AUTHENTIC HAPPINESS
The theory and practice of wellbeing
GETTING TO KNOW YOU

• Your name, where from?
• One thing that makes you happy
LEARNING OUTCOMES

• Learn about the 3 forms of Authentic Happiness
• Explore how to grow Authentic Happiness
• Plan how to increase each dimension of your wellbeing
WHAT IS IT?

And what are the practices that grow it?

**AUTHENTIC HAPPINESS**

*Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize Your Potential for Lasting Fulfillment*

Martin E. P. Seligman, Ph.D

Author of the national bestseller *LEARNED OPTIMISM*
WHAT IS POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY?

Scientific study of optimal human functioning... to discover and promote the factors that allow individuals and communities to thrive.

Feeling good + Functioning well = Flourishing

Prof. Martin Seligman
Learned Optimism
Authentic Happiness
Flourish

Prof. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi
Flow: The Psychology of Happiness
THE THREE PILLARS OF POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

| Positive emotions (Positivity) | Positive Traits (Strengths) | Positive Institutions (Organisations) |
THE HEALTH - DISEASE CONTINUUM

Disease Model
Focus on weaknesses
Overcoming weaknesses
Avoiding pain
Escaping unhappiness

Neutral
“What you focus on grows”

Health Model
Focus on strengths
Building strengths
Finding enjoyment
Approaching happiness

anxiety, depression

well-being, joy satisfaction,

-10

0

+10

CABA with you for life

PROVIDING LIFELONG SUPPORT TO PAST AND PRESENT ICAEW MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES
AUTHENTIC HAPPINESS IS...

Pleasure

The ‘Pleasant Life’ - the ‘feel-good factor’ of enjoyment, bliss, serenity warmth, comfort etc

Engagement

‘The Engaged Life’ - strengths, flow

Meaning

The ‘Meaningful Life’ – in service to something bigger than the self

Seligman, 2002
PERMA MODEL OF WELLBEING

Seligman, 2011
WHERE DOES HAPPINESS COME FROM?

\[ H = S + C + V \]

- Our Parents - 50%
- Our Circumstances - 10%
- Our Activities and Outlook - 40%

Lyubomirsky, 2007
TWO DIMENSIONS

You may recognise as ‘ηδονή’ and ‘ευδαιμονία’!

**Hedonic wellbeing**
- Pleasure
- Feeling good
- Positive emotions
- Maximising enjoyment
- Subjective well-being
- SWB = SWL + (PA – NA)
- Peak moments of happiness

**Eudaimononic wellbeing**
- Achievement
- Functioning well
- Meaning – serving a purpose beyond the self
- Engagement – playing to strengths
- Effort into meaning = fulfilment
- Deeper happiness
WHICH BOX ARE YOU IN?

Life of Pleasure

Hedonia (Feel Good)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Sweet Life</th>
<th>The Fulfilled Life</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Empty Life</td>
<td>The Dry Life</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Life of Achievement
WHY IS IT GOOD TO BE HAPPY?

- Happy people live longer
- Are more optimistic
- Earn 30% more income
- Enjoy higher ratings at work
- Enhanced creativity
- Task persistence, multi-tasking, being systematic
- Less vulnerable to illness – stronger immune system
- More popularity - sociable, trusting, helpful
- Less hostility and self-centeredness
- Virtuous relationship. Success leads to happiness and happiness leads to success
BEWARE THE BARRIERS TO HAPPINESS
THE NEGATIVITY BIAS

Well-written, funny, informative, uplifting, but ran a bit long.
THE D-U-R-A-T-I-O-N EFFECT...

Negative emotions last L-O-N-G-E-R

Positive emotions are fleeting
SOCIAL COMPARISONS

Would you prefer to take a €50,000 job where everyone else is paid €30,000?  
(Downward social comparison)

OR

A €60,000 job where everyone else is paid €80,000?  
(Upward social comparison)
THE HEDONIC TREADMILL

Taken for Granted…

“The same old pleasures simply fail to work after a time and the only recourse is to up the dose or switch to a new one…”
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Seligman, 2002
YOUR LAST POSITIVE EMOTION?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>Joy</td>
<td>Excitement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contentment</td>
<td>Calm</td>
<td>Optimism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulfillment</td>
<td>Pleasure</td>
<td>Hope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pride</td>
<td>Zest</td>
<td>Faith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serenity</td>
<td>Bliss</td>
<td>Trust</td>
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<td>Gratitude</td>
<td>Ecstasy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Curiosity</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inspiration</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Elation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Love</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What was your last positive emotion? What led to it? What happened next?
EMOTIONS ACT AS SIGNALS

Negative Emotions
- Stop!
- Long
- Heavy

NEGATIVITY Bias

Positive Emotions
- Go Ahead!
- Short
- Light

PROVIDING LIFELONG SUPPORT TO PAST AND PRESENT ICAEW MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

CABA with you for life
NEGATIVE EMOTIONS HELP YOU SURVIVE

Serve an evolutionary purpose - narrow thought action repertoires - prepare for fight or flight.
The Broaden and Build Theory of positive emotions

- **Broaden** thought-action repertoires – help you to think more flexibly, creatively and productively
- **Build** resources that you can draw on later – Psychological, intellectual, social, physical
- **Build** resilience - Undo the effects of negativity. Your ‘inner reset button’ eg. how laughter provides light relief from difficulty

POSITIVE EMOTIONS HELP YOU THRIVE
POSITIVE EMOTIONS BUILD RESOURCES

**intellectual resources**
- develop problem-solving skills
- learn new information

**physical resources**
- develop coordination
- develop strength and cardiovascular health

**social resources**
- solidify bonds
- make new bonds

**psychological resources**
- develop resilience and optimism
- develop sense of identity and goal orientation

Positive Emotions
A POSITIVITY TOOLKIT

• Be open and find positive meaning
• Create high-quality connections
• Cultivate kindness
• Develop distractions from negativity
• Find nearby nature (green exercise)
• Learn and apply your strengths
• Meditate mindfully
• Meditate on loving-kindness
• Ritualise gratitude
• Savour positivity
• Visualise your future (Best Possible Self)

Barbara Fredrickson, 2009
THREE GOOD THINGS – AKA COUNTING YOUR BLESSINGS

• What is good in your life?
• What are you grateful for?
• What went well? + your role
GRATITUDE: ‘THANK YOU THERAPY’

“A felt sense of wonder, thankfulness and appreciation for life.”

- **What for:** To notice what’s good in life, focus on what’s right rather than what’s wrong. Overcome negativity bias.
- **Expressing gratitude is a** “meta-strategy for achieving happiness” (Lyubomirsky, 2007). Gratitude associated with increased life satisfaction, happiness, positive emotions, optimism, hope, enthusiasm, energy, spirituality, forgiveness. And decreased depression, anxiety, loneliness, envy, neuroticism and materialism (Emmons, 2007).
- **How to:** 3 Good Things, apps, jar. Gratitude journal/humour diary. Expressing gratitude through a letter/visit.
SAVOURING

“The aim of life is appreciation” - G.K. Chesterton (1936)

Savouring is “the capacity to attend, to appreciate and enhance the positive experiences in one’s life.”

Bryant & Veroff, 2007

What for: To maximise enjoyment of a positive experience and overcome the negativity bias.
SAVOURING IS A PROCESS

Something we have to do; not just something that happens

Requires active engagement

Savour the past positive reminiscence

Savour the present the here & now

Savour the future building excitement

Basking, Marvelling, Relishing, Luxuriating, Cherishing
SAVOURING TIPS

- Slow down
- Focus your full attention on what you’re savouring.
- Look for the positive in whatever you’re savouring. What is good about this? What do I appreciate? What do I value?
- Use your senses – sight, smell, sound, touch, taste…
- S-t-r-e-t-c-h out the experience
- Reflect on the source of enjoyment
HUNT THE GOOD STUFF!

• Take a savouring walk around the venue. What is there to savour? Ask yourself what can I appreciate here? What do I value? 1 minute for each sense.
• Find a comfortable seat. Initially using only your sense of SIGHT, what do you notice around you? Colours? People? Architecture?
• Close your eyes and use only your HEARING. What do you notice?
• Next using only your sense of SMELL, what do you notice? Cooking, flowers, perfume…
• Next walk around and use your sense of TOUCH - what do you notice? The texture of something – rough or smooth?
• If you find something safe to TASTE – go ahead!
• Return and discuss your experience at the table. What did you appreciate or value? What difference did the senses make?
SAVOURING TIME TRAVEL

- Savour the past – positive reminiscence of a favourite memory.
- Savour the present – be in the moment.
- Savour the future – relish the anticipation of something exciting coming up.

Think of one of the best times in your life - a peak memory and/or something you’re looking forward to.

Then savour one of your choices in pairs. Partner acts as coach – ‘what’s good about it?’
BREAK TIME
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Seligman, 2002
“IN THE ZONE” WHAT PUTS YOU INTO FLOW?
GETTING INTO FLOW

- Complete absorption in activity
- Time stops. Lose track of time
- Lack of self-consciousness
- Clear goals
- Immediate feedback
- Sense of self vanishes. At one with what you’re doing
- Feel in control / no concern about failing
- Intrinsically rewarding – do for its own sake
- Absence of emotion in the moment. Feel good after.
HAPPINESS AS FLOW – CHALLENGE V SKILL

- Too much challenge relative to skill = anxiety
- Too much skill relative to challenge = boredom
- Balance of challenge and skill = flow

The flow channel is where challenge/demands are at or just above current level of skill.
POSITIVE TRAITS – YOUR STRENGTHS

• **Personal/Signature/Character strengths** - Positive qualities like perseverance, courage or kindness

• **Performance strengths** - Your abilities, talents, gifts e.g. problem-solving, number-crunching, public speaking
HALLMARKS OF SIGNATURE STRENGTHS

• A sense of authenticity – “this is the real me”
• Joy, excitement, enthusiasm, animated when using it
• Rapid learning curve when the strength is first practised
• Energised and invigorated by using it
• Pursuing projects that involve using it
• Yearning to find new ways of using it
WHY PLAY TO YOUR STRENGTHS?

- Performance
- Wellbeing
- Resilience
- Energy and vitality
- Confidence
- Insight and perspective
- Protection against dysfunction and disorder
- Optimism protects against depression
- Courage, faith, hope, future-mindedness, perseverance are all protective strengths
- Fulfilment
- Engagement at work
- Sense of direction
- To resolve issues and reach goals
THE STRENGTHS APPROACH IN A NUTSHELL

Identify your strengths

and

Use them!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wisdom and Knowledge</th>
<th>Courage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*Curiosity (interest)</td>
<td>Bravery (valour)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Love of learning</td>
<td>Perseverance (persistence)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Judgement (critical thinking)</td>
<td>Honesty (integrity, authenticity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Creativity (originality, ingenuity)</td>
<td>Vitality (zest, enthusiasm, energy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspective (wisdom)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Humanity</th>
<th>Transcendence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Love</td>
<td>Appreciation of beauty and excellence (awe, wonder)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Kindness (generosity, compassion)</td>
<td>Hope (optimism, future-mindedness)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social intelligence (emotional intelligence)</td>
<td>Humour (playfulness)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spirituality (purpose, faith)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Justice</th>
<th>Temperance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork (loyalty, social esponsibility)</td>
<td>Forgiveness and mercy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Fairness Leadership</td>
<td>Humility and modesty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prudence (caution)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-regulation (self-control)</td>
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</table>
SPEED-DATING FOR STRENGTHS

• A fresh way of getting to know people!
• Short meet-ups to explore each other’s VIA strengths
• Be curious – find out what strengths you have in common, what’s different?
• How do those strengths show up in real life?
YOUR STRENGTHS AS A TOOLKIT

Use your strengths to help you resolve problems and reach goals. Working in pairs…

1. Problem-solving. Think of a small issue at work/home. Take each of your top 5 VIA strengths in turn and think of how you could apply it to help resolve the issue. ‘How might your strength in (courage) help you solve the problem of…?’

2. Choose one of your goals. Now apply each of your top 5 VIA strengths in turn to see how it may help achieve the goal. ‘How might your strength in (perseverance) help you achieve the goal of…?’
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Seligman, 2002
WHAT GIVES LIFE MEANING?

- Family – relationships with loved ones (e.g. raising children)
- A sense of purpose, working towards a goal.
- Achievement (e.g. aiming for a particular role)
- Contributing to something bigger and beyond the self.
- Contribution to society (e.g. volunteering)
- Having a mission or vocation
- Personal development (e.g. learning a new skill)
- Expressing your creativity (e.g. innovation, artistry)
- Spirituality/philosophy (e.g. why am I here?)
- Adventure (e.g. travelling)
- Legacy (e.g. making a difference in the world).
MEANING & PURPOSE

• Meaning provides a theoretical context to our motivation, an understanding of the *why* in life.
• Purpose traces the corresponding action, the *how* in life.

A sense of meaning performs two main functions in life. It provides a *bedrock foundation* which helps us be more resilient and bounce back from adversity. It gives us a sense of direction, enabling us to set *goals and targets* to aim for and dedicate our efforts.

Kashdan & McKnight 2009; Ivtzan, Lomas, Hefferon & Worth 2016
HOW MEANING LEADS TO PURPOSE

1. **Finding** meaning - readily connecting an event to pre-existing beliefs
   - More likely in response to a positive event
   - Feel that *things are as they were meant to be* eg. *becoming a parent*

2. **Making** meaning - engaging in a constructive process to come to a sense of meaning
   - More likely in response to a negative event
   - ‘Why did this happen to me?’ or ‘What does this mean?’
DISCOVERING YOUR PURPOSE THROUGH STRENGTHS

• List your top 5 VIA strengths
• List up to 5 other strengths, talents, gifts.
• Name up to 3 things that make you angry in modern society or causes you’re passionate about.
WHAT NEXT? NAME ONE ACTION YOU CAN TAKE IN EACH AREA OF AUTHENTIC HAPPINESS…

One action to take forward:
Positive Emotions:
Gratitude & Savouring

One action to take forward:
Meaning & Purpose

One action to take forward:
Flow & Strengths

Seligman, 2002