

FLOURISH
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- The theory in Authentic Happiness that happiness could be analyzed into three different elements that we choose for their own sakes: positive emotion, engagement, and meaning. And each of these elements is better defined and more measurable than happiness. The first is positive emotion; what we feel: pleasure rapture, ecstasy, warmth, comfort and the like.
- The second element, engagement is about flow: being one with the music, time stopping, and the loss of self-consciousness during an absorbing activity. I refer to a life lived with these amidst the “engaged life.”
- The third element is meaning. The meaningful life consists in belonging to and serving something that you believe is bigger than the self, and humanity creates all the positive intuitions to allow this: religion, political party, being green, the Boy Scouts or the family.
- Well-being is a construct, and happiness is a thing. A “real thing” is a directly measurable entity.
- Each element of well-being must have three properties:
 - It contributes to well-being
 - Many people pursue it for its own sake, not merely to get any of the other elements
 - It is defined and measured independently of the other elements
- Well-being theory has five elements and each of the five has these three properties. The five elements are positive emotion, engagement, meaning positive relationships, and accomplishment. (PERMA)
- Other people are the best antidote to the downs of life and the single most reliable up.
- Empirically, Ma Post’s maxim has been put to rigorous test, and we scientists have found that doing a kindness produces the single most reliable momentary increase in well-being of any exercise we have tested.
- To flourish, an individual must have all the core features and three of the six additional features:
 - Core: Positive emotions, engagement/interest, and meaning/purpose
 - Additional features: self-esteem optimism resilience, vitality, self-determination, positive relationships
- Positive psychology exercise that work
 - Your task is to write a letter of gratitude to an individual and deliver it. You will be happier and less depressed one month from now.
 - Every night for the next week set aside ten minutes before you go to sleep. Write down three things that went well today and why they went well. Next to each positive event, answer the question “Why did this happen?”
 - Write a one-page “positive introduction,” in which you tell a concrete story showing yourself at your best and illustrating how you used your highest character strength.
 - Start a blessing journal in which you write, every night, three good things (big or small) that happened that day.
- Authentic Happiness website: www.authentichappiness.org
- How you celebrate is more predictive of strong relations than how you fight.
- There are four basic ways of responding to people, but only one of builds relationships.
 - Active and constructive: (That’s great! I am so proud of you. I know how important that promotion was to you? Please relive the event with me now. Where were you when your boss told you? What did he say? How did you react? We should go out and celebrate.” Nonverbal: maintain eye contact, displays of positive emotions, such as genuine smiling, touching laughing.

- Passive and constructive: That is good news. You deserve it. Nonverbal: little to no active emotional expression
- Active and Destructive: That sounds like a lot of responsibility to take on. Are you going to spend even fewer nights at home now? Nonverbal: displays of negative emotions, such as furrowed brow, frowning.
- Passive and Destructive: What's for dinner? Nonverbal: little to no eye contact, turning away leaving the room.
- Today, the healer's job is minimizing anxiety, anger, and sadness. Parents and teachers have taken on the same job and I worry about this because there is another, more realistic approach to these dysphorias: learning to function well even if you are sad or anxious or angry – in other words, dealing with it.
- It is true that most personality traits are highly heritable, which is to say that a person may have genetically inherited a strong predisposition to sadness or anxiety or religiosity. Dysphorias often, but not always stem from these personality traits.
- Positive mood produces broader attention, more creative thinking, and more holistic thinking. This is in contrast to negative mood, which produces narrowed attention, more critical thinking, and more analytic thinking. When you are in a bad mood, you are better at “what is wrong here?” When you are in a good mood, you are better at “what is right here? Even worse: when you are in a bad mood, you fall back defensively on what you already know, and you follow orders well. Both positive and negative ways of thinking are important in the right situation, but all too often schools emphasize critical thinking and following orders rather than creative thinking and learning new stuff.
- The stand-alone positive education course at Timbertop emphasizes resilience. First, students learn the AB model: how beliefs (B) about an adversity (A) – and not the adversity itself – cause the consequent (C) feelings. This is a point of insight for students: emotions don't follow inexorably from external events but from what you think about those events, and you can actually change what you think. Then students learn how to slow down this ABC process through more flexible and more accurate thinking. Finally, students learn “real-time resilience” in order to deal with the “heat of the moment” adversities that ninth graders often face at Timbertop.
- Games that build the positives in life: www.avantgame.com
- To help chronically low-performing but intelligent students, educators and parents must first recognize that character is at least as important as intellect.
- Reward and punishment shape character, not just behavior.
- We need to be drawn by the future rather than driven by the past.
- Speed at completing tasks and IQ have a surprisingly strong relationship. What speed does is give you extra time to carry out the non-automatic parts of the task.
- The second component of intelligence and achievement is slowness and what you do with all that extra time that being fast affords you.
- Going slow allows executive function to take over. Executive function consists of focusing and ignoring distractions, remembering and using new information, planning action and revising the plan, and inhibiting fast impulsive thoughts and actions.
- Speed and anxiety go together.
- Achievement = skill x effort
- Deciding which path (fast/slow) to take is the slow process we call “planning,” and beyond this, the invention of new paths captures much of what is meant by creativity.
- If you want to become world class at anything, you must spend 60 hours a week on it for ten years.
- What determines how much time and deliberate practice a child is willing to devote to achievement? Nothing less than her character? Self-discipline is the character trait that engenders deliberate practice.
- Self-discipline out predicts IQ for academic success by a factor of about 2.

- Grit is an extreme trait of self-discipline and includes the combination of very high persistence and high passion for an objective.
- In business, 20% of the employees are responsible for 80% of the profit.
- The more grit you have, the more time you spend on the task and all those hours do not just add to whatever innate skill you have; they multiply your progress to the goal.
- Controlling for education, older people have more grit than younger people, with those over sixty-five having much more than any other age group.
- Theory of achievement
 - Speed: The sheer speed of thought about a task reflects how much of that task is on automatic; how much skill or knowledge relevant to the task a person has.
 - Slowness: Unlike underlying skill or knowledge the executive functions of planning, checking your work, calling up memories, and creativity are slow processes. The more knowledge and skill you have (acquired earlier by speed and deliberate practice), the more time you have left over to use your slow processes and hence, the better the outcomes.
 - Rate of learning: The faster your rate of learning – and this is not the same factor as your sheer speed of thought about the task, the more knowledge you can accumulate for each unit of time that you work on the task.
 - Effort = time on task. The sheer time you spend on the task multiplies how much skill you have in achieving your goal. It also enters into the first factor: the more time spent on the task, the more knowledge and skill that accrete or “stick” with you. The main character determinants of how much time you devote to the task are your self-discipline and your grit.
- The real leverage you have for more achievement is more effort.
- A few sad or lonely or angry apples can spoil the morale of an entire unit. But the news is that positive morale is even more powerful and can boost the well-being and the performance of the entire unit. This makes the cultivation of happiness – a badly neglected side of leadership – important, perhaps crucial.
- What does not kill me makes me stronger. Nietzsche
- There are some things we care about instinctively: water, food, shelter, sex. But most of what we care about is learned. Freud called what we learn to care about cathexis: a negative cathexis occurs when some neutral event, such as seeing a snake, co-occur with a trauma, such as getting your hand smashed in a car door. Snakes become heinous. A positive cathexis occurs when a previously neutral event is paired with ecstasy.
- If our business schools wish to avoid the economic consequences of greed and short-termism, they have to select their students for a broader moral circle and for long-termism.