Positive Psychotherapy: a New Treatment Model

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Contact me: DrJ@enjoylifebook.com
My new book *Enjoy Life! Healing with Happiness*

http://enjoylifebook.com

Look who is talking about it:

“The perfect book for those struggling with the fears and anxieties of life that often overcome us. Learn how to reconnect to the childlike optimism of the past and create a life you never thought possible.”

– **Stephen R. Covey**, author, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People and The 8th Habit: From Effectiveness to Greatness.*

www.stephencovey.com
PP Vs. Therapeutic Psychology

• Clinical psych: correcting what is wrong.
  – For anxiety, do X, for depression, do Y . . .

• PP: More of what is right.
  – Substituting symptom correction for prescriptions about the good life.
Increasing Risk of Depression

• Each generation since 1900 has seen a higher incidence of depression*.  
  – 1/25 ca. 1900; 1/5 or greater ca. 2000.
• Seen in all industrialized countries
  – Definitely not due to measurement artifact**.
• Reason is unknown:
  – Possibly change in social values?
  – Change in diet: depression as an inflammatory disease?
  – Unknown stressors?


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The Benefits of Frequent Positive Affect: Does Happiness Lead to Success?
Psychological Bulletin November 2005 Vol. 131, No. 6, 803-855
What’s Good About Positive Emotions?

“We should work to cultivate positive emotions in ourselves and in those around us not just as end states in themselves, but also as a means to achieving psychological growth and improved psychological and physical health over time... I call this the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions because positive emotions appear to broaden people’s momentary thought-action repertoires and build their enduring personal resources... Through experiences of positive emotions people transform themselves, becoming more creative, knowledgeable, resilient, socially integrated, and healthy individuals.”

Fredrickson’s argument:

• Negative emotions are behaviorally predictive:
  – Anger: fight, hurt, defeat, kill.
  – Fear: run, avoid, prevent harm.
  – Despair: freeze, play dead, survive by passivity.

• Positive emotions are not predictive:
  – Interest and Curiosity?
  – Joy?
  – Contentment?
Principle:

• Negative emotions (fear, anger, despair) are for SURVIVAL

• Positive emotions (curiosity, delight, interest, joy, etc) are for GROWTH
ED DIENER’S SUBJECTIVE WELL BEING SCALE:
On the next slide are five statements that you may agree or disagree with. Using the 1 - 7 scale below indicate your agreement with each item by placing the appropriate number on the line preceding that item. Please be open and honest in your responding.

* 7 - Strongly agree
* 6 - Agree
* 5 - Slightly agree
* 4 - Neither agree nor disagree
* 3 - Slightly disagree
* 2 - Disagree
* 1 - Strongly disagree

In most ways my life is close to my ideal.
The conditions of my life are excellent.
I am satisfied with my life.
So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.
If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.

- 31 - 35 Extremely satisfied
- 26 - 30 Satisfied (most common response range)
- 21 - 25 Slightly satisfied
- 20 Neutral
- 15 - 19 Slightly dissatisfied
- 10 - 14 Dissatisfied
- 5 - 9 Extremely dissatisfied
Positive Psych in the Clinic

• Several PP interventions are equal to or better than:
  – Treatment as usual (CBT)
  – Combined medication and TAU

• Gratitude visit; gratitude diary, Using personal strengths.


Figure 2
Mean Hamilton Rating Scale for Depression (Hamilton) Scores and Standard Errors at the End of Treatment for Individual Positive Psychotherapy (PPT), Treatment as Usual (TAU), and TAU Plus Antidepressant Medication (TAUMED) Groups

Gratitude

A validated intervention for depression
“You say grace before meals. All right. But I say grace before the concert and the opera, and grace before the play and pantomime, and grace before I open a book, and grace before sketching, painting, swimming, fencing, boxing, walking, playing, dancing, and grace before I dip the pen in the ink.”

“Gratitude produced the most purely joyful moments that have been known to man.”
“If the only prayer you said in life was ‘Thank you,’ that would suffice.”

Meister Eckhardt

“Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all others”.

Cicero
Who has been kind or helpful?

• Jot down two or three people who have been kind to you.

• How do you feel when you review those memories?
Gratitude Visit

• Pick one person who has been helpful. Write a letter of appreciation – one or two pages.

• Laminate it or frame it.

• Take it to that person, read the letter, and leave it.
Gratitude Experiment

• Jot down three things, in the past 24 hours, that you feel good about and would like to see continue.

• Jot down one or two things you did that you feel were good, right, ethical, or noble, some things you approve of.

• Rate your feelings before / after 0-10
Gratitude for Challenges

• Jot down something that upset you.

• Now try to brainstorm: How might this be a blessing in disguise? How could I turn it to my advantage? What could be good about this?

• Rate your feelings now: 0 -10.
Ancient Wisdom: Bad to Good

• Rabbi Nachum said: “Gam Zu l’ Tovah”
  – “Even this can be good.”
  – Students called him “Rabbi Nacham Gam Zu

• Epictetus - Greek Stoic Philosopher:
  – “No matter what happens, it is within my power to turn it to my advantage.”
The Gratitude Diary

• Each day, write 3 – 5 things that you liked.
  – What happened to me?
  – What did I do right?

• Then write one thing that you didn’t like
  – Ask yourself: “And how is it also good, a blessing in disguise?”
  – Find two or three ways it helps you.
Building on Strengths

Key to Engagement and Meaning
Values in Action

• Created by Chris Peterson & Marty Seligman to “diagnose” strengths.
• Cross cultural
• Six major areas
• Twenty-four specific areas
• Several studies show emphasizing strengths increases happiness.
Six Areas of Strength

• Wisdom & Knowledge
• Courage, firmness
• Love, warmth
• Justice / fairness
• Temperance
• Transcendence
KNOWLEDGE & WISDOM
1. Creativity
2. Curiosity
3. Love of learning
4. Wisdom / perspective
5. Open-mindedness

COURAGE & FIRMNESS
6. Bravery
7. Persistence
8. Integrity
9. Vitality

HUMANITY & LOVE
10. Give & receive love
11. Kindness
12. Social intelligence

JUSTICE & FAIRNESS
13. Citizenship
14. Fairness
15. Leadership

TEMPERANCE
16. Forgiveness / mercy
17. Modesty / humility
18. Prudence
19. Self-regulation

TRANSCENDENCE / SPIRITUAL
20. Appreciation of excellence and beauty
21. Gratitude
22. Hope
23. Humor
24 Spirituality
Now pick three or four that best describe you.

Assignment: Consciously increase the amount of time and energy you give to your top strengths.
Use a Key Strength to Address your Largest Challenge

Example: Your challenge is to create a new business model for the recession. Your strength is curiosity.
Developing Optimism
Raising Optimism:
Three Factors; Two Tools

Optimism: How we describe good and bad events
Permanent / Temporary
Pervasive / Local
Personally caused / Random
Optimistic Triad

- **Permanent**: bad doesn’t last, good does.
- **Pervasive**: good affects everything; bad is localized and doesn’t affect other parts of life.
- **Personal**: Good = my fault; bad = random
- We can teach ourselves and our children to think optimistically.

Optimism Homework

• Cognitive-behavioral: Diary of automatic thoughts
  – About events:
    • Permanent? Personally caused? Pervasive?
    • Good: Permanent, personally caused, pervasive.
    • Bad: Temporary, random, local.
  – ABCD homework
    • Adverse event, Belief, Consequence of that belief, and Disputation.

More Optimism Homework

• Writing the Future Diary: Describe in detail the answer to the Miracle Question.
  – How would things be if your problems were miraculously transformed into solutions?
  – What would you do? What would others see you doing? How would others know the miracle had occurred, without you telling them.

• Keep that as part of your diary, once a week or so.

Lyubomirsky, Sonja: The How of Happiness.
Connection with Others
No Happy Hermits

• Very happy persons have much wider range of friends.
• Spend more time with others.
• Connection skills:
  – How can I help others?
  – Enjoy others as they already are.
  – Create time with friends.
Lifestyle Skills
Activity

• Physical activity is approximately equal in effect to antidepressants and anxiety medications.
• Ten minutes a day is sufficient to produce the effect; thirty minutes may be optimal.


Sleep

- Insomnia affects up to 30% of population
- A risk factor for depression
- A side effect of depression
- Continues after depression is resolved

- Behavioral treatments are equal or better than medication
Behavioral Sleep Tools

• Go to bed only when sleepy.
  – Quiet down in the evenings, avoid TV, lower the lights an hour before bed. Luxuriate in your bed.

• Meditate briefly before bed.
  – This is a natural melatonin producer.

• If not asleep in 20 minutes, get out of bed.

• Return to bed only when sleepy.

• Get up the same time every day.

• Don’t take naps, but do meditate once a day.
Autogenic Training

SAMPLE phrases: My right arm is heavy. . . My left arm is heavy . . . My arms are heavy . . . My right leg is heavy . . . My left leg is heavy . . . My legs are heavy. My arms and legs are heavy and relaxed.

My right hand is warm . . . My left hand is warm . . . Warmth flows into my hands. My hands are warm . . . My right foot is warm . . . (and so on)

My breathing is calm and regular . . . My heartbeat is calm and regular . . .

I am at peace . . . There is nothing to bother or disturb . . .
Using Autogenic Training

• Train every day around noon time.

• Meditate before going to bed.

• If not asleep in 20 minutes, get out of bed and meditate some more. Go back to bed only when you feel sleepy.
Autogenic Training & Depression

GROUPS A, B, C

A: 40 sessions tx / 20 wks

B: 10 weeks AT tng; then
10 weeks of AT + tx (20
sessions therapy)

C: 10 weeks wait list; 10
weeks of AT & 20 sessions
therapy 2x / wk.

Krampen, G (1999) Long-term evaluation of the effectiveness of additional autogenic
Nutrition

• Breakfast like a king, supper like pauper
• Mediterranean diet:
  – Rich in vegetables, fish, complex carbs, legumes and nuts; low in red meat.
  – “Rainbow diet”
  – Addictions: tobacco, alcohol, etc. all reduce happiness
• Omega-3 oils* reduce depression.

Importance of Omega-3

• 20% of the brain’s dry weight is polyunsaturated essential fatty acids
  – DHA (docosahexanoic acid); EPA (eicosapentanoic acid); ALA (alpha linolenic acid).
  – Help the brain grow / recover; reduce inflammation. Effective w/ all depressive dx.
  – Modern diets out of balance

Mediterranean Diet & Depression

• A total of 10,094 initially healthy Spanish participants.
• After a median follow-up of 4.4 years, 480 new cases of depression were identified.
• Inverse dose-response relationships were found for fruit and nuts, monounsaturated- to saturated- fatty-acids ratio, and legumes. (PUFAS)
• Q.E.D.: DIET affects mood

Savoring

An intervention for anxiety and depression
“I wondered how it was possible to walk for an hour through the woods and see nothing of note. I who cannot see find hundreds of things: the delicate symmetry of a leaf, the smooth skin of a silver birch, the rough, shaggy bark of a pine. I who am blind can give one hint to those who see: use your eyes as if tomorrow you will have been stricken blind. Hear the music of voices, the songs of a bird, the mighty strains of an orchestra as if you would be stricken deaf tomorrow. Touch each object as if tomorrow your tactile sense would fail. Smell the perfume of flowers, taste with relish each morsel, as if tomorrow you could never taste or smell again. Make the most of every sense. Glory in all the facets and pleasures and beauty which the world reveals to you.”

Helen Keller
Homework

• Focus on the sensory impressions in a moment-to-moment fashion.
  – Food
  – Activity (walking, running, sports)
  – Conversations
  – Friends
  – Recall & nostalgia
Questions?
The world stands out on either side
No wider than the heart is wide;
Above the world is stretched the sky
No higher than the soul is high.
The heart can push the sea and land
Farther away on either hand;
The soul can split the sky in two,
And let the face of God shine through.

Renascence and Other Poems. 1917.