	14	11	-3

Participant #	Scale	Pretest	Posttest	Score Difference
#10	Positive Affectivity	19	23	4
#10	Negative Affectivity	10	10	0

### *Satisfaction with Life Scale*

Mean scores were calculated for the pretest and the posttest for all ten participants together and individually. The mean score for the pretest was 24.4. The mean score for the posttest was 24.4. Participants mean scores on the scale showed no change. Most people score in the 21-25 range on this scale (Diener, Emmons, Larson, & Giffin, 1985).

Eight of the participant's (80%) scores changed from the pretest to the posttest. Five of the participant's (50%) scores increased, three of the participant's (30%) scores decreased, and two (20%) stayed the same. On the pretest, scores ranged from 12 to 35, the median was 26, and the modes were 17, 26, and 30. On the posttest, scores ranged from 12-32, the median was 27, and the modes were 27, 30, and 32. Examining the change for each individual's pre and posttest scores individually, the pretest to the posttest scores ranged from -5 to 5, the median was 0.5, and the mode was 1. Listed below are the scores for each participant on the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS).

Table III

*Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) Scores*

Participant #	Scale	Pretest	Posttest	Score Difference
#1	SWLS	30	32	2
#2	SWLS	30	30	0
#3	SWLS	18	19	1
#4	SWLS	17	13	-4
#5	SWLS	26	27	1
#6	SWLS	26	27	1
#7	SWLS	12	12	0
#8	SWLS	33	32	-1
#9	SWLS	17	22	5
#10	SWLS	35	30	-5

*The Life Orientation Test- Revised*

Mean scores were calculated for the pretest and the posttest for all ten participants together and individually. The mean score for the pretest was 22.1. The mean score for the posttest was 22.8. Participants' mean scores changed by 0.7.

Six of the participant's (60%) scores changed from the pretest to the posttest. Five of the participant's (50%) scores increased, one of the participant's (10%) scores decreased, and four (40%) stayed the same. On the pretest, scores ranged from 15 to 28,

the median was 22.5, and the modes were 15 and 28. On the posttest, scores ranged from 15 to 29, the median was 23, and the mode was 23. Examining the change for each individual's pre and posttest scores individually, the pretest to the posttest scores ranged from -1 to 3, the median was 0.5, and the mode was 0. Listed below are the scores for each participant for the Life Orientation Test- Revised (LOT-R).

Table IV

*Life Orientation Test- Revised (LOT-R) Scores*

Participant #	Scale	Pretest	Posttest	Score Difference
#1	LOT-R	23	24	1
#2	LOT-R	28	28	0
#3	LOT-R	22	23	1
#4	LOT-R	15	15	0
#5	LOT-R	24	23	-1
#6	LOT-R	28	28	0
#7	LOT-R	15	16	1
#8	LOT-R	26	29	3
#9	LOT-R	21	23	2
#10	LOT-R	19	19	0

Table V

*Participant Changes Across Scales*

Key: Oxford Happiness Scale Revised (OH)

Positive Affectivity Scale (PA)

Negative Affectivity Scale (NA)

Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)

Life-Orientation Test Revised (LOT-R)

Participant #1

Increased= + 1 (LOT-R), + 2 (SWLS), + 5 (NA)

Decreased= - 6 (OH), - 11 (PA)

No Change= None

Participant #2

Increased= +2 (OH), +1 (NA)

Decreased= - 1 (PA)

No Change= 0 (LOT-R), 0 (SWLS)

Participant #3

Increased= + 1 (LOT-R), + 1 (SWLS)

Decreased= - 1 (OH), - 5 (PA), - 3 (NA)

No Change= None

Participant #4

Increased= + 5 (OH), + 4 (PA)

Decreased= - 4 (SWLS)

No Change= 0 (LOT-R), 0 (NA)

Participant #5

Increased= + 1 (SWLS), + 5 (OH), + 9 (PA)

Decreased= - 1 (LOT-R), - 3 (NA)

No Change= None

Participant #6

Increased= + 1 (SWLS)

Decreased= - 6 (OH), - 4 (PA)

No Change= 0 (LO-R), 0 (NA)

Participant #7

Increased= + 1 (LOT-R), + 4 (PA), + 3 (NA)

Decreased= - 3 (OH)

No Change= 0 (SWLS)

Participant #8

Increased= + 3 (LOT-R), + 3 (OH)

Decreased= - 1 (SWLS), - 4 (PA)

No Change= 0 (NA)

Participant #9

Increased= + 6 (OH) + 2 (LOT-R), + 5 (SWLS), + 2 (NA)

Decreased= None

No Change= 0 (PA)

Participant #10

Increased= None

Decreased= - 3 (OH), - 5 (SWLS), - 2 (PA), - 3 (NA)

No Change= 0 (LOT-R)

### Discussion

The current study's results are discussed, along with the study's limitations, and ideas for the possible future direction of the field of positive psychology. The "three good things in life" exercise was implemented with participants and participants completed pre and posttest measurements on happiness, positive and negative affect, hope/optimism, and well-being. The "three good things in life" exercise consisted of having participants' journal each night for one-week three things that went well that day and why. The results suggest that the "three good things in life" exercise may increase happiness and optimism/hope. Results also showed that the satisfaction with life scale scores remained the same, a decrease in positive affect scores, and increased negative affect scores. Overall, the changes in all the mean scores were small.

The current results showed an increase in mean happiness ratings. This finding is

consistent with the results reported by Seligman et al. (2005). It appears that for the participants in the current study who had happiness ratings that were in the "normal" range, i.e. not considered depressed, the "three good things in life" exercise increased their happiness. The changes in happiness scores were not as large as those in Seligman's et al. (2005) study, but those were changes reported for participants who had clinical depression pretest scores. In the current study participants scored in the happiness range. This result is evidence that even people who may be considered well-functioning can still increase their happiness. This is additional support for the view that positive psychology interventions may be used to assist all people to flourish and become the best they can be. Along with happiness, positive and negative affectivity were measured.

Positive affectivity and negative affectivity were found to be opposite to what the researcher hypothesized. In the current study, positive affectivity decreased and negative affectivity increased. The researcher is really not sure what accounts for this result. Argyle and Crossland (1987) believed that happiness consists of three main components: the frequency and degree of positive affect or joy; the average level of satisfaction over a period; and the absence of negative feelings, such as depression and anxiety.

In accordance with Argyle and Crossland (1987) it would appear that happiness is related to positive affect and the absence of negative affect. In the current study happiness ratings increased while positive affect decreased and negative affect increased. This is an interesting occurrence and one in which the researcher does not have a complete answer. One reason may be that because all the mean scores that increased or decreased did so to a small degree, the changes were not all that significant and thus were not very meaningful. This is to say that it is possible that happiness did not increase to a

degree that an individual would notice it in their lives and in how it affected their positive and negative affectivity. Alternatively, it is possible that the individuals' positive and negative affectivity did not really affect their happiness.

The current study also showed an increase in participants' optimism and hope. This result was consistent with the researcher's hypothesis. As discussed earlier, optimism and hope are positively correlated with, and are predictive of, physical and mental health as reported by a variety of measures including self-reported health, subjective well-being, positive mood, effective coping, and health-promoting behavior (Carr, 2004). By implementing "the three good things in life" exercise the results suggest that one may be able increase optimism and hope. Along with these benefits, it may also be possible to gain the added benefit of increasing one's resilience.

Hope and optimism are important constructs in positive psychology and may benefit a person's emotional and physical well-being because they have been related to the ability to plan pathways to desired goals despite obstacles, and motivation to use these pathways (Snyder, 2000). Furthermore, hope is related to resilience because encountering barriers, planning ways around them, and then actively executing these plans is central to the genesis of hope and overcoming these barriers and adversities is resilience (Snyder, 2000). Further research is necessary to examine the ways to increase optimism, hope, and resilience because the benefits appear to be great.

The current study also examined well-being. Participants' mean scores showed no change from the pretest to the posttest. The researcher had predicted that well-being scores would increase due to the connection between subjective well-being and happiness based on Fredrickson (2002) broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions that

described how positive emotional experiences both signal personal well-being and also contribute to personal growth and development. Upon further review of the literature, it came to light that the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) that was used in this study is a measurement tool that shows stability over time and shows support for the position that subjective well-being is a relatively global and stable phenomenon (Pavot, et al 1991). This current study may be further evidence that the SWLS shows stability over time.

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) is a measurement tool that does not examine the affective component of well-being, but examines the cognitive judgmental component where a person's life satisfaction is "constructed" by their own standards (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). Studies in the future should examine whether the affective component of well-being is affected by the "three good things in life" exercise.

### *Limitations*

Along with limitations that are discussed above, the current study has a number of additional limitations. The current study did not have a control group. Having a control group, that received the pretest and posttest without the "three good things in life" exercise would help show whether the changes in participants' ratings were due to the "three good things in life" exercise or to other factors such as just being in a study or due to occurrences at school.

The current study would benefit from having more participants. The current study had only ten participants due to time and institutional constraints. For research studies of this type it is important that the number of participants be much greater so that the results can show more reliability and validity.

An additional limitation is that the study was run for only a week. It would be interesting to study whether happiness and other ratings continued to increase, stay the same, or decrease. Short-term effects may be beneficial, but clearly longer-term positive effects are what many are searching for.

A final limitation to be discussed is that the researcher did not know if all participants indeed performed the "three good things in life" exercise each night. The researcher did not collect the journal at the end of the week because the researcher wanted to protect the participants' privacy and the researcher hoped that the participants would be more honest in their journaling and ultimately get more positive benefit out of the experience if they knew that they would not be sharing their "private" thoughts with another person. A possible idea for future studies may be to ask whether each participant performed the activity each night, or to even collect the journals.

#### *Where Positive Psychology is Heading*

Funding for positive psychology is definitely growing. The U.S. Education Department's (ED) Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services in 2004 put out a notice seeking one \$500,000 grantee to test the use of three specific positive psychology techniques for use in state vocational rehabilitation services. The three specific techniques listed were learned optimism, strengths and virtues versus talents for employment, and subjective well-being (Report on Disability Programs, 2004).

A number of foundations and agencies have been giving funding to the movement; including Atlantic Philanthropies, the Annenberg Foundation, Sunnylands Trust, the Mayerson Foundation, the Templeton Foundation, the Hovey Foundation, the Gallup Foundation, the U.S. Department of Education, and others (Seligman, Steen, Park,

& Peterson, 2005). Funding will definitely assist the growth of positive psychology. Along with positive psychology's growth will be related concepts and ideas to assist in furthering our knowledge of the positive in our lives and how to bring out and build on the positive. One direction that the researcher believes positive psychology may benefit from is studying people's emotions and motivation. Csikszentmihalyi is one important figure at the forefront of positive psychology and has attempted to integrate positive psychology with emotion and motivation and what he has coined "flow." There are also a number of researchers that study emotion and motivation that provide the building blocks for current research.

#### *Flow and the Relationship Between Emotion and Motivation*

Reeve (1997) stated that emotions relate to motivation in two ways. First, emotions act as motives. Like needs and cognitions, emotions energize and direct behavior. Second, emotions provide a readout of the status of the person's ever changing motivational states. Positive emotions such as interest and joy facilitate conduct, whereas negative emotions inhibit conduct. Emotions energize and direct the creation of plans. Without the impetus of emotions we would not be motivated to create plans. Furthermore, emotions energize and direct the carrying out of our plans. In other words, emotions are the impetus for directing our behavior. Emotions also provide a readout that allows a person to change their behavior. Positive emotions such as interest and joy facilitate certain behavior, while negative emotions such as boredom and sadness inhibit certain behavior. Emotions not only allow for the creation and implementation of our plans, emotions also facilitate other types of behavior as well. An example of emotion facilitating conduct is exhibited when people experience a state of "flow," a term

coined by Csikszentmihalyi (1997).

According to Csikszentmihalyi (1999), intrinsically motivated behavior creates an optimal experience called flow. Flow theory is said to be based on a phenomenological model of consciousness based on information theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). When in a state of flow, the individual places his or her attention on the task, blocks out other stimuli, and concentrates intently. Experiencing pleasure in the here and now, enjoying the "flow," leads to sustained motivation (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). In this way, pleasure sustains itself, and people are motivated to continue to participate in the activity that is helping to put them in the state of flow. Csikszentmihalyi (1999) further stated that flow is "how youth feel when they are thoroughly involved in activities that are enjoyable or meaningful...separate from the routines of everyday life" (p. 825). Intrinsic motivation is the propensity to engage in one's interests and exercise one's capacities, and in doing so, seek out and master optimal challenges (Deci & Ryan, 1985). In addition, intrinsic motivation is the desire to engage in an activity because one finds it enjoyable or finds it interesting, not because of external rewards or pressures.

According to Larson (2000) who studied random sampling of self-reports on 16,000 moments in the daily experience of a representative sample of white, working- and middle class adolescents, the youth reported being bored for 27% (4,300) of those random moments. Larson (2000) wrote: "Many do their school work, comply with their parents, hang out with their friends, and get through the day, but are not invested in paths into the future that excite them or feel like they originate from within... They communicated an ennui of being trapped in the present, waiting for someone to prove to them that life is worth living" (p. 120). As Kelly (2004) stated, "Positive Psychology

promises to get adolescents' internal fires lit, to help them develop the complex skills and dispositions necessary to take charge of their lives, to become socially competent, compassionate and psychologically vigorous adults" (p. 258). Positive psychology holds the possibility to increase student's, faculty's, and staff's internal motivation and flow experiences.

Positive psychology is the study of human strength, resilience, and optimal human functioning. The goal of positive psychology is to assist people in becoming happier by understanding and building positive emotion, gratification and meaning. As discussed in the current study, researcher the related constructs of happiness, hope, optimism, well-being, resilience and flow are related to positive psychology and the field may benefit from further study of ways to acknowledge and increase these positive traits in individuals. Happiness is composed of many different things for many people; culturally, socially, and individually/biologically regulated. It is important to keep an open and expanding view of happiness taken from all cultural perspectives. A new era of positive thinking may be upon us, and ways to increase everyone's strengths is clearly a noble goal to provide for a flourishing society in the present and into the future.

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## Appendix A: Statement of Informed Consent

A1

## Statement of Informed Consent

The purpose of this research project is to examine whether faculty and staff participation in the "three good things in life" exercise leads to changes over time in feelings and attitudes. The "three good things in life" exercise consists of journaling each night for one week three things that went well that day and why they went well.

The project is being conducted for my master's thesis for the Department of Counselor Education at the State University of New York College at Brockport.

In order to participate in this study, your informed consent is required. You are being asked to make a decision whether to participate in the project. Completion of the questionnaires, scales, and surveys indicates your informed consent to participate in the project, and that you agree with the statements below. You may change your mind at anytime and leave the study without penalty, even after the study has begun.

I understand that:

1. My participation is voluntary and I have the right to refuse to answer any questions. This research is not part of the regular school program, the school is not conducting it, and participation will not affect your employment.
2. My confidentiality will be protected. My name will not be written on the surveys. If any publication results from this survey, I would not be identified by name.
3. There will be no anticipated personal risks because of my participation in this project. Possible benefits include increasing my happiness, hope, optimism, and subjective well-being.
4. My participation involves journaling each night for one week three things that went well that day and why they went well. I will not be asked to share these "three good things" with the researcher or anyone else. At three points in time: During the first session, one week later, and again after an additional week, I will be asked to answer scales and questionnaires that measure happiness, hope, optimism, and subjective well-being.
5. Approximately 20 faculty and staff will take part in this study. The results will be used for the completion of a class thesis in Implementation I and II at SUNY Brockport.
6. Data will be kept in secure locations. Data and consent forms will be destroyed at the end of the Spring 2006 semester.

I am 18 years of age or older. I have read and understand the above statements. All my questions about my participation in this study have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in the study realizing I may withdraw without penalty at anytime during the study. Completion of the questionnaires, scales, and surveys indicates your informed consent.

If you have any questions you may contact:

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## Appendix B: Revised Oxford Happiness Scale

B1

Revised Oxford Happiness Scale

Below, there are groups of statements about personal happiness. Please read all four statements in each group and then pick out the one statement in each group that best describes the way you have been feeling in the past week, including today. Circle the letter (a, b, c, or d) beside the statement that you have picked.

- 1
  - a I do not feel very happy
  - b I feel fairly happy
  - c I am very happy
  - d I am incredibly happy
  
- 2
  - a I am not particularly optimistic about the future
  - b I feel optimistic about the future
  - c I feel I have so much to look forward to
  - d I feel the future is overflowing with hope and promise
  
- 3
  - a I am not really satisfied with anything in my life
  - b I am satisfied with some things in my life
  - c I am satisfied with many things in my life
  - d I am completely satisfied with everything in my life
  
- 4
  - a I feel that I am not especially in control of my life
  - b I feel at least partially in control of my life
  - c I feel that I am in control most of the time
  - d I feel that I am in control of all aspects of my life
  
- 5
  - a I don't feel that life is particularly rewarding
  - b I feel that life is rewarding
  - c I feel that life is very rewarding
  - d I feel that life is overflowing with rewards
  
- 6
  - a I don't feel particularly pleased with the way I am
  - b I am pleased with the way I am
  - c I am very pleased with the way I am
  - d I am delighted with the way I am
  
- 7
  - a I never have a good influence on events
  - b I occasionally have a good influence on events
  - c I often have a good influence on events
  - d I always have a good influence on events
  
- 8
  - a I get by in life
  - b Life is good
  - c Life is very good
  - d I love life

9. a I am not really interested in other people  
b I am moderately interested in other people  
c I am very interested in other people  
d I am intensely interested in other people
10. a I do not find it easy to make decisions  
b I find it fairly easy to make decisions  
c I find it easy to make most decisions  
d I can make all decisions very easily
11. a I find it difficult to get started to do things  
b I find it moderately easy to start doing things  
c I find it easy to do things  
d I feel able to take anything on
12. a I rarely wake up feeling rested  
b I sometimes wake up feeling rested  
c I usually wake up feeling rested  
d I always wake up feeling rested
13. a I don't feel at all energetic  
b I feel fairly energetic  
c I feel very energetic  
d I feel I have boundless energy
14. a I don't think things have a particular 'sparkle'  
b I find beauty in some things  
c I find beauty in most things  
d The whole world looks beautiful to me
15. a I don't feel mentally alert  
b I feel quite mentally alert  
c I feel very mentally alert  
d I feel fully mentally alert
16. a I don't feel particularly healthy  
b I feel moderately healthy  
c I feel very healthy  
d I feel on top of the world
17. a I do not have particularly warm feelings towards others  
b I have some warm feelings towards others  
c I have very warm feelings towards others  
d I love everybody
18. a I do not have particularly happy memories of the past  
b I have some happy memories of the past  
c Most past events seem to have been happy  
d All past events seem to have been extremely happy

- 19 a I am never in a state of joy or elation  
b I sometimes experience joy and elation  
c I often experience joy and elation  
d I am constantly in a state of joy and elation
- 20 a There is a gap between what I would like to do and what I have done  
b I have done some of the things I wanted  
c I have done many of the things I wanted  
d I have done everything I ever wanted
- 21 a I can't organize my time very well  
b I organize my time fairly well  
c I organize my time very well  
d I can fit in everything I want to do
- 22 a I do not have fun with other people  
b I sometimes have fun with other people  
c I often have fun with other people  
d I always have fun with other people
- 23 a I do not have a cheerful effect on others  
b I sometimes have a cheerful effect on others  
c I often have a cheerful effect on others  
d I always have a cheerful effect on others
- 24 a I do not have any particular meaning or purpose in my life  
b I have a sense of meaning and purpose  
c I have a great sense of meaning and purpose  
d My life is totally meaningful and purposive
- 25 a I do not have particular feelings of commitment and involvement  
b I sometimes become committed and involved  
c I often become committed and involved  
d I am always committed and involved
- 26 a I do not think the world is a good place  
b I do think the world is a fairly good place  
c I do think the world is a very good place  
d I do think the world is an excellent place
- 27 a I rarely laugh  
b I laugh fairly often  
c I laugh a lot  
d I am always laughing
- 28 a I don't think I look attractive  
b I think I look fairly attractive  
c I think I look attractive  
d I think I look extremely attractive

- 29    a    I do not find things amusing  
      b    I find some things amusing  
      c    I find most things amusing  
      d    I am amused by everything
-

## Appendix C: Positive Affectivity and Negative Affectivity Scale (PANAS)

C1

Positive Affectivity and Negative Affectivity Scale (PANAS)

This scale consists of a number of words that describe different feelings and emotions. Read each item and then circle the appropriate answer. Indicate to what extent you feel this way right now (that is, at the present moment).

---

1 Interested	Very slightly or not at all	A little	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely
	1	2	3	4	5
2 Distressed	Very slightly or not at all	A little	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely
	1	2	3	4	5
3 Excited	Very slightly or not at all	A little	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely
	1	2	3	4	5
4 Upset	Very slightly or not at all	A little	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely
	1	2	3	4	5
5 Strong	Very slightly or not at all	A little	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely
	1	2	3	4	5
6 Guilty	Very slightly or not at all	A little	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely
	1	2	3	4	5
7 Scared	Very slightly or not at all	A little	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely
	1	2	3	4	5
8 Hostile	Very slightly or not at all	A little	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely
	1	2	3	4	5
9 Enthusiastic	Very slightly or not at all	A little	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely
	1	2	3	4	5
10 Proud	Very slightly or not at all	A little	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely

	1	2	3	4	5
11 Irritable	Very slightly or not at all	A little	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely
	1	2	3	4	5
12 Alert	Very slightly or not at all	A little	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely
	1	2	3	4	5
13 Ashamed	Very slightly or not at all	A little	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely
	1	2	3	4	5
14 Inspired	Very slightly or not at all	A little	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely
	1	2	3	4	5
15 Nervous	Very slightly or not at all	A little	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely
	1	2	3	4	5
16 Determined	Very slightly or not at all	A little	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely
	1	2	3	4	5
17 Attentive	Very slightly or not at all	A little	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely
	1	2	3	4	5
18 Jittery	Very slightly or not at all	A little	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely
	1	2	3	4	5
19 Active	Very slightly or not at all	A little	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely
	1	2	3	4	5
20 Afraid	Very slightly or not at all	A little	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely
	1	2	3	4	5

---

## Appendix D: Satisfaction with Life Scale

D1

Satisfaction with Life Scale

Below are five statements you may agree or disagree with. Using the 7-point scale below indicate your agreement with each item by circling the answer that applies to you. Please be open and honest in your responding.

---

1 In most ways my life is close to my ideal

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2 The conditions of my life are excellent

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3 I am satisfied with my life

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4 So far I have got the important things I want in life

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5 If I could live my life over I would change almost nothing

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
----------------------	----------	----------------------	-------------------------------	-------------------	-------	-------------------

1

2

3

4

5

6

7



## Appendix E: Life Orientation Test - Revised

E1

Life Orientation Test - Revised

Please circle the answer that applies to you to show how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements

---

1 In uncertain times I usually expect the best

Strongly agree    Agree    Unsure    Disagree    Strongly disagree

2 If something can go wrong for me it will

Strongly agree    Agree    Unsure    Disagree    Strongly disagree

3 I'm always optimistic about my future

Strongly agree    Agree    Unsure    Disagree    Strongly disagree

4 I hardly ever expect things to go my way

Strongly agree    Agree    Unsure    Disagree    Strongly disagree

5 I rarely count on good things happening to me

Strongly agree    Agree    Unsure    Disagree    Strongly disagree

6 Overall I expect more good things to happen to me than bad

Strongly agree    Agree    Unsure    Disagree    Strongly disagree

