



2017-2018 Mentor Academy Series



Using Positive Psychology to Create Your Own Destiny

April 17, 2018



Thank you to

GOODcents[®]
deli *fresh* subs

for providing lunch!





Dr. Michael Scheel
Professor
Department of Educational Psychology



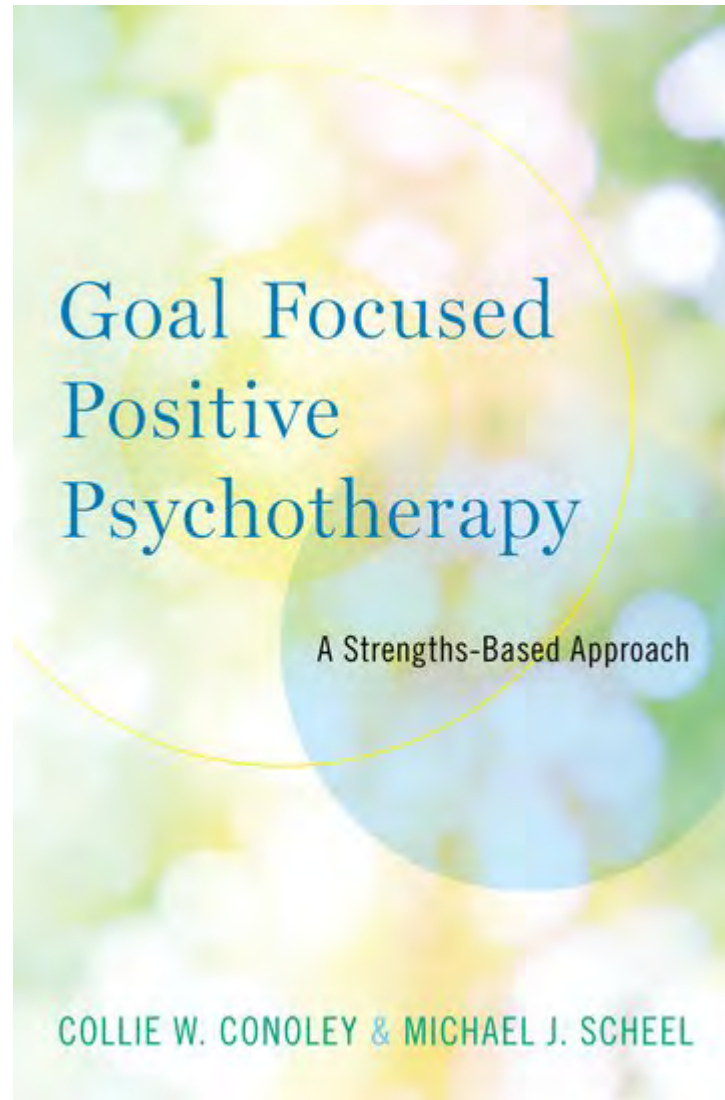


FEELING GOOD! WHAT REALLY MAKES PEOPLE HAPPY

MICHAEL J. SCHEEL, PHD, ABPP
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN
COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY
DIRECTOR OF THE BUILDING BRIDGES DROPOUT PREVENTION PROGRAM

“**Positive psychology** is the study of the conditions and processes that contribute to the **flourishing** or **optimal functioning** of **people, groups, and institutions**” (Gable & Haidt, 2005, p.104).

Conoley, C. W., & Scheel, M. J. (2018). *Goal Focused Positive Psychotherapy: A Strengths-Based Approach*. New York: Oxford University Press.



OUR GOAL COULD/SHOULD BE HAPPINESS

- Wellbeing – Life satisfaction; experiencing more positive emotion; experiencing less negative emotion
- Is our life pursuit to be happy or not to be sad?
- To seek meaning and fulfillment or to ward off problems and distress?



DO WE TAKE CARE OF OUR YOUTH IN THE U.S.?

- The World Health Organization studied the status of wellbeing in youth in "developed countries."
- Of 23 economically advanced countries, the U.S. ranked second to last in the wellbeing of our children (UNICEF, 2007), and yet wellbeing was found to mediate (explain) the relationship between childhood poverty/distress and school achievement.



TWO BIG IDEAS

- Positive Psychology can form the basis of a comprehensive approach to optimize human functioning while diminishing the effects of psychological distress
- Psychotherapy's historic attachment to the physical science metaphor needs to be changed to the psychological metaphor



PHYSICAL SCIENCE METAPHOR

- Fixing a problem is the goal.
- A problem cannot be fixed that is unknown – diagnosis is key.
- When problems are fixed, the physical machine operates again



A PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCE METAPHOR

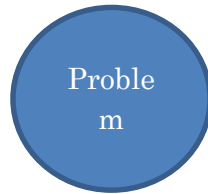
- People flourish under known conditions
 - Involved in meaningful activity
 - Involved in supportive, caring relationships
 - Believing in their efficacy
 - Somewhat focused on goals
 - Experiencing positive affect frequently

Counseling, mentoring, or any kind of helping activity should be the process of helping people attain these conditions, thereby using psychological means to address individual problems.



HOW DOES INCREASED WELLBEING HELP?

So if a problem is this size.



And your wellbeing or
personal resources
are this size

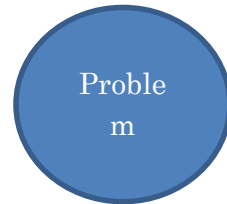


Then your ability to deal with the problem is
more challenging than if...



HOW DOES INCREASED WELLBEING HELP?

So if a problem is this size.



And your wellbeing or
personal resources
are this size



Then your ability to deal with the problem is
less intimidating and your resources are much
larger!



HOW DO I KNOW IF I'M HAPPY?

- Happy people have negative moods and positive moods.
- The positive moods occur much more often than the negative ones.
- Happy people believe that their life is meaningful and experience more frequent positive feelings.
(Thinking and feeling) ★



WHY IS HAPPINESS A HELPFUL GOAL? ISN'T IT SIMPLY SELF INDULGENT OR SELFISH?

- Happiness is found best via instant gratification through risky behaviors (partying, drinking, and sex)
- Or through consumerism, buying objects that can enhance instant gratification, like a sports car



WHY IS HAPPINESS A HELPFUL GOAL? ISN'T IT SIMPLY SELF INDULGENT OR SELFISH?

- Happiness is found best via instant gratification through risky behaviors (partying, drinking, and sex)
- Or through consumerism, buying objects that can enhance instant gratification, like a sports car



WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT HAPPINESS?

- Success leads to Happiness AND Happiness leads to Success
- Increasing Happiness requires Sustained Effort
- Much easier to be anxious or angry!



SELLING YOU HAPPINESS!

Good Things about Happier People -

- Live longer and healthier lives
- Viewed as more reliable and productive
- Better social relationships, more attractive, sought after as friends and more likely to receive assistance
- Better coping ability, prevent drug abuse and problem drinking
- Decreased stress, accidents, and suicide rates

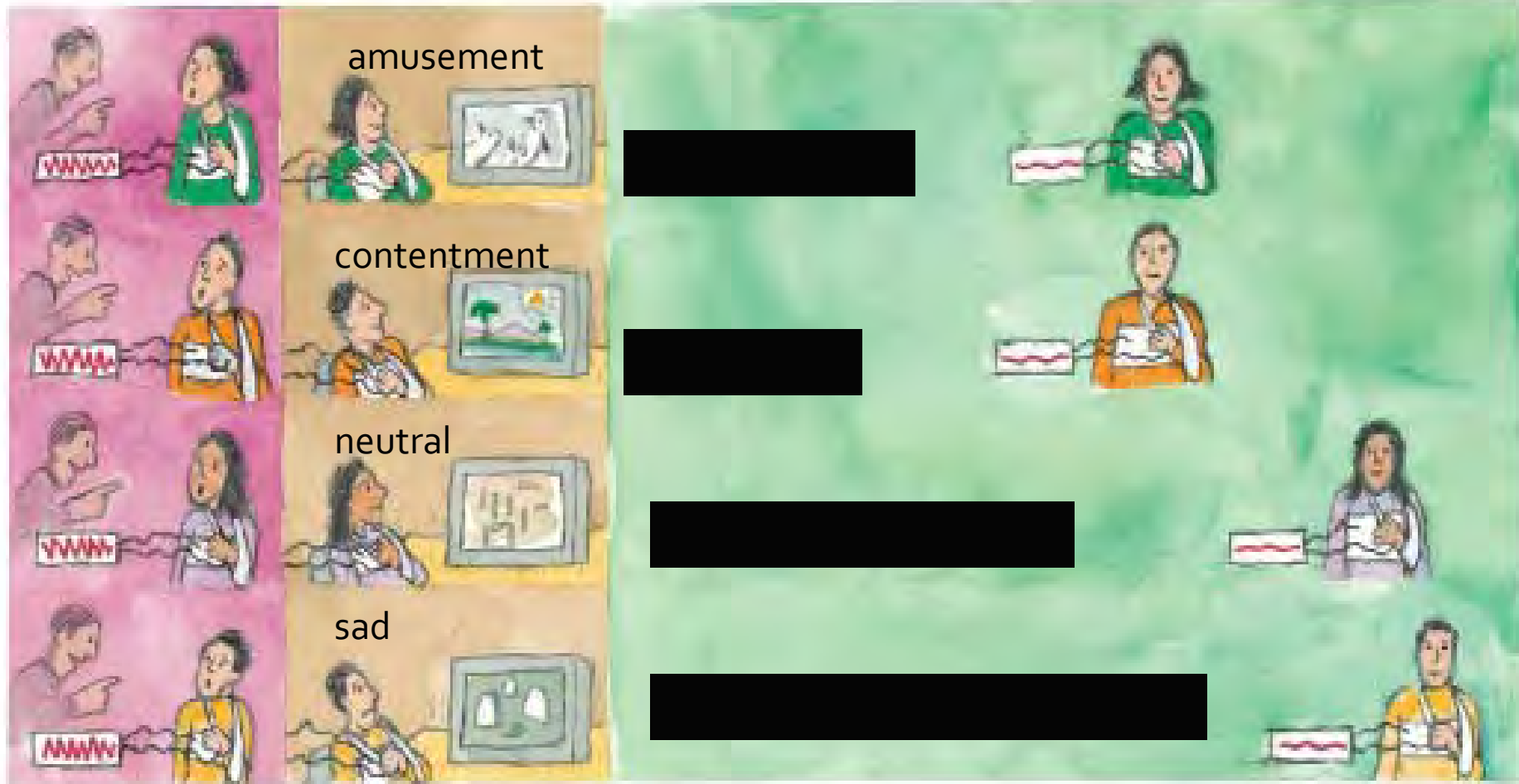


Negative Emotions... Bad for your Health!

Anxiety Provoking
Situation

Short film

Results



20

40



How do you get rid of an Angry Feeling?

Do you punch a hitting bag?

Write an angry letter?

Yell at someone?

Kick the dog?

How do you get rid of a Happy Feeling?

Do something enjoyable?

Count your blessings?

Share you happiness with a friend?

Pet your dog?



TOP SECRET: BROADEN AND BUILD THEORY!

- Positive Feelings lead us to be more energetic, curious, creative and out-going;
- Leading us to build our knowledge, skills and relationships;
- Leading us to be more energetic, curious...
- Into a marvelous escalation



GETTING THE POSITIVE ENGINE STARTED! HELPFUL POSITIVE FEELINGS!

Do things that facilitate

- Relaxed calm feelings
- Positive view of our-self and others (Mindfulness)
- Plan for the worst and expect the best
- Laugh out loud
- Virtuous activities (especially gratefulness)



MINDFULNESS

Don't Let Yesterday Use Up Too Much of Today.

– Cherokee Proverb

Be Present, be Mindful

When for you?

Benefits:

- Acceptance
- Decreased Rumination
- Increased Mental Efficiency
- Greater Awareness



FEELINGS AND MEANING

What are ways to think about meaningful happiness or wellbeing?



MAJOR LIFE AREAS ENHANCING HAPPINESS

- Gallup polled 150 countries which they estimate represents 98% of the world population
- Generated Five categories of wellbeing for most people

- “Well Being the 5 Essential Elements” by Tom Rath and Jim Harter 2010, Gallup Press, NY, NY



FIVE ELEMENTS FOR WELLBEING

- **Career** – what you do with your life every day, how you occupy your time
- **Social** – relationships; friendship and love
- **Financial** – managing economic life
- **Physical** – health, energy, getting things done
- **Community** – sense of engagement and where you live



HAPPIEST PEOPLE ARE FUNCTIONING WELL IN ALL 5 AREAS

- 66% are doing well in one area;
- Only 7% are doing well in all areas, **THRIVING!**
- For most of us the improvement of all 5 areas is within our control!



BIGGEST THREAT TO WELLBEING!

Short term decisions over-riding long term goals

- Missing exercise one time won't have long term negative effects;
- One potato chip or fry;
- Skipping a social occasion for watching TV;
- Mentally kicking ourselves rather than supporting;



WHAT YOU DO WITH YOUR LIFE EVERY DAY, HOW YOU OCCUPY YOUR TIME (CAREER)

- Do you like what you do each day? (20% say yes)
- Something to look forward to everyday?

Why?

- Happiness is higher & stress is lower
- Lower depression;
- Lower harmful cholesterol

Summary!

- Physical and emotional health follow the enjoyment of daily work;



RX FOR CAREER WELLBEING

- Every day, use your strengths
- Find your character strength:
www.AuthenticHappiness.org
- [VIA Survey of Character Strengths](#)
Measures 24 Character Strengths



RX FOR CAREER WELLBEING

- Identify someone with a shared mission, who supports your growth, spend more time with him/her. (**Capitalization!**)
- Spend more time around people you enjoy during the day.



SOCIAL WELLBEING

- Social connections are very important!
- Emotions are contagious;
- The more important the person is to us socially/emotionally, the more contagious



SOCIAL CONTAGION

- IF you have one friend that you spend direct and frequent time with who is THRIVING it will increase your wellbeing/happiness by 15%
- Even if your friend's friend is THRIVING then through your friend you increase by 10%.
- Friend's friend's friend will increase you 6%.
- A \$10,000 raise in annual pay is associated with a 2% increase in well-being

(Christakis & Fowler, 2014)



RELATIONSHIPS!

- Few social ties are related to people being twice as likely to have heart disease and catch colds
- Couples with hostility in relationships took twice as long to heal from a wound (medically inflicted wounds) as those not reporting hostility in a relationship



SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP RECOMMENDATIONS

- Spend time each day socializing with peers, family, friends
 - Via work, phone, home, email
- Strengthen connections in your social network
- Mix social time with physical activity



FINANCIAL WELLBEING

- Generally, having money is good for wellbeing;
- How Much Money?
Enough money for not worrying
- Arrange life not to stress about income vs debt



ENHANCING WELLBEING VIA FINANCES

- Spending on others is better than self
- Beware Retail Therapy - spending money to cheer ourselves up.
 - Items lose their novelty quickly
- Spend on experiences (cruises, movies, or going out to dinner); Memories!



ENHANCING WELLBEING VIA FINANCES

- Wealth accumulation is the wrong goal;
- Reducing stress associated with money is important; (e.g., stock market, paying off house mortgage)
- Establish default systems to save money and for bill payment; (active decision is more difficult and stressful)



PHYSICAL WELLBEING

- Average energy - balance of good and bad food with moderate amount of exercise and sleep
- Optimal energy & wellbeing - substantially more good food and drink than bad coupled with vigorous exercise and good night's sleep



PHYSICAL WELLBEING IMPORTANT?

- Genetic expression of problems can be suppressed by diet;
 - one serving of broccoli per week reduces the chances of prostate cancer;
 - one or more servings of fatty fish[salmon] can reduce risk of kidney cancer 74% in women



SLEEP, THE LEAST APPRECIATED CONTRIBUTOR TO WELLBEING

- Enhances mood, reduces stress of the day
- Enhances memory, concentration, energy, better reasoning, patience
- During Sleep we consolidate memory and think creatively
- Reduces risk of diabetes, obesity



COMMUNITY WELLBEING

Choice of Place

- Live in a safe place.
- Choose a place that fits you; Slow, small, active, nightlife, parks,

Involvement

- Be socially involved in the community. (Volunteer organizations, clean up, docent, coach, sing for retirement homes)
- Give blood, time, money to others (Joy from meaningful gifts)



HAPPINESS / WELLBEING MADE EASIER

Organ donations show that countries that require

- Opting in for organ donation average from 1% to 27% volunteers;
- Opting out consistently achieves 99% volunteering.

How?

- Exercise with a group at a regular time.
- Tutoring or becoming a **Teammate**
- Board member of community organization
- Regular dinner out with a friend



POSITIVE FEELINGS DAILY HABITS

1. Notice and repeat to yourself anything positive that occurs during the day. (Smiles, compliments, enjoyable sights, tastes, conversations, ideas, memories)
2. Notice and let go disturbing memories that repeat in your mind. (Mindfulness: Thinking about this does not make me feel better. Let it go.)
3. Predict that you will enjoy and do well in the next task or encounter. (Hope & Optimism!)



DAILY HABITS

4. Give compliments to others; Try to guess who will say good morning when you say it; Say please and thank you... (What virtue is associated with complimenting and greeting others?)
5. At the end of the day remind yourself of three positive things that happened. Share your memories with someone... Ask the person what were his/her 3 good things that happened today.
6. At least once a week call someone you care about and tell them something good that happened to you and ask them about something that happened to him/her.



DAILY HABITS

7. When people tell you good things, ask follow-up questions, celebrate verbally with them.
8. Remind yourself of what it is that is enjoyable about school, your job, your hobbies, your friends, **YOURSELF!**
9. Have rituals with people you care about. Rituals are routines that have values embedded (birthdays, anniversaries, religious holidays, secular holidays, reunions, weddings, funerals, Sabbath meals, Sunday dinners)
10. IDEAS???



??? QUESTIONS ???



The Counseling and School Psychology
Clinic, University of Nebraska-Lincoln,
402-472-1152



THANK YOU!





Fall Kickoff
August, 2018
Watch Your Emails!!