The Role of Positive Emotion

- Positive emotions are frequently paired with happy circumstances
- Which comes first??????
What is Positive Psychology?

- Brainstorm
Definition

- **It is the** study of HAPPINESS!
- **Psychology** traditionally focused on dysfunction and how to treat it
- **Positive Psychology**, in contrast, examines how ordinary people can become happier & more fulfilled
How Did it Start?

-The modern Positive Psychology movement began with Martin Seligman, during his APA Presidential speech in 1998

“Building Human Strength: Psychology’s Forgotten Mission”

-Seligman is known as the father of Positive Psychology
Its Main Pillars: *Dimensions of Happiness*

Seligman concludes happiness has 3 dimensions that can be cultivated:

- The Pleasant Life
- The Good Life
- The Meaningful Life
1- The Pleasant Life

Appreciating BASIC pleasures:

- Companionship
- The Natural Environment
- Our Bodily Needs
The Pleasant Life: 
Past, Present, & Future

- He provides a mental “toolkit” to achieve what he calls the pleasant life:
  1- Think constructively about the past
  2- Gain optimism & hope for the future
  3- Gain greater happiness in the present

So....

- Deal with the PAST and its negative emotions (gratitude & forgiveness)
- Be optimistic about the FUTURE (build hope & optimism)
- Be happy in the PRESENT (the here & now-break habituation, savor experiences and use mindfulness to increase happiness)
The Good Life

Achieved through:

- Discovering our unique virtues & strengths
- Employing them creatively to enhance our lives

Life is only genuinely satisfying if we discover value within ourselves
Strengths & Virtues

Function against misfortune & disorders & may be the key to building resilience

Virtues
6 particular virtues that were valued in almost every culture, valued in their own right (not just as a means to another end) and are attainable.

- wisdom & knowledge
- courage
- love & humanity
- justice
- temperance
- spirituality & transcendence

Strengths
- Strengths are the “route” through we achieve virtues in our life.
- Moral traits that can be developed, learned, and that take effort.

- Seligman sees development of strengths and virtues as a key to the good life where one uses them to bring more “gratification and authentic happiness.”
- The good life is a place of happiness, good relationships and work
The Meaningful Life

- The final stage
- Gives a deep sense of fulfillment
- Is attained by employing our unique strengths for a purpose greater than ourselves.
Meaning & Flow

- There are no shortcuts to happiness
- The Pleasant life might bring more positive emotion to one’s life
- The meaningful life fosters deeper & more enduring happiness
- Without the application of our strengths towards an end bigger than ourselves, our potential stays in the mundane, inauthentic, empty pursuit of pleasure
- Seligman expands on the work of his colleague, Csikszentmihalyi, in the area of “flow” to explain what he means by the meaningful life.
FLOW!

- Investing oneself into creative work creates a greater sense of meaning in life and accordingly, a greater sense of happiness.
- Altruism
- The loss of self-consciousness with acts of altruism and kindness.

Example: (gifted martial artist who experiences great pleasure in perfecting her skills in karate and winning prizes in tournaments discovers that one autistic child she teaches shows signs of enormous improvement. This makes her feels so good that she opens a class for children with special needs. Seeing these children overcome their challenges gives her still greater happiness. Finally, she becomes so absorbed in the happiness of these children ).This situation enables her to enrich the lives of others while engaging her own strengths and virtues)
Individualistic & Collective

- Theory reconciles 2 conflicting views of human happiness
  1- The Individualistic approach (take care of yourself, nurture own strengths)
  2- The Altruistic approach (downplays individuality & emphasizes sacrifice for the greater purpose).
The pleasant life: a life that pursues the positive emotions about the present, past, and future

The good life: using strengths to obtain gratification (through activities we like doing)

The meaningful life: using strengths and virtues in the service of something much larger than we are
Suggested Activities:

- My Flow Moments
- I’m Grateful for
- Bed-time Blessings
- Grateful journal
- My Strengths & Skills Inventory
- My Life Line
- My Life Story
- Best Possible You
- Meet Me in the Future
- Self compassion Meter
Thank You!
Activity: Life Story

- Life Story
  The Past, Present, and Future
  - Writing a story about your life can help you find meaning and value in your experiences. Those who develop stories about their life tend to experience a greater sense of meaning, which can contribute to happiness.
The Past:
Write the story of your past. Describe challenges you’ve overcome, and the personal strengths that allowed you to do so.

The Present:
-Describe your life and who you are now. How do you differ from your past self? What are your strengths now? What challenges are you facing?

The Future:
-Write about your ideal future. How will your life be different than it is now? How will you be different than you are now?