

SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING: APPLIED RESEARCH

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6 CONTINUING EDUCATION CONTACT HOURS

The human quest for subjective well-being represents a core drive dating back thousands of years (Tongeren and Burnette, 2018).

Learning Objectives

The purpose of this course is to provide an understanding of the concept of happiness, entitled “subjective well-being” within psychological literature. Major topics include: Can happiness change; A sense of purpose beyond the self; Conception of well-being affects reactions to negative events; Attributional assessment of happiness and unhappiness; That which really makes us happy; Which personality types benefit from online positive psychology intervention; The effect of time on well-being; Effect of everyday creative activity on flourishing; Contentment and tranquility: Similarities and differences; and Savoring moderates the daily demands and psychological capital relationship.

Accreditation

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Mission Statement

Continuing Psychology Education Inc. provides the highest quality continuing education designed to fulfill the professional needs and interests of mental health professionals. Resources are offered to improve professional competency, maintain knowledge of the latest advancements, and meet continuing education requirements mandated by the profession.

Course Objective

Upon completion, the participant will be able to:

1. Acknowledge that growth mindset beliefs are positively associated with well-being.
2. Articulate that having purpose in life and beyond the self intention is relevant to well-being.
3. Understand how one conceives and achieves subjective well-being may impact individual reactions to daily hassles and negative life events.
4. Comprehend how people's beliefs regarding the causes of their emotions affect their actual happiness and well-being.
5. Consider that flow activities facilitate well-being better than passive activities but generally people do not act accordingly.
6. Recognize the effectiveness of brief online interventions in decreasing psychological symptoms for distressed individuals, and improving emotional functioning.
7. Conceptualize that introducing time scarcity may improve well-being.
8. Convey that people feel more enthusiasm and greater flourishing following days when they were more creative than usual.
9. Communicate similarities and differences between contentment and tranquility.
10. Express that uplifting experiences and savoring are positively correlated with overall psychological capital.

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CAN HAPPINESS CHANGE?

Tongeren and Burnette (2018) remind us that the human quest for subjective well-being (this term is synonymous with happiness) represents a core drive dating back thousands of years. A Google search on 'happiness' revealed over 402 million hits in July of 2016, showing strong interest in acquiring this desired affective state.

The two researchers above examined how mindsets about happiness, specifically, whether one perceives happiness to be changeable or fixed, predicts subjective well-being, and in turn, satisfaction with various life domains.

Early philosophers felt that mindset was important as demonstrated by ponderings of "two thirds of what we see is behind our eyes," and "we don't see things as they are, we see things as we are." As such, to comprehend how people see the world, it is helpful to understand how those perceptions are influenced by personal beliefs. Supportively, the esteemed researcher in developmental psychology, Jean Piaget, felt that the development of meaning systems is equally important to logical thinking in shaping behavior.

The literature review of Tongeren and Burnette (2018) reveals that mindsets, technically termed implicit theories, are defined as schematic knowledge structures that embody beliefs about the stability of an attribute and organize the way individuals assign meaning to various events. The mindsets are called implicit because they are not directly expressed or documented. Implicit theories differ relative to whether characteristics of specific domains are viewed as stable (a fixed mindset) versus changeable (a growth mindset) and they can affect motivation and perception. By example, possessing a fixed mindset regarding intelligence (considering intelligence to be a fixed trait) produces ability-focused goal structures, uncontrollable attributions, and helpless regulation strategies when confronted with failure. In comparison, maintaining a growth mindset (regarding intelligence as malleable) yields learning-focused goals, effort attributions, and mastery-oriented regulatory strategies.

Implicit theories are a fundamental component of people's motivational systems that impact appraisals. For example, people who conclude that personality is fixed, and not changeable, are more likely to make global social judgments from small behavior samples and to be punitive with respect to undesirable behavior.

Tongeren and Burnette (2018) united implicit theory with subjective well-being to illuminate the processes underlying people's subjective well-being appraisals and their resultant satisfaction with relationships, work, and life in general. They propose that these processes, at least partly, are based on one's beliefs whether happiness is a fixed entity due to genetics or a malleable trait that can be altered. Specifically, one person may feel that attempting to change their current level of happiness is equivalent to altering their eye color because our usual level of happiness is genetic while another might believe that strong effort leading to enhanced ability and exerting effective strategies can induce greater happiness.

Okabe-Miyamoto et al. (2023) point to a growing body of research revealing happiness may be increased by utilizing brief, self-directed positive activities in daily life, including performing acts of kindness (Nelson et al. 2016), expressing gratitude (Layous et al., 2017), visualizing optimistic futures (Lyubomirsky et al., 2011), and savoring (Hurley & Kwon, 2012).

Research examining how well-being changes across the lifespan has revealed some factors are consistently related to life satisfaction over the lifespan, such as standards of living and family situations (Medley, 1980), while other factors change across the lifespan. By example, a variety of health-related factors predict life satisfaction among older adults more than younger individuals (Joshanloo & Jovanovic, 2021), and fluid intelligence predicts life satisfaction more among younger than older adults (Siedlecki et al., 2008). Further, older adults often live more 'eudaimonically' than younger or middle-aged individuals, highlighting intrinsic aspirations and mindfulness, which may foster greater psychological need fulfillment resulting in higher well-being levels (Mackenzie et al., 2018).

Mindsets can affect many self-regulation tendencies, including coping with social life obstacles, therefore, presumably, a belief that happiness can change may lead to greater motivation to exert effort to increase happiness whereas belief that happiness is fixed may culminate in reduced motivation to actively engage in activities designed to promote happiness. In support, growth mindsets predict optimistic appraisals regarding the potential for future success.

Tongeren and Burnette (2018) propose that a growth mindset about happiness will be positively associated with well-being since (a) belief systems are a predictor of well-being and related health outcomes, (b) optimism is a predictor of well-being, (c) stress mindsets (belief that stress can be strengthening and enhancing) help diminish the potential negative physiological responses of stress, and (d) mindsets are distinct from other belief structures, for instance, self-esteem, confidence, cognitive ability, and attitudes, making mindsets domain-specific (pertinent to specific attitudes, behaviors, events, etc.) and significantly correlated with broader constructs such as possessing the trait of optimism. By example, one may believe that the domain of intelligence can change but the domain of happiness is fixed, in turn, motivation to change the domain-specific construct of happiness will be lower than the motivation to change intelligence.

The researchers, Tongeren and Burnette (2018) foresee a positive spillover effect of a happiness growth mindset onto social satisfaction. Individuals who experience personal well-being are more likely to be satisfied with their relationships, occupation, and health. For example, people who report greater well-being, which is associated with their view that happiness can change, may invest more into and derive more satisfaction from their personal relationships, in contrast, those reporting lower well-being, which is associated with their belief that happiness is fixed, may be

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less inclined to invest in relationships, work, and maintaining health.

We are reminded by Tongeren and Burnette (2018) that when people experience positive emotional states, they broaden their range of possible positive responses and simultaneously build a repertoire of additional positive behaviors and tendencies (termed the broaden and build theory). For instance, individuals instructed to write about positive emotions for several days as opposed to neutral experiences reported greater happiness, along with better health, for the next three months. Hence, positive emotional states may broaden a person's opportunity to build positive outcomes through various intrapersonal and interpersonal ways. Accordingly, the above researchers postulate that when people report greater well-being, which is a positive emotional state, related to their belief that happiness is not fixed but can change, they will also report greater positive outcomes such as relationship, work, and health satisfaction.

Experimentally, Tongeren and Burnette (2018) showed that growth beliefs are positively associated with well-being ($r = .23, p < .001$) and with relationship satisfaction ($r = .20, p < .001$). This suggests that believing happiness can change is associated with greater well-being and relationship satisfaction. This research also revealed that a growth mindset regarding happiness is distinct from other types of implicit theories. Specifically, individual differences relative to whether happiness can change correlates with perceived well-being and satisfaction with close relationships. This advocates that the cognitive patterns used by people regarding their positive affective states relates to and influences relevant intrapersonal and interpersonal outcomes.

In study 2 by Tongeren and Burnette (2018), evidence indicated that beliefs with respect to the flexibility of happiness can be experimentally manipulated. Participants were randomly assigned to a growth or fixed priming induction whereby they either read and had to summarize an essay characterizing scientific evidence and quotes from scholars about happiness being malleable and can change (growth prime) or fixed and stable across time (fixed prime). The researchers theorized that the priming induction would produce stronger growth mindsets of happiness that would be related to higher levels of well-being and subsequent reported greater relationship satisfaction - this process was termed a serial mediation model.

Results confirmed the hypothesis such that priming growth mindsets: (a) increased beliefs that happiness is malleable (confidence interval = 95%), (b) the growth mindsets related to well-being (confidence interval = 95%), and (c) well-being was associated with greater relationship satisfaction (confidence interval = 95%).

In study 3 by Tongeren and Burnette (2018), a parallel analysis as indicated above was performed with health satisfaction as the outcome variable. Priming growth mindsets yielded increased beliefs that happiness is malleable which was associated with greater well-being and the well-being was associated with greater health satisfaction

(confidence interval = 95%). Likewise, a parallel analysis was conducted measuring the outcome variable of job satisfaction which produced the same result that the ensuing greater well-being was associated with greater job satisfaction (confidence interval = 95%). Study 3 contributes additional experimental evidence concerning the capability of shifting growth mindsets about happiness and the potential to positively affect other life domains. This opens doors to possible future interventions regarding one's perceived happiness malleability and global life functioning in important life domains. The researchers surmised, "Practically speaking, mindsets matter."

Overall, happiness growth mindsets have a moderate relationship with well-being (correlation = .24) and reports of well-being reveal a large association with life satisfaction (correlation = .63).

The results of Tongeren and Burnette (2018) support the broaden and build construct which indicates that experiencing positive emotional states, for example, happiness, assists people to enlarge their range of possible constructive responses and subsequently establish additional positive behaviors and tendencies.

People report less well-being and less satisfaction with important life domains when they believe that happiness cannot be altered, and worse yet, that they are confined to their current emotional state. Clinically, interventions devised to create growth mindsets, deemed to be attainable for many people, can positively affect how individuals experience numerous life domains. The current study illustrated that a brief reading induction can influence growth mindsets producing downstream ramifications for relationships, work, and health-related outcomes. Such interventions could assist those mired in a depressive state to consider that their state of unhappiness is avoidable, which could motivate them to expend effort to pursue happiness and heighten the satisfaction naturally inherent in their day-to-day living. Implicit theories affect an array of emotional and motivational processes in that our making sense of and establishing meaning to the world guides our intrapersonal and interpersonal appraisals. Our assumptions of the world, including acquiring the desired end-state of happiness, can be influential in the degree to which we enjoy life.

Tongeren and Burnette (2018) conclude by stating, "The salutary belief that happiness is malleable may motivate a suite of processes aimed at securing such a desirable end-state. Thus, it seems that to find happiness, one has to believe that such a treasure is actually discoverable."

A SENSE OF PURPOSE BEYOND THE SELF

Morton et al. (2019) researched the effects of living with purpose in life, which includes the intent to contribute to the world 'beyond the self,' and the ensuing benefit to individual well-being and societal flourishing. Participants in the study ranged in age from 50 to 92 years-of-age and those who met strictly defined criteria for having purpose beyond the self

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(abbreviated as BTS), based on a one-hour interview, were labeled *purpose exemplars*.

These researchers reveal that many middle-aged and older adults live an active and robust lifestyle which disputes predominant societal attitudes that aging represents self-oriented leisure, and physical, emotional, and cognitive decline.

Morton et al. (2019) used an exemplar method as the research approach to study the construct of BTS in a selected sample of adults. This methodology allows researchers to assess the upper levels of a construct versus concentrating on typical aspects of a larger population. They closely analyzed in-depth interview transcripts to select exemplars from a larger representative sample and rather than choosing publicly notable figures, individuals likely to be present in our world were chosen.

This study extended research on hedonic happiness versus Aristotle's ethics and political philosophy entitled eudaimonic well-being. Hedonic happiness is based on pleasurable experiences whereas eudaimonic well-being is a satisfying life based on self-realization, personal growth, meaning, addressing the existential challenges of living, autonomy, environmental mastery, positive relations with others, exhibiting purpose in life, and self-acceptance. Purpose means possessing goals in life along with a sense of directedness and meaning in one's present and past. Meaning, engagement, and personal growth positively affect mental and physical health.

Having purpose in life is relevant to well-being, according to Morton et al. (2019), and they describe purpose as a stable and generalized intent to accomplish something meaningful to the self, and simultaneously, somewhat impactful to the world beyond the self. This definition transcends the conventional definition which requires only having goal clarity and direction for something personally meaningful. The beyond-the-self aspect is argued to make purpose highly significant and beneficial to both the individual and society.

Further, purpose is seen as a life goal involving a stable commitment to a goal of importance to the individual and contributory to something larger or beyond the self. As such, Morton et al. (2019) view purposeful people as being engaged in and committed to routinely working on personally meaningful goals that strive to contribute beyond the self.

These researchers indicate that demonstrating purpose in adolescence and emerging adulthood is associated with positive developmental outcomes and well-being such as greater life satisfaction, hopefulness about the future, enhanced sense of identity, improved psychological maturity, and a belief that schoolwork is meaningful.

In older adults, Morton et al. (2019) report that possessing a well-developed sense of meaning, which closely relates to a self-transcendent life purpose, associates with higher ratings of subjective well-being and lower depression levels, less serious medical issues and physical decline, and increased longevity.

Morton et al. (2019) illuminate that having purpose is not affected by age, income, marital status, or even self-reported

health, thus, the capacity for purpose is not restricted to the privileged or the physically healthy. They found that purpose was significantly positively associated with life satisfaction, wisdom, personal growth, gratitude, empathy, and generativity.

The research study by Morton et al. (2019) involved a one-hour telephone interview of 102 respondents and these semi-structured interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded for purpose. The purpose codes were based on the respondents' responses to the following themes: 1) described an 'impact goal' (i.e., a goal or intention to make a difference on a consequential issue BTS); 2) expressed BTS reasons for the goal's relevance; 3) reported significant, ongoing activity toward the goal; 4) indicated BTS reasons for their activities; and 5) stated the BTS concerns and pursuits are a very important focus of their life, in other words, the BTS concerns were a driver of their actions. The interviews were coded in relation to the BTS concerns representing a driver of one's actions, specifically, if participants: a) spontaneously returned to the BTS issue throughout the interview, b) articulated strong feelings about the issue, and c) characterized their work regarding the issue as a major commitment, frequently one of a few central preoccupations. All of these codes were utilized to distinguish between purpose and non-purpose exemplars.

Additional coding comprised seven central sources of well-being reported by the interviewees, including: a) purpose beyond the self, b) positive relationships, c) positive sense of engagement (rather than boredom or disengagement), d) competence/productivity (feeling a sense of competence, exerting effort to learn and build skills), e) autonomy, freedom, or self-direction, f) contentment, safety, and predictability, and g) spiritual connection, transcendence, or spiritual growth. Another code was incorporated which acknowledged whether an interviewee combined several sources of well-being thus reflecting an interconnectedness of well-being sources.

To receive a code for one of the seven well-being sources, an interviewee had to verbalize the well-being source was important in his/her life, and essentially, it served not only as a goal or desire but as an achieved reality. Each element was coded as being present (if present, as a central or non-central well-being source) or absent. The opposites of the seven well-being sources were also coded to assess negative influences and potential obstacles to well-being. These codes pertain to unhappiness and non-flourishing that parallel sources of flourishing, hence, the codes include loneliness, negative relationships, boredom, excessive freedom or restraints on freedom, stress, and preoccupation with anticipating problems.

Eighteen of the interviewees fulfilled all five of the coding requirements for purpose and were classified as purpose exemplars. This group varied greatly from poor to rich, working to retired, married to single, physically healthy to terminally ill, and different political views, race, nationality, and religion. They worked to improve a diverse range of issues, including poverty, human rights, aging, cultural

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institutions, religious issues and institutions, youth mentorship, community development, animal rights, health and mental health, and commitment to varied non-profit organizations. All have devoted considerable time to this work in the past and plan on such in the present and future. Four are paid for their purposeful work and fourteen are not paid.

The comparison group for the purpose exemplars included 18 respondents who clearly coded as non-purposeful (they received a code of 'no' on each element of purpose) along with receiving a code representing the opposite of several of the seven central sources of well-being (i.e., loneliness, negative relationships, boredom, as indicated earlier) while matching gender and approximate age of the purpose exemplar respondents.

The researchers linked, in almost every case, the exemplars involvement in their activity through their personal experiences and interests. Ten exemplars specified their change to serious commitment resulted from an invitation from another individual or an organization. By example, two exemplars adopted pets from animal shelters, and over time, they received requests from animal shelters to become involved with animal rights. They recruited others to join them and established networks of people to assist with animal rescue, and improving animal shelter conditions and policies.

The concept of purposeful commitment may involve focusing on one issue or group of closely related matters such as working to enhance a community's culture and arts; in contrast, one may focus on multiple issues and organizations, for instance, working to help the homeless while also improving the cultural life of a community.

Seventeen exemplars highlighted the joy and satisfaction they experience - especially in their BTS activities - despite contending with their own life issues, such as poverty, ill health, family concerns, and bereavement. This supports the researchers observations that purposeful respondents report higher life satisfaction than non-purposeful respondents, and that moral exemplars display an attitude of positivity in relation to hopefulness, gratitude, and joy despite their work challenges. One purpose exemplar who reported low overall well-being indicated improvement in her physical and mental health resulting from her BTS engagements. Moreover, fifteen of the 18 exemplars stated their life is not based on self-sacrifice, alternatively, they effectively attend to BTS and self-oriented goals. The fact that purposeful respondents pursue both types of goals implies they have greater health and physical energy, however, respondents' health status was not associated with differences in prevalence of purpose, and many of the purpose exemplars reported serious health issues.

When examining different potential sources of satisfaction, positive relationships was deemed more important for the purposeful respondents relative to the comparison group of non-purpose interviewees; central to 14 of 18 versus 8 of 18 respondents respectively. A second source of satisfaction was positive engagement, defined as experiencing excitement, fun, adventure, novelty, and flow, and it was

more prevalent in the purpose exemplars compared to the comparison group; central to 10 of 18 versus 7 of 18 respondents respectively. The combination of positive relationships and positive engagement showed a strong difference between the two groups in that 9 purpose exemplars versus 5 comparison interviewees displayed this combination. Further, interconnectedness among the previously mentioned seven central sources of well-being was highly different between the two groups with 17 of 18 purpose exemplars versus only 2 of 18 comparison interviewees indicating the interrelatedness of these seven sources of well-being.

The variable of continuing to use and build competencies was more relevant for purpose exemplars compared to comparison interviewees (all 18 versus 12 included this theme respectively, and 7 versus 4 revealed this construct as central, respectively).

Conversely, two of the codes underlying the seven central sources of well-being were more common with the comparison interviewees than the purpose exemplars: 1) enjoyment gained from being productive, for its own sake, and 2) contentment with simple routines. It is deduced that enjoying one's capabilities and skills, evolving them, and utilizing these strengths/competencies to feel productive are methods that people can employ to experience meaning in life and well-being if not engaged BTS. Also, creating simple but satisfying daily routines can generalize to developing effective approaches to later life.

The element of autonomy/freedom, within the seven central sources of well-being, revealed qualitatively different meanings for the purpose exemplars and comparison interviewees. The comparison group expressed relief from having to follow set work schedules, or, if not yet retired, free from other life responsibilities or grateful for flexible work hours and locations. The majority of purpose exemplars described autonomy/freedom in relation to their BTS concerns. Some acquired an enhanced sense of freedom by doing what they truly believed in, pursuing a meaningful venture, or being 'true to yourself.' Some felt a balance between responsibilities and commitments while the commitments were not burdensome. One purpose exemplar stated, "You have so much more freedom than you have any other time in your life. It's a gift and I try to use that gift the best I can every day." Another said, " We have more freedom, that's for sure. But we try to use that freedom to everybody's benefit."

The purpose exemplars and non-purposeful comparison group also differed regarding references to negative well-being. The comparison group referred more often (39%) to unresolved negative relationships, which describe conflict, betrayal, or alienation, than the purpose exemplars (6%). Specifically, only 2 purpose exemplars mentioned even one of the negative factors whereas 10 in the comparison group verbalized at least one of the negative elements.

Findings of this study suggest that maintaining purposeful commitments later in life promotes feelings of joy, engagement, gratitude, and excitement but without assurance

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of a problem-free life. The essential elements that underlie well-being include an interconnection of purpose, positive relationships, positive life engagement, a sense of competence and using one's knowledge and skills to accomplish valued goals, appreciating autonomy and self-direction, and freedom to achieve worthwhile pursuits is more valuable than mere relief from life's responsibilities.

Opposed to popular belief about people committed to BTS activities, purposeful respondents do not appear to sacrifice self-oriented endeavors. They perceive engaging BTS to be congruent with doing fun and interesting things and pursuing personal growth.

These researchers resolve that non-purposeful BTS individuals are not necessarily unhappy or living empty lives because many people in the non-purpose comparison group reported having positive relationships, positive engagement, motivation to build knowledge and skills, feelings of productivity or satisfaction with basic and undemanding daily routines. Conversely, some of the non-purpose comparison group interviewees expressed dissatisfaction as manifested by loneliness, boredom, freedom limitations or too much freedom without comprehension of how to spend their time, stress, and preoccupation with managing or preventing problems. Some people in this group who disclosed dissatisfaction along with some of the more satisfied non-purpose respondents conveyed a desire to become engaged in BTS commitments, and this study suggests they would benefit by involvement in such engagements.

Morton et al. (2019) acknowledge that their criteria for purpose BTS is challenging and that non-purposeful individuals, to a less ambitious degree, undoubtedly contribute to the world and lead happy and fulfilled lives.

CONCEPTION OF WELL-BEING AFFECTS REACTIONS TO NEGATIVE EVENTS

The pursuit of well-being is pervasive but how one conceives of well-being and the pathways taken to achieve this end differ. Fuochi et al. (2018) report that the three main routes to well-being are pleasure, meaning, and engagement. The pleasure pathway stems from the hedonic view of happiness derived from maximizing pleasure and minimizing pain. The meaning pathway emanates from the eudaimonic viewpoint of happiness in that appraising our experiences and life as significant and purposeful promotes greater and long-lasting well-being. The engagement path involves being one with and absorbed by an activity yielding a loss of self-consciousness, and it equates with the experience of flow. Each of these three orientations to happiness predict life satisfaction, however, the orientations of meaning and engagement correlate more strongly with well-being than the orientation to pleasure; meaning had the strongest effect on life satisfaction while pleasure had the weakest effect. Having meaning in life, and to some degree, searching for meaning are positively correlated with good mental health, even given poor health conditions. Finding meaning in life experiences also associates with resilience and ability to feel

positive emotions when encountering negative events. Possibly, individuals more permanently oriented toward meaning may be capable of finding meaning in life and subsequently obtaining the meaning-making benefits.

Fuochi et al. (2018) note that debate still exists on the best orientation to well-being as they describe a longitudinal study, using mobile experience sampling, which revealed each of the three orientations simultaneously correlated with momentary ratings of pleasure, engagement, and meaning experienced in the activity of the moment. It is suggested that daily well-being may require a balanced and comprehensive accumulation of the three orientations rather than a single dominant orientation.

Fuochi et al. (2018) tested whether the three orientations to well-being associate with differences in the reactions to negative or potentially stressful events. Major negative life events such as divorce or job-loss severely affect well-being but minor daily stressors as commuting in traffic or disagreements with fellow workers can produce more cumulative and long-term effects. Exhibiting affective reactivity in response to minor daily inconveniences/upsets predicts general affective distress and a greater chance of reporting chronic physical health conditions or affective disorders 10 years later. This implies that negative emotions elicited by any potentially stressful event may impair well-being and health, and this negative outcome is not caused by the event itself but mainly by the emotional reactivity linked to the event.

As reported by Fuochi et al. (2018), various personality characteristics can neutralize the potentially harmful consequences of stressful situations. For example, high social support and self-esteem lower the probability of psychological and somatic issues due to hassles, and people low in neuroticism are less likely to experience negative affect in response to daily stress. A feeling of perceived control lowers physical and psychological reactivity to interpersonal, network, home, and health stressors. Additionally, optimism, emotional self-regulation, adaptive coping strategies, and humility buffer the repercussion of bad events. Finding a meaning in life also lessened the adverse impact of traumatic life events occurring at any time in the lifespan on depressive symptoms of older adults.

In this study, Fuochi et al. (2018), examined the subject's emotional reactions to a recalled self-relevant negative event along with the interactive effect of each orientation to well-being (pleasure, meaning, engagement) and potentially stressful events on well-being. Results revealed the protective function of orientation to meaning upon well-being, specifically, orientation to meaning buffered the effect of recent potentially stressful events on satisfaction with life and with positive affect while the orientations of pleasure and engagement did not display any buffering effect. Further, meaning was associated with the ability to express positive emotions (e.g., lower activation/reactivity) when recalling an impactful negative event; this ability seems counterintuitive but two possible explanations exist. First, individuals may exert a reappraisal process whereby through a cognitive

reevaluation, in addition to a negative importance/purpose, a positive relevance is attached to the negative event. Second, those who characteristically display the trait of resilience or effectively manifest emotion regulation strategies may recall positive emotions in the midst of negative emotions during the stressful situation.

The three orientations to well-being did not have effects on negative emotions felt while thinking about a self-relevant negative situation. This lack of association suggests that the function of orientations to well-being may be due to an enhancement of positive feelings instead of a lessening of negative emotions. This interpretation, coupled with the findings that meaning was a predictor of positive emotions characterized by low reactivity and that meaning lowered the effects of potentially stressful events on well-being more firmly suggests that the deleterious effects of stressful events (daily hassles and life events) on well-being are not due to the event itself but more so by the emotional reactivity connected to events.

Research related to this concept shows that a failure to value negative emotion strengthens the connection between negative emotional states and poor psychological health outcomes via a decline of emotional complexity and flexibility, and a greater tendency to ruminate (Dejonckheere et al., 2019; McGuirk et al., 2018). Conversely, the more one values negative emotions the less these experiences affect well-being outcomes (Bastian et al., 2012; Luong et al., 2016).

Humphrey et al. (2022) believe highly valuing happiness and attempting to sustain feelings of happiness on a moment-to-moment basis yields the experiencing of negative emotions as undermining the goal of maintaining happiness. This may produce maladaptive responses to negative emotional experiences which contributes to poor psychological health outcomes (Dejonckheere et al., 2017; DeVaus et al., 2017).

Humphrey et al. (2022) found that seeking happiness by prioritizing behaviors that may create future happiness does not foster a devaluation of negative emotion, and displays a positive relationship to well-being. They recommend utilizing a behavioral approach to happiness (prioritizing positivity) instead of a cognitive approach (valuing happiness) to minimize negative outcomes present in pursuing happiness. In clinical practice, Humphrey et al. (2022) recommend clients pursue a more behavioral approach to happiness via optimizing the chance of obtaining happiness at a later date. This method may stimulate client to avoid focusing heavily upon in the moment monitoring of their emotional states; such monitoring can result in feelings of disappointment and self-blame given expected happiness levels not being reached along with devaluing negative emotional experience in general.

In sum, Fuochi et al. (2018) conclude that the meaning orientation to well-being offers these benefits: a) lower emotional reactivity in front of a recalled negative experience, b) protects long-term well-being and health, and c) buffers the effect of recent potentially stressful events on

well-being. Their study conveys that differences in how one conceives and achieves subjective well-being may impact individual reactions to daily hassles and more significant negative life events.

ATTRIBUTIONAL ASSESSMENT OF HAPPINESS AND UNHAPPINESS

Titova and Sheldon (2019) assessed how people's beliefs regarding the causes of their emotions affect their actual happiness and well-being. As measures of respondents' behavior, they used Attribution theory, which focuses on how we explain the things that happen to us. The two main underlying dimensions of this theory are: stability, which indicates whether the cause of an event is likely to be stable or unstable, and locus, which indicates whether the cause of an event is internal or external to the individual. Additionally, the researchers utilized a measure of behavior linked to attribution theory entitled self-serving bias (SSB) which is a predisposition to attribute successful outcomes to internal and stable causes and unsuccessful outcomes to external and unstable forces. SSB explains that people are motivated to preserve their self-esteem given negative outcomes and bolster their self-esteem given positive outcomes. For example, a therapist attributing therapeutic success for a client's outcome to his or her ability and effort, and attributing therapeutic failure to the client's motivational lapse, helps to sustain a level of self-esteem regardless of the outcome of the therapeutic process. Thus, self-esteem is associated with well-being which means that a link exists between SSB and higher well-being, through self-esteem. The researchers remind us that SSB is associated with more adaptive coping styles, which may culminate with better affect balance and greater life satisfaction, as long as the realistic limits of SSB are observed.

Titova and Sheldon (2019) specify that across different cultural and age groups there is a connection between well-being and the tendency to attribute positive events to more stable, internal, and global causes, and the tendency to attribute negative events to less stable, more external, and more local causes. They observed that controllability, which is the perception of voluntary control by an individual, was a missing variable from this paradigm.

Controllability is divided into the dimensions of personal control (I control it, or I don't control it) and external control (others control it, or others don't control it). Though these dimensions seem opposites on the same continuum, they are two distinct aspects, and one dimension may be more important in certain situations. In interpersonal relationships, for example, perceiving high external control in a situation is different from perceiving low personal control since relationships are interdependent and the other person exerts influence. Also, these two dimensions associate with different emotions in that perception of high personal control in negative situations links to the experience of shame and guilt whereas perception of high external control in negative situations links to anger. Further, personal and external

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control are relevant variables in predicting future behavior based on the attributional assessments made in the past. The predictive capability and emotional relevance of personal and external control are applicable to this study because Titova and Sheldon (2019) are examining attributions toward emotions and well-being.

Methodologically, Titova and Sheldon (2019) conducted three studies; in Study 1, participants were assessed for subjective well-being then asked to recall and write about two times in their recent life they felt happy, as well as unhappy, then causal attributions of those happy and unhappy feelings were assessed.

Study 1 results showed: a) happy feelings are perceived as being caused more by personally controllable factors and by more stable and internal factors and less by externally controlled factors; b) significant positive correlations between subjective well-being and personal control, stability and internal locus of causality for happy feelings, and negative correlations between subjective well-being and internal locus of causality for unhappy feelings; c) stability, personal control, and locus of causality regarding happy feelings had positive correlations with subjective well-being while external control did not; d) low external control for happy feelings correlated with subjective well-being, and high personal control for happy feelings also correlated with subjective well-being; e) having an internal locus of causality for unhappy feelings was negatively correlated with subjective well-being; f) external locus of causality and low personal control for unhappy feelings are predictors of subjective well-being; and g) high stability for happy feelings is a predictor of subjective well-being.

In Study 2, participants followed the methodology of Study 1 except that they recalled and wrote about a relationship-related situation (any kind of a relationship - with friends, romantic partners, parents) and an achievement-related situation (any kind of an achievement - school, sports, a competition).

Study 2 results indicated: a) participants sensed happy achievement feelings were significantly more strongly influenced by stable, internal, and personally controllable factors, and significantly less influenced by external control factors; b) external control for relationship feelings across happy and unhappy events did not differ. The interpretation for this outcome is that participants recognized other people are involved in relationships regardless of the relationships causing happy or unhappy feelings. Feelings linked to social domains are influenced by others, equally regarding happy and unhappy feelings; and c) individuals who perceived unhappy feelings as unstable and happy feelings as controlled by them had higher levels of subjective well-being.

In Study 3, participants were given information about their overall well-being and then asked to explain this information. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three experimental conditions: participants were provided either an accurate subjective well-being test score, a false high (84th percentile) or a false low (14th percentile) score. Procedurally, the study involved two online sessions. In Part

1, the researchers measured the subjective well-being of the participants then asked them to complete a causal attribution assessment about their subjective well-being level as a whole (without providing a subjective well-being score). Participants were instructed they would complete the second part of the study in 5 days. In Part 2, participants were given a subjective well-being score, based on their assigned experimental group, and were asked to complete the causal attribution assessment again, evaluating their well-being level according to the subjective well-being score they just received. Essentially, they were asked, 'Why did you get that score?' During the debriefing, participants in the false feedback groups were told not to believe the incorrect feedback regarding their well-being levels and explained the rationale for the deception.

The researchers compared the false high and false low feedback conditions and found a significant difference for locus of causality such that there was a more internal of causality locus in the high level of well-being feedback group. A significant difference appeared in external control in that there was more perceived external control by others in the low level of well-being feedback group. Further, there was a marginally significant difference for stability, implying a more stable sense of well-being in the high level feedback group. Contrary to prediction, no significant difference between the high and low false feedback conditions was found for personal control.

When examining how attributions made about subjective well-being at time 1 (before the experimental manipulation) correlated to subjective well-being (also determined at time 1), internal locus of causality, stability of attributions, and personal control were positively correlated with subjective well-being. External control was found to have a negative correlation with subjective well-being. Stability of attributions and personal control were significant predictors of subjective well-being whereas external control and internal locus of causality were not significant predictors of subjective well-being.

Participants with actual higher subjective well-being reported higher personal controllability and stable attributions in the high feedback condition, and participants with low actual subjective well-being gave lower ratings in that condition. This relationship was reversed in the low feedback condition. These results indicate that the participants given more accurate information based on their actual subjective well-being demonstrated even greater bias effects compared to those given false information, by reporting more stable attributions and more personally controlled attributions for their subjective well-being. In other words, the findings show that individuals with higher actual well-being levels, when given feedback matching that level (informed they reside in the 86th percentile) view their well-being as more stable and controlled by them personally, whereas, those with actual low subjective well-being, when given feedback they are in the 86th percentile (false high), view their well-being as less stable and less controlled by them personally.

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Participants told they were in the low subjective well-being group (14th percentile) perceived their well-being to be more a result of external factors, more controlled by other people, and less stable compared to participants told they were in the high subjective well-being group (86th percentile).

The results revealed that self-serving bias is present when individuals evaluate their general levels of subjective well-being. The researchers surmise that beliefs of those with high actual subjective well-being relative to their own happiness were reinforced by the 86th percentile feedback they received, causing them to evaluate their subjective well-being levels as more stable and internally controlled. Conversely, individuals with low actual subjective well-being levels may have sensed the high subjective well-being feedback (86th percentile) was temporary and not something they are personally accountable for. When the low actual subjective well-being group received feedback of being in the low subjective well-being group (14th percentile), such information may have felt more suitable and self-descriptive which elicits attributions of more control and stability.

Whereas most of the attributional dimensions differ between those with actual high and actual low subjective well-being, the dimension that is most connected to relationships - controllability by other people - showed no difference for participants asked to evaluate relationships related feelings. This result emphasizes that although people are generally inclined to display self-serving bias, they still understand that in certain situations the involvement effect of other people in the cause of a situation is inarguable despite the outcomes.

The higher the actual subjective well-being level of participants, the greater was their stability and personal control perceptions when informed their well-being level was higher (the 86th percentile). This suggests that: a) the feedback confirms their pre-existing beliefs which then provides them with a bigger boost in their positive attributions, and b) those with high subjective well-being levels more easily 'take credit' for their high level of subjective well-being feedback. In contrast, participants with lower well-being levels exhibited the opposite tendency - when informed they were happier than others their attributions for such were less stable and less due to personal control. These unhappy people interpreted the result as a fluke, something they did not personally achieve which will be impermanent. Simultaneously, people with low subjective well-being are inclined to view the low level feedback (14th percentile) as more within their personal control and stable, thus 'taking credit' for that which corresponds to their actual level of subjective well-being.

This study found that self-serving bias occurred when participants evaluated the causes of their feeling subjective well-being as well as when feeling a lack of subjective well-being. Titova and Sheldon (2019) recommend future researchers to explore whether generating self-serving attributions for one's well-being in fact boosts one's well-being because, at present, there is no evidence for the belief

that employing the self-serving bias in explaining subjective well-being actually raises subjective well-being.

Lomas and VanderWeele (2023) conclude, "Happiness is an emergent phenomenon that cannot be mechanistically, reductively or simplistically attributed to any one particular factor. It is moreover a complex creation in that humans are not merely passively affected by their conditions, but actively shape these very conditions through their values and behaviors." These researchers believe individuals have agency which can influence their conditions by virtue of their own actions. Future research may contribute to the agency paradigm regarding how our beliefs about the causes of our emotions affect happiness and well-being.

THAT WHICH REALLY MAKES US HAPPY

People are often in pursuit of subjective well-being (synonymous with the term happiness) yet they may be unaware of where or how to find this elusive but worthwhile state. We generally associate happiness with income and the fulfillment of hedonic needs, hence, individuals are inclined to strive for amassing wealth, status, and possessions. These acquisitions, though, do not produce sustainable happiness because people are prone to hedonic adaptation, meaning they take for granted and get used to good life circumstances. Related to subjective well-being, due to the domain of work often being highly demanding, people believe their leisure time is too scarce and treasured to limit in order to engage in more challenging activities so they choose to experience happiness through easy relaxing entertainment. Happiness-inducing activities, however, generally require a degree of 'activation energy' which is a chemistry term that Schiffer and Roberts (2018) modify to describe the physical and psychic energy that must be enacted to initiate an effortful activity. Schiffer and Roberts (2018) tested whether people acknowledge that more effortful activities produce longer-lasting happiness, and whether and why they still avoid these activities and instead select more passive leisure in the pursuit of subjective well-being.

Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 2001) maintains that people are active and agentic contributors to their life rather than simply passive recipients of their life circumstances. Agency is fundamental to Social Cognitive Theory and pertains to the ability to influence the nature and quality of one's life experiences due to one's actions (Bandura, 2002). Vella-Brodrick et al. (2023) note that individuals possessing agency are goal-directed and can intentionally modify their environment to perform actions which achieve intended life outcomes. Key elements of agency within Social Cognitive Theory are personal efficacy and goal-oriented behavior (Bandura, 2011). Personal efficacy represents the belief that one can achieve the desired goal by their actions. Goals encompass a future vision that a person cares about along with an energy investment (i.e., planning, preparation) to actualize the visions (Bandura, 2011). Personal efficacy and goal-motives/behavior have been empirically shown to

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strongly relate to well-being (Milam et al., 2019; Shoji et al., 2016).

Vella-Brodrick et al. (2023) found that an earlier display of agency predicted future emotional well-being (and social connection). These researchers concluded, "This underscores the importance of believing that one has the capability to influence their life course through their own actions and that one can intentionally modify their environment to achieve personally desired outcomes." Thus, the amount of control and self-efficacy individuals feel over what happens to them and what they can achieve are central predictors of their well-being.

Schiffer and Roberts (2018) remind us of two modern definitions of subjective well-being: the hedonic method centers on pleasure versus displeasure, suggesting that maintaining positive well-being requires striving to experience more gratification than pain. Conversely, the eudaimonic theory centers on our ability to function in the world such that our happiness depends on our ability to live in congruence with our authentic self while we endeavor to reach perfection and Aristotle's concept of human flourishing.

Another conceptualization of subjective well-being described by Schiffer and Roberts (2018) is the equation: happiness = genetic predisposition + life circumstances + factors under personal control (intentional activities). Genetic predisposition, in this case meaning heritable personality traits, contributes to how extraverted versus introverted or optimistic versus pessimistic, for example, one is; these personality factors then regulate the person's baseline of happiness, or average well-being. Quite significantly, genetic predispositions can account for as much as 50% of an individual's happiness. Life circumstances involve factors as one's profession, marital status, socio-economic status, and geographical location, and this variable accounts for approximately 20% of one's happiness. Life circumstances primarily establish which factors we control and how we can manage them. Our life circumstances must provide potential for basic need-fulfillment (physiological, physical safety, love and belonging, and esteem) in order to increase our well-being by exerting personal control. This concept is similar to an individual experiencing a good 'person-environment' fit. Given that roughly 70% of our subjective well-being is governed by genetic variables and life circumstances, to a certain measure, happiness is constant over time, and is shaped by factors beyond personal control. The counterbalance to these determined factors is that about 30% of happiness is determined by intentional activities, for instance, counting blessings, expressing gratitude in verbal or written format, being optimistic, strategizing and planning, visualizing a fulfilling future, and performing acts of kindness can increase subjective well-being levels. Such intentional activities are more likely to elicit happiness when they stimulate 'flow'.

Flow, as described by Schiffer and Roberts (2018), is a non-conscious all-enveloping state of mind evoked when skill and challenge interact during engagement in activities

that necessitate psychic or physical energy expenditure. Due to flow activities often being intrinsically motivating (without immediate extrinsic reward) and not always pleasurable in the moment, such experiences are commonly only enjoyable retrospectively. These researchers believe that overall happiness is more likely given engagement in flow activities and such optimal experiences cumulatively yield a happy life. In turn, they wonder why people believe that relaxation and improved financial status represent the paths to subjective well-being; Schiffer and Roberts (2018) specify several constructs that offer explanation.

The process of attempting to predict the emotional impact of future events is termed 'affective forecasting' and generally people are error-prone when forecasting future happiness. An essential reason for these errors is called 'impact bias' which is overestimating the duration and intensity of an emotion in relation to one's current emotional state. Impact bias causes us to potentially wrongly predict the direction of the emotion as being positive or negative as well as how long the emotion will last. 'Focalism' also leads to wrong affective forecasting and occurs when individuals render immediate (top-down versus bottom-up thinking) decisions falsely based on hypothetical future events and feelings.

Inaccurate affective forecasting, as suggested by Schiffer and Roberts (2018), may contribute to our unwillingness to pursue flow activities. Presented with a choice between a leisure activity or a high-energy investment flow activity, a person might affectively forecast that passive leisure will offer more rest, relaxation, and enjoyment than a flow activity. Affective forecasting operates in both short- and long-term, and since flow activities are not always pleasurable in the present moment, people may actually be correct in predicting that low-investment pursuits will be more fun and satisfying in the present moment. Longer-term forecasts are more difficult to assess than short-term predictions, and long-term happiness decisions usually necessitate self-sacrifice, which makes them more vulnerable to impact bias.

Schiffer and Roberts (2018) tested three hypotheses:

- 1) people know that flow activities best promote long-term happiness, thus they advocate more effortful rather than passive activities as the path to greater subjective well-being;
- 2) Despite people acknowledging that flow activities best promote long-term happiness, they will report participating in more passive than flow activities on a weekly basis; in other words, people will display inaccurate short-term affective forecasts about flow activities, but correct long-term affective forecasts; and
- 3) People minimize their flow activities due to the short-term affective forecast that more passive activities are more enjoyable, and that flow activities demand high activation energy - vast effort is required and the challenge appears too overwhelming to begin.

Methodologically, participants rated 36 activities as either requiring high physical and psychic involvement or being more passive (each activity was already known to require high physical and psychic involvement or to be more passive). Participants were asked the following questions for

each activity: a) 'How enjoyable is the activity?' b) 'How much effort does it take to initiate the activity?' c) 'How daunting is it to go get this activity started?' and d) 'How often do you engage in this activity in a typical week?' Then, participants were shown the complete list again and asked to pick 5 activities that best facilitated long lasting happiness, after which they were shown the complete list again and asked to select 5 activities that least facilitate long-term happiness.

The researchers identified 18 activities as high flow and 10 activities as passive by utilizing an effort rating variable and they eliminated 8 activities which loaded significantly, or not at all, on both of the high flow and passive activities. The 28 utilized activities included: exercising, participating in team sports, participating in individual sports, professional work, house work/yard work, creating art, practice/play instrument, face to face socializing, helping others, cooking, meditation/yoga, studying, organizing, building, journaling, shopping, writing letters, grooming, listening to music, watching movies, surfing internet, daydreaming, watching TV, checking social media, resting, eating, alone time, and sleeping. The 8 eliminated activities were: pursuing hobbies, going out, reading, catching up with family, playing board games, drinking tea/coffee, using drugs, and consuming alcohol.

Participants rated high flow activities as significantly less enjoyable than passive ones ($p < .001$), as predicted. High flow activities were significantly rated as requiring more effort to initiate than passive ones ($p < .001$), as predicted. High flow activities rated as significantly more daunting than passive activities ($p < .001$), as predicted. Participants reported engaging in high flow activities significantly fewer times in a typical week than passive activities ($p < .001$), as predicted.

All predictions by Schiffer and Roberts (2018) were supported. In fact, participants acknowledged that flow activities facilitate long-term happiness better than passive ones, yet, they reported engaging in flow activities less than passive activities. Participants affectively forecasted that in the short-term, flow activities are significantly less enjoyable, significantly necessitate more energy to initiate, and are significantly more daunting or intimidating. When examining the variables of enjoyment, effort, and daunting in order to predict participants' weekly engagement in flow or more passive activities, surprisingly, the effort variable did not predict engagement in either flow or passive activities - the perceived effort required in flow activities was not a significant barrier to participants' engagement in such flow activity. Instead, enjoyment alone predicted the frequency at which participants engaged in passive leisure in a typical week, thus, the only predictor of engaging in more passive leisure during a typical week is participant's perception that such passive activities are enjoyable. The factor of enjoyment predicted engagement in flow activities and the variable of daunting was a significant barrier to engagement in flow activities.

The results reveal that people know high investment activities facilitate happiness better than passive activities, yet, only minutes before participants verbalized this awareness, they disclosed that they engage in passive rather than flow activities significantly more often on a weekly basis. Consequently, people may acknowledge what is best for them and that which they should be doing but many are not following through to completion. Analysis of participants' responses regarding the characteristics of passive activities offers explanation for the rationale of choosing passive over flow activities: passive activities are rated more enjoyable, require less effort to initiate, and are less daunting compared to flow activities. The researchers deduce that passive activities are perceived to be more fun in the moment because they require less activation energy.

Passive leisure, as viewed by Schiffer and Roberts (2018), is healthy and functional when utilized as a restorative, homeostasis-inducing, and re-energizing process with the intent of returning to flow activities. Conversely, exclusively engaging in passive leisure and resolving that 'relaxation' is the path to happiness can lead to complacency. Stagnation and complacency involve avoiding complexities and adversity and may lead to feeling overly secure with routine. Thus, passive leisure alone generally will not produce sustainable happiness or growth.

Inaccurate affective forecasting, as interpreted by Schiffer and Roberts (2018), is the reason why participants rated passive activities as more enjoyable than effortful ones; people often choose immediate pleasure regardless of knowing it does not facilitate long-term happiness. Impact bias is seen to interact with inaccurate affective forecasting in that people might be overestimating the lasting happiness potential of pleasurable activities, thus explaining the motivation to pursue passive activities.

Schiffer and Roberts (2018) share the view that focalism bias might influence the results in one of two ways. First, while engaging in pleasurable activities, one might devalue future flow activities and conclude that they will not facilitate happiness. The current study, however, shows that people are aware that pleasure is not eternal and will not offer long-term happiness. Second, and more possibly, focalism bias may foster the overestimation of how much participating in a future flow activity will affect overall happiness. Awareness of future plans might justify and compensate for the immediate engagement in passive leisure. Accordingly, the researchers state that people engage in 'procrastinated happiness' by believing they will be happier later or they will 'get to it tomorrow'. Based on these predictions, individuals engage in immediate passive leisure with the false presumption that a single future high-energy activity will compensate for immediately engaging in mindless passive activity.

One of the key difficulties in pursuing flow activities is how daunting (e.g. psychologically intimidating) the activity is. Despite the current finding that effort was not a significant barrier to participation in flow activities, the researchers believe that minimizing 'initiation effort' could

potentially help compensate the belief that an activity is overly daunting. One option to reduce initiation energy is to lighten the physical burden that is required to engage in flow activities. Regarding exercising, for example, a routine could entail assembling workout clothes the night before and choosing a nearby gym. Arranging required materials beforehand can facilitate the transition process into flow activities.

One reason people may let the daunting factor (psychological intimidation) interfere with pursuing flow activities, affirmed by Schiffer and Roberts (2018), is due to 'transition costs', defined as forecasts of discomfort likely produced during the initial minutes of flow activity engagement. When contrasted with the immediate pleasure of passive leisure, as in watching a movie on a comfortable sofa, the first several moments of vigorous exercise may be viewed as 'costly', fatiguing, and difficult. One may project their body will hurt, breathing will be strained, and enjoyment for the activity will only be felt later. Obviously, the more perceived discomfort to initiate a flow activity (even one not truly requiring high physical effort), the more daunting the activity becomes.

One way to counter the psychological intimidation potentially accompanying flow activities, acknowledged by Schiffer and Roberts (2018), is to execute 'controlled consciousness' which is the capacity to govern the direction of our attention. This ability facilitates control over distracting external stimuli and internal thoughts. Meditation, and mindfulness, for instance, can facilitate the practice of controlled consciousness. Focusing on the enjoyable and worthy elements of flow activities might negate the psychological and physical investments involved in commencing these activities. One mindfulness intervention promoted by Schiffer and Roberts (2018) involves utilizing 'SMART' goal tasks which is an acronym for: Specific (simple, sensible, significant); Measurable (meaningful, motivating); Achievable (agreed, attainable); Relevant (reasonable, realistic and resourced, results-based); and Time bound (time-based, time limited, time/cost limited, timely, time-sensitive). SMART goals are designed to be clear, and reachable, and may help individuals select goals related to flow-style activities they value.

In sum, people know that flow activities facilitate subjective well-being better than passive, homeostatic, restorative activities but generally do not act accordingly, perhaps due to not knowing ways to overcome the activation energy or transition costs necessary for the pursuit. This division may create the assumption that happiness will result from the quest for hedonism, thus one might develop a more passive approach to subjective well-being, choosing easier, enjoyable activities that demand less energy expenditure and are less daunting than high-investment flow activity. Advanced planning and arranging coupled with controlled consciousness may help in resolving the activation energy and transition costs that hinder our path to subjective well-being.

WHICH PERSONALITY TYPES BENEFIT FROM ONLINE POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY INTERVENTION?

Positive psychology interventions have been shown to be beneficial and effective (Sitbon, Shankland, & Krumm, 2019), for example, positive psychology exercises can decrease depression, and increase happiness, mindfulness, and positive emotions (Antoine, Dauvier, Andreotti, & Congard, 2018).

The ability of online positive psychology interventions (OPPIs) to improve happiness and reduce depression has been well-supported. Person-activity fit is considered an important moderating factor of outcome success from exposure to OPPIs. Individual personality traits, including the 'Big Five' personality traits of extraversion, neuroticism, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness to experience are seen as potential moderators of outcome of positive psychology interventions. Barnes and Mongrain (2019) highlight that: a) the positive psychology exercises of savoring, as well as practicing gratitude were more helpful for participants high in neuroticism in increasing positive affect; b) extraverted participants reported greater benefits from OPPIs; c) disagreeable compared to agreeable participants indicated greater benefits following a kindness exercise (Mongrain et al., 2018); and d) practicing optimism, as well as gratitude exercises, proved successful for self-critical individuals in lowering self-critical tendencies.

Barnes and Mongrain (2019), however, report that the research on the ability of personality factors to predict outcome following OPPIs has been inconsistent, hence, they studied personality types who might experience benefit, harm, or no effect from OPPIs fostering modification of these exercises for the general population.

The study by Barnes and Mongrain (2019) examined participants' various personality measures including attachment styles (avoidance attachment, anxious attachment), neediness, self-criticism, efficacy, gratitude, self-compassion, self-esteem, and the Big Five personality traits and accordingly assessed participants as being representative of one of three models of personality: Equanimity, Anxiety, or Agency.

The Equanimity model of personality refers to 'an even-minded mental state' reflecting both interpersonal and intrapersonal harmony, feelings of contentment and safety in relationships, socially desirable traits, and more globally, stable mental health and wellness, including agreeableness, self-acceptance, and adaptive functioning. The Anxiety personality type constitutes immature dependency, nervousness, emotional instability, feelings of threat, fearful, cautious, interpersonal anxiety, and an active threat protection system. The Agency personality model denotes achievement orientation, self-efficacy, personal strivings, a tendency toward exploration and curiosity, and an active drive-seeking and acquisition-focused system.

Participants were randomly assigned to one of ten positive psychology exercises and were instructed to complete their assigned exercise once daily for one week for approximately

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15 minutes. Participants completed a post-test outcome measure at the conclusion of the intervention and again at one, three, and six months later. The ten positive psychology exercises (of which 8 were active conditions and 2 were control conditions), from which one was assigned per participant, included:

3 good things: Write down three good things you experienced that day, and why those good things happened.

Positive reinterpretation: Describe a 'bothersome' event from your day, then answer questions intended to provide a positive outlook on the event.

Signature strengths: Participants initially completed the VIA Signature Strength Questionnaire (Authentic Happiness: www.authentichappiness.com) to highlight their top five personal strengths, then applied one of those strengths in a new way every day.

Self-compassion: Think about a distressing event from that day then write a letter to yourself about the event from a caring perspective.

Compassionate action: Act compassionately toward another person for 5 to 15 minutes per day.

Gratitude: List five things or gifts you were thankful for that day.

Listening to music: Choose and listen to three or four songs that you find uplifting.

Letter from your future self: Imagine yourself in a positive future, at a time of your choice, then give yourself concrete and compassionate advice on how to attain this possible future.

The following two control conditions rounded out the 10 exercise conditions to which participants were randomly assigned:

Early memories: Describe an early memory in as much detail as you can recall.

Early positive memories: Describe an early positive memory in as much detail as you can recall.

The relationships between the three models of personality and subjective well-being, and depression, along with the moderating effects of the three models of personality on the positive psychology interventions was examined. Outcomes from the active exercise conditions were compared to the outcomes of the control exercise conditions.

As predicted, higher Equanimity scores were associated with lower depression and higher subjective well-being at baseline (pre-active and pre-control condition exercise), along with low negative affect, high satisfaction with life, and high positive and compassionate affect. Due to a ceiling effect, individuals high in Equanimity benefited less from OPPIs than other participants.

Agency correlated with lower depression and higher subjective well-being at baseline, but at a lower magnitude than Equanimity, along with higher life satisfaction, fewer negative emotions, and more positive and compassionate emotions. Participants higher on Agency reported significant benefits from the positive psychology exercises with greater increases in positive and compassionate affect compared to the control conditions over the 6-month follow-up period.

Agency represented a goal-oriented personality variable comprised of efficacy, openness, and self-evaluation, and overall, depicts someone who is goal-driven and self-efficacious. Agency predicted increases in positive emotional functioning over time, possibly due to the inherent variables within this personality type, including efficacy, striving toward improvement, and goal-driven/striving.

Anxiety associated with higher depression and lower subjective well-being at baseline, along with lower satisfaction with life, more negative emotions, and fewer positive or compassionate emotions. Participants higher on Anxiety in the active exercise interventions exhibited decreases in negative affect and depression after the one-week exercise period and over the 6-month follow-up, along with significant increases in life satisfaction over the 6-month follow-up.

The active conditions, compared to the control groups, predicted decreases in depression and increases in positive affect between baseline and post-test, and these benefits were on-going between post-test and the six-month follow-up. Further, the active condition participants experienced increases in compassionate affect and decreases in negative affect between post-test and six-month follow-up which offers strong support for the availability of long-term gains obtained from participation in OPPIs.

Barnes and Mongrain (2019) note that Equanimity, compared to Anxiety and Agency, most strongly related to optimal psychological functioning at baseline. This model of personality includes reversed neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness which are variables relating to wellness and stability, simultaneously, it includes the qualities of gratitude, self-compassion, and self-esteem which are all positively related to high well-being. Collectively, individuals high on Equanimity are self-compassionate, possess a positive sense of self, and have harmonious relationships. It is not unexpected that these individuals did not benefit from the OPPIs given their high ceiling of such positive traits, in fact, this group experienced slight (effect sizes were small) increases in negative affect and decreases in compassionate affect across conditions at post-test and at the six-month follow up. The researchers surmise that these findings may represent regression to the mean, or possibly these individuals felt disappointed that they could not profit much from the interventions.

Participants high on Anxiety, compared to Equanimity and Agency, had the most to gain from the active interventions and they reported significant benefits after one week of practicing the OPPIs. This group reported sustained improvements in depressive symptoms, life satisfaction, and negative affect over the six-month follow-up period. Barnes and Mongrain (2019) express that individuals high on Anxiety are dependent on others and are attentive to the threat of an interpersonal loss. The active conditions may have facilitated the skills of affect regulation and being self-soothing via the exercises of practicing self-compassion, positive reinterpretation of negative life events, and creating optimistic goals. As such, people high on the personality

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orientation of Anxiety appear to be good candidates for online positive interventions.

The findings of this randomly assigned, placebo-controlled design study support the effectiveness of brief online interventions in decreasing psychological symptoms for distressed individuals (i.e., anxiety), and improving emotional functioning. This study is the first to show increases in compassionate affect over time resulting from positive psychology exercises. Interest in compassion-focused therapies and the effect of compassion upon reducing psychopathology is growing.

THE EFFECT OF TIME ON WELL-BEING

Layous et al. (2018) agree that individuals who savor the moment gain greater enjoyment and happiness from life, hence, appreciating daily events is worthy. Russo-Netzer and Cohen, (2023) highlight that positive psychology interventions are intentional activities that can increase an individual's life satisfaction and flourishing. Interventions such as practicing gratitude, focusing on character strengths, and practicing self-reflection, which foster savoring of life, often produce improvements in life satisfaction.

Savoring daily life, however, is challenging due to hedonic adaptation, whereby memorable and extraordinary daily events lose their emotional intensity over time and through repeated exposure. Positive activities and events only offer short-lived well-being increases due to the dampening of an individual's emotional response to positive or negative experiences over time (Okabe-Miyamoto & Boehm, 2020). Interestingly, hedonic adaptation is generally adaptive because sustaining high levels of positive or negative emotion for long periods of time can become overwhelming (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). For example, if the negative emotions of an unwanted divorce do not abate then the resultant sadness and anger might lead to lower productivity in many areas of life (Okabe-Miyamoto et al., 2023), hence, hedonic adaptation is essential to rebound from negative life experiences. Likewise, it is important to bounce back from positive experiences, such as winning the lottery (Brickman, et al., 1978). Lottery winners who maintain the emotion of elation face the risk of alienating friends and family, ignoring others taking advantage of their gain, difficulty in concentrating on important life tasks, or overspending on hedonic gains.

Another challenge to savoring daily life is the demands of daily life may require people to multitask or feel distracted, thus hindering savoring.

Savoring, as explained by Layous et al. (2018), is a form of emotion regulation by which people acknowledge and intensify the impact of positive events on positive emotions by responding in cognitively and behaviorally receptive ways (i.e., focusing intently on the present moment during a positive moment with a friend, or opting to remain longer than usual at an awe-inspiring location). 'Savoring interventions' are created to promote people's awareness of and response to positive events. Evidence-based techniques

to enhancing savoring include a direct and intentional focus on increasing savoring such as journaling about savoring efforts, or counting one's blessings; indirect approaches can involve limiting one's exposure to something pleasurable (i.e., eating a preferred dessert) to intensify the enjoyment, or imagining how life would be in the absence of a significant other. Likewise, successful approaches exist to assist individuals in appreciating their past through positive reminiscence or to positively anticipate their future.

As Layous et al. (2018) acknowledge, based on the scarcity principle, the value of a resource increases if its availability is limited while a resource that is abundantly available has limited value. Similarly, people who know their time in a certain place or their relationship with a particular person is limited (e.g., they are moving or travelling soon) may value each minute more. Accordingly, Layous et al. (2018) examined whether simply asking people to assume that time is scarce in a specific location will heighten their appreciation of that location. Specifically, participants were asked to imagine only having 30 days left before moving away from their present location and to intentionally participate in activities and spend time with people they will miss after leaving the location.

Layous et al. (2018) predict that introducing time scarcity will improve well-being because: a) it will augment receptivity to the positive aspects of one's surroundings, including people, events, and locations, and b) the heightened receptivity to the positive features of the surroundings will facilitate psychological need satisfaction which, in turn, will produce positive changes in well-being. Supporting this prediction is the construct entitled self-determination theory, which states that people have three essential psychological needs that promote optimal motivation, development, and well-being: Autonomy - perceiving being in control of one's own actions; competence - believing oneself to be skilled and effective; and connectedness - being close and connected to others. Layous et al. (2018) propose that when people actively savor their surroundings, including their family, friends, and co-workers, they may sense that they are freely choosing how to spend their time, productively managing their lives, and experiencing meaningful relationships, thus fulfilling their needs for autonomy, competence, and connectedness. Conversely, when people experience their daily life as replete with distraction and negativity, they may feel trapped in an uncontrollable situation, incompetent at performing daily tasks, and unsatisfied with their relationships.

Layous et al. (2018) examined whether college students instructed to imagine they were moving in one month, thus creating a sense of temporal scarcity, would exhibit greater global well-being over time compared to the control group which listed their weekly activities. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions which instructed: 'live this month like it was your last in your college town for a while' or 'keep track of what you do over the course of the week'. To control for possible demand effects, all

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participants were informed they would engage in positive practices designed to promote well-being.

Each group reported their activities and psychological need satisfaction (connectedness, competence, and autonomy) each week for 4 weeks, and at baseline, post-intervention, and 2-week follow-up; participants indicated their well-being, based on a composite of life satisfaction, positive emotions and negative emotions.

Those in the 'live this month' (LTM) group were given the following instructions:

Think about where you live right now. Consider all of the reasons that you like this area - special people, specific restaurants, places that are remarkably beautiful. Now, imagine that you will be moving far away in 30 days. Plan the next 30 days like they will be your last chance for a long while to enjoy your surroundings (e.g., people, places, other comforts). During this month, do all of the things you are going to miss while you're away. For example, get in touch with friends who are special to you and spend time in the spots that have made your current location feel like home to you. Seize the moment and take the time to enjoy what you love most about where you live, work, and study.

Then, participants were told there was no need to spend a lot of money or extra time in completing this study, and as much as possible, to actively appreciate and savor their activities while they engage in them. Finally, they were asked to keep track of what they did along with the thoughts and emotions they experienced because they would be reporting weekly, for 8 minutes, on their activities and experiences.

Participants in the control group received the following instructions:

During the next 7 days, keep track of your daily activities. You do not need to remember who you were with or how you might have felt during that time. Instead, just remember factual information about what you did. Do not alter your routine in any way; simply keep track of what you do. When you log back into the study, you will be asked to write an outline of what you did. For example: Monday: Went to school, gave a presentation in class, went to the gym, ate dinner, did homework, watched TV, went to bed. Tuesday: Went to work, had a meeting for new student organization, did homework, etc. Only the facts are important.

Each week, control group participants wrote for 8 minutes about their activities for the past week without examining their emotions or considerations regarding their plans.

At the conclusion of the 4-week intervention, the LTM participants increased in well-being by almost half a standard deviation ($d = 0.46$) while control group participants increased in well-being by less than half as much ($d = 0.21$).

A positive indirect effect of the LTM condition on well-being via need satisfaction was found at post-intervention (confidence interval = 95%) and at 2-week follow-up, suggesting the LTM condition fostered greater need

satisfaction than the control group, which elicited higher well-being at post-intervention and follow-up.

The findings show that: a) framing time as limited facilitates people to gain greater happiness from their surroundings; b) people are able to mentally simulate the experience of scarcity despite realistically having an abundance of time; and c) one mechanism by which savoring heightens well-being is by guiding individuals to perceive they are more connected, competent, and in-control (the three fundamental psychological needs of self-determination theory).

Psychological interventions as intentionally thinking gratefully or optimistically are positive in nature, but Layous et al. (2018) note that the intervention of time scarcity is contradictory and not positive in nature as a method to increase happiness because it requires seriously considering an upcoming loss. Individuals generally overestimate the extent to which pondering time scarcity will evoke sadness and underestimate how contemplating time scarcity will heighten happiness, possibly due to fixating on the impending loss rather than experiencing increased motivation and appreciation which may ensue. The mental practice of fabricating time scarcity, according to Layous et al. (2018) is "a 'stealth' counterintuitive happiness strategy that works in spite of individuals' assumptions (who tend to believe it will be bad for them), and thus, succeeds in spite of the placebo effect that plagues other straightforwardly positive interventions such as practicing gratitude or optimism."

Layous et al. (2018) specify that younger people derive more happiness from extraordinary life experiences while older individuals acquire more happiness from ordinary life experiences. Sensing time scarcity, therefore, is one intervention to help younger people derive greater need satisfaction and subjective well-being from their routine daily experiences.

All told, the study by Layous et al. (2018) presents evidence that perceiving time as scarce can make people happier, possibly by encouraging them to plan, participate in, and enjoy activities and obtain autonomy, competence, and connectedness from ordinary experiences and surroundings. Appropriately, Layous et al. (2018) cite seventeenth century poet Robert Herrick who asserted 'Gather ye rosebuds while ye may', highlighting the need to enjoy ourselves while we can, before we lose the opportunity or become too old.

EFFECT OF EVERYDAY CREATIVE ACTIVITY ON FLOURISHING

Conner et al. (2018) acknowledge that creativity is associated with emotional functioning, specifically, creativity usually originates from a positive emotional state. Emotional states that are positive, activated, and motivating, such as feeling happy, upbeat, and elated are more likely to promote creative ideas in the laboratory. Higher positive affect has been shown to precede creative workplace problem-solving, and to stimulate spending time on creative goals on days

when one feels energetic and happy rather than angry or gloomy.

Whereas positive emotional states are known to foster creative behavior, the effect of creativity on emotional states (the emotional consequences of creativity) is unclear.

Questions arise such as: a) Is there an emotional benefit to being creative? b) Does being creative (i.e., playing music, devising a novel solution to a problem) benefit subjective well-being unrelated to how we feel during the act?

Conner et al. (2018) indicate that creativity can improve emotional well-being as shown by: 1) employees who rated their workplace as more creative expressed greater enthusiasm and less depression than employees who experienced their workplace as less creative; and 2) greater employee creativity, as evaluated by their manager, associated with more self-reported excitement and interest, and lower loneliness and depression.

Another question investigated by Conner et al. (2018) is whether and how creativity may influence other facets of subjective well-being unrelated to affect. These researchers expect creativity to be related to flourishing, which is a term describing 'eudaimonic well-being', defined as a state of optimal functioning characterized by feelings of meaning, engagement, and purpose in life (i.e., Ryff, 2023). Creative pursuits are usually self-propelled and intrinsically motivating which are essential motivations that promote greater flourishing. Further, creativity is linked to flow states, which positively affect subsequent flourishing and happiness. As such, if endeavoring in creative behavior does increase subjective well-being, then it is likely to foster a sense of flourishing, along with any effects it has on positive affect and negative affect.

Conner et al. (2018) examined whether creative behavior in daily life leads to increased well-being as measured by positive affect, negative affect, and flourishing. They used a daily diary data-set of participants who reported for 13 days their daily experiences of positive affect, negative affect, flourishing, and creative activity contained within a larger diary of common daily behaviors. The researchers studied whether self-reported creative activity on one day led to an increase in next-day well-being, and whether well-being increased next-day creative activity. Such positive results may reveal creativity as a treatment plan for improving well-being.

The influence of certain personality traits on the carry-over effects of creativity was also researched by Conner et al. (2018), by essentially asking if creative activity increases well-being for all or only select people. A possible personality moderator to the carry-over effects of creativity is 'openness to experience', which is a predisposition toward cognitive exploration. Individuals higher in openness to experience have more creative goals and accomplishments, higher creative self-efficacy, and are more likely to perceive themselves as creative people who value being creative. Correspondingly, openness to experience people may gain a greater well-being increase after engaging in creative acts

because creativity fulfills their greater need for autonomy and reinforces their identity as being creative.

Participants' daily diary measured creative activity by using a Likert scale in response to the following message:

'Overall, how creative were you today? Creativity includes coming up with novel or original ideas; expressing oneself in an original and useful way; or spending time doing artistic activities (art, music, painting, writing, etc.)'.

The daily diary included 9 adjectives that measure positive affect at 3 different levels of activation: energetic, enthusiastic, excited (high activation); happy, cheerful, pleasant (medium activation); calm, content, relaxed (low activation), along with 9 adjectives that measure negative affect at 3 different levels of activation: angry, hostile, irritable (high activation); nervous, anxious, tense (medium activation); and dejected, sad, unhappy (low activation). Participants rated each adjective regarding how they felt that day on a Likert scale.

The daily diary included a Flourishing Scale that measured feelings of purpose and meaning in life, engagement, and social connectedness. Statements included, for example, 'Today I led a purposeful and meaningful life'; 'Today, I was engaged and interested in my daily activities'; 'Today, my social relationships were supportive and rewarding'. Participants used a Likert scale to rate each item regarding how they felt that day.

Results indicated that engaging in creative activity on one day predicted a significant increase in next-day positive affect, and even stronger, next-day flourishing, whereas experiencing higher positive affect or flourishing on one day was not predictive of more creative activity the next day.

Individuals who engaged in creative pursuits today felt significantly more energetic, enthusiastic, and excited the next day (high activation positive affect; $p < .001$); people who engaged in creative pursuits today felt significantly more calm, content, and relaxed (medium activation positive affect; $p < .015$), but there was only a trend, at a lesser significant level, for creative pursuits to carry over to medium activation positive affect states such as feeling happy, cheerful, and pleasant ($p < .057$). No carry-over effects of creative activity onto next-day negative affect were found at any of the three levels of activation. No carry-over effects of affect were observed at any of the three levels of activation onto next-day creative activity. Creative activity on one day had unique effects on next-day enthusiasm and flourishing that were not completely caused by the next-day creative pursuits themselves, thus, the increased well-being following creativity is not simply due to sustained creative behavior.

This study found that people feel more enthusiasm and greater flourishing following days when they were more creative than usual suggesting that everyday creative activity fosters increased well-being. The previous day's creativity significantly predicted heightened positive affect and flourishing even when controlling for next-day creative activity. This observation suggests an upward spiral for well-being and creativity, specifically, engaging in creative

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activity promotes well-being increases the next day, and this well-being increase is likely to facilitate creative behavior on the same day.

Clinically, Conner et al. (2018) suggest that the recommendation of engaging in creative activities can represent an intervention strategy for improving well-being, and master works of art are not required, rather, everyday, mundane creative pursuits suffice. Engaging in creativity may potentially be added to the list of interventions that have shown capability to improve well-being and flourishing, such as fostering gratitude expression, practicing loving kindness meditation, savoring, giving to others, and exercise (i.e., Ko et al, 2021; Margolis & Lyubomirsky, 2020). Other common positive psychology interventions include: positive recollection, positive psycho-education, identifying and using strengths and virtues, engaging in positive thinking, goal setting, performing acts of kindness, practicing mindfulness, life review (positive reminiscence of personal memories), practicing forgiveness, engaging in meaningful activities, imagining and believing in one's best possible self, experiencing spiritual activities, pursuing a healthy lifestyle, and practicing self-compassion. Given that personality did not moderate the effects of creativity upon well-being, this creativity intervention may work for most people. The individual need not be highly creative, open to experience, or an artisan to benefit from finding a creative activity of personal interest to be experienced occasionally. Routine, daily creative experiences as working on a creative hobby or having a momentary insight are causes and effects of healthy functioning. Engaging in creative goals is both an indication that the individual is doing well and a way to facilitate positive experiences. These researchers remind us that creativity and flourishing are connected both within the same day, as previous diary and experience sampling analyses have shown, and they are linked across time: creative pursuit engagement in a given day predicts greater flourishing the next day, thus, creativity promotes well-being in one's daily world.

CONTENTMENT and TRANQUILITY: SIMILARITIES and DIFFERENCES

Berenbaum et al. (2019) conducted two studies to identify similarities and differences between contentment and tranquility. These researchers used three different operational definitions for the concept of contentment: a) it stimulates people to savor their current life circumstances and recent successes; fosters a sense of oneness with the individual's world; and promotes integration of one's recent events and achievements into her or his overall self-concept and world view; b) contentment is felt when our current resources match or surpass our level of need; and c) contentment results from a sense of completeness, whereby completeness means a state in which an intentional object such as the self, aspects of a person's life, or the total of all existence is thought to be whole and entire, unrelated to whether the present experience is pleasant or unpleasant.

Two different definitions for tranquility were used: a) it is pleasant inactivity in body and mind (and it cannot exist during physiological exertion, whereas contentment can be present during physiological exertion); and b) tranquility is experienced when we are at peace with our current status, unrelated to goal attainment (while contentment occurs when we experience our needs, goals, and concerns being satisfied).

When comparing the correlates of contentment and tranquility among younger (mean age = 18.9 years) and older (mean age = 74.4 years) adults, contentment was strongly associated with life satisfaction in both groups whereas tranquility was only moderately associated with life satisfaction among older adults, and only weakly associated with life satisfaction among younger adults. In examining the personality correlates of these constructs, contentment was consistently positively associated with conscientiousness and extraversion while tranquility was inconsistently associated with conscientiousness and weakly negatively associated with extraversion. While assessing the effect of various life activities on these constructs, contentment was most strongly associated with activities involving nurturance (positively associated) and entertainment (negatively associated).

In Study 1 by Berenbaum et al. (2019), participants wrote a one-sentence description of each of the 10 things that lead to their experiencing some sort of pleasure (i.e., contentment/satisfaction, tranquility/serenity, interest/curiosity, fun/cheerful, vigor/energy). Participants then used a 5-point Likert scale to rate the extent to which each activity produced the emotional experience of a) contented/fulfilled/satisfied, and b) tranquil/calm/serene.

Each participant's listed pleasure activity was rated on a Likert scale on the degree to which it involved: a) a social component; b) an intellectual component; c) fulfilling basic needs, such as eating and sleeping; d) a physical component; e) nurturing someone/something; f) mastery/virtuosity; g) spirituality; and h) a form of entertainment.

The results of Study 1 found that both contentment and tranquility were positively associated with nurturant and basic needs activities and negatively associated with entertainment activities. Mastery activities were positively associated with contentment and negatively associated with tranquility. Tranquility was positively associated with spirituality and negatively associated with social and physical activities whereas contentment was not significantly associated with these three activities. Contentment was positively associated with intellectual activities while tranquility was not significantly associated with this activity.

In Study 2 by Berenbaum et al. (2019), rather than exploring the relationship between contentment and tranquility and the types of activities engaged in, the research focused on attitudinal approaches taken toward activities and toward life in general. Specifically, participants completed a questionnaire measuring the degree to which: a) the pleasure obtained by participants comes from the outcome of activities - the outcome focus; b) the pleasure participants gain comes

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from the process of engaging in activities - the process focus; and c) the extent to which participants are accepting of life's challenges and their own shortcomings.

The questionnaire that participants completed regarding outcome focus used a Likert scale in response to these statements: a) 'The pleasure I experience tends to come from how things turn out (in other words, the successful outcome of certain activities)'; b) 'The pleasure I experience tends to come from getting some sort of reward or sense of accomplishment'; c) 'The pleasure I experience tends to occur after the activities (after I know how things turn out)'; and d) 'My engagement in the activities tends to be goal-focused (my focus tends to be on a particular goal or outcome I am hoping to achieve).'

Process focus was measured with a Likert scale pertaining to these statements: a) 'The pleasure I experience tends to come from the act of doing certain activities (regardless of how things turn out)'; b) 'The pleasure I experience tends to occur during the activities (before I know how things are going to turn out)'; and c) 'I tend to engage in the activities because the activities themselves give me pleasure.'

Acceptance was measured by the following statements (each statement began with, 'Leaving aside the things that tend to lead you to experience pleasure...') using a Likert scale: a) 'Do you find it easy to accept the challenges of life?'; b) 'Do you find it difficult to accept disappointment and hardship?'; and c) 'Are you able to feel OK about your shortcomings and imperfections?'

Participants completed a questionnaire that indicated the degree to which they generally experience each of 16 pleasurable emotions, using a Likert scale. For example, contentment was assessed using the terms, contented, fulfilled, and satisfied, and tranquility was measured by the terms, calm, serene, and tranquil.

Finally, participants were instructed to complete a daily diary, for seven consecutive days, at 8:00pm and they had until 4:00am the next day to complete each day's diary. Each daily diary was identical and consisted of questionnaires assessing daily pleasurable emotions, outcome focus, process focus, and acceptance. Participants were told to 'think about a specific time during the day today when you experienced some sort of pleasure' before responding to the questionnaires.

Contentment, but not tranquility, was associated with an outcome focus. Contentment and tranquility were associated with acceptance but their associations with process and outcome focuses were less strong and consistent.

Berenbaum et al. (2019) agree that contentment is associated with savoring acceptance because contentment is associated with savoring current life circumstances, and because contentment emanates from a sense of completeness. Tranquility was associated with acceptance because tranquility is associated with being at peace with one's current state or status, independent of what that state or status happens to be.

These researchers also found that contentment and tranquility are negatively associated with neuroticism, and they propose this link exists for at least two possible reasons: a) neuroticism leads to a state of non-acceptance, which promotes diminished tranquility; and b) a lack of acceptance leads to lessened contentment, which adds to heightened neuroticism.

In interpreting the results, Berenbaum et al. (2019) believe that feelings of satiation significantly contribute to contentment. In other words, contentment arises after people have enjoyed the 'taste' of something (e.g., food, an activity) and then no longer wish to continue tasting. This view is consistent with the conception that contentment stems from a sense of completeness, with the additional proposal that contentment also arises from a sense of completion (i.e., one has completed a needed meal or job).

Further, these theorists conceive that another feature of contentment, along with a sense of completion, is the absence of regret and negative judgments. This interpretation is based on contentment's positive association with acceptance, and negative association with neuroticism.

In interpreting the tranquility results, Berenbaum et al. (2019) believe that people will feel tranquil when they accept whatever the future may deliver and they feel no pressure to do anything. Second, they propose that tranquility arises when a person feels no need to pursue anticipatory pleasure and does not want anything, as opposed to contentment, which is associated with consummatory pleasure and with liking. As such, tranquility is associated with the absence of demand which coincides with the view of tranquility as 'pleasant inactivity of the mind' - but Berenbaum et al. (2019) sense that tranquility is more a freedom from need/desire to attempt to change/control the future than current inactivity. Third, these researchers profess that contentment and tranquility include an acceptance of one's current status but with a distinction: contentment involves the acceptance of one's current status in relation to the past (thus, the absence of regret), whereas tranquility involves the acceptance of one's current status in relation to the future (thus, the absence of pessimism).

SAVORING MODERATES the DAILY DEMANDS and PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL RELATIONSHIP

We experience various demands (stressors, inconveniences, and hassles, such as work commuting or troublesome errands) and uplifts (positive events, such as receiving a compliment or experiencing a beautiful sunset) daily. Sytine et al. (2019) note that, on average, daily stressors are reported to occur on 40% of days, with an effect of low to medium severity. Daily uplifts are reported to occur, on average, five to six times more often than hassles for adults. The process of savoring, defined as proactively endeavoring to sustain and enhance the positive feelings associated with positive events, has been associated with fewer negative mental health outcomes, such as fewer anxiety and depressive symptoms, higher positive affect, and increased well-being and life

satisfaction. Savoring involves the positive control of positive emotions by prolonging the feeling of happiness beyond the event instead of simply sensing a momentary uplift (i.e., Cullen et al., 2024). This action of 'positive reflection' (synonymous with savoring) is associated with reduced stress and health complaints. As indicated by Sytine et al. (2019), older adults, aged 55 to 94, who savored more expressed greater life satisfaction regardless of their health status whereas for those adults who savored less, health was a greater predictor of life satisfaction. Additionally, savoring may buffer the negative effects of experiencing daily demands, hence, Sytine et al. (2019) investigated savoring as a possible moderator of the daily demands-positive psychological states relationship.

In contrast to positive events, negative events are often more pertinent and weighted thus producing more lasting consequences. The experience of daily demands is shown to be associated with increased stress, diminished health and mood, and the worsening of existing chronic health conditions.

Sytine et al. (2019) examined how savoring positive events may buffer people from the detrimental consequences that can arise when experiencing a large number of demands on a given day. Specifically, they studied how daily demands, uplifts, and savoring are related to an individual's daily psychological capital (PsyCap).

Psychological capital involves four essential psychological states for effective organizational behavior: hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy. Hope is demonstrating perseverance and goal orientation toward success. Optimism reflects the predisposition to expect positive outcomes in the present and future. Resilience represents the perceived ability to recover from adversity. Self-efficacy relates to the belief in one's ability to succeed or effectively complete a task. Collectively, these four positive psychological states are termed Psychological Capital (PsyCap) and these four traits are associated with lower perceptions of overall stress, subjective well-being, and desirable employee outcomes such as work performance, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job stress, and turnover intentions. Further, PsyCap is considered beneficial to an individual's psychological well-being over time.

The Sytine et al. (2019) study tested these hypotheses:

1. Daily uplifts will be positively related to PsyCap.
2. Daily demands will be negatively related to daily PsyCap.
3. Daily savoring will be positively related to daily PsyCap.
4. Daily demands and daily savoring will interact to predict daily PsyCap while controlling for uplifts, in that given the presence of more daily demands, individuals who savor more will report greater PsyCap compared to those who savor less.

Procedurally, participants completed a consecutive eight-day daily diary and surveys involving daily demands, daily uplifts, whether they savored the uplift or not, and their PsyCap. Daily demands was assessed by responding to items such as, 'I didn't have enough time to get things done' and 'I had many interruptions'. Daily personal uplifts indicated

whether the participant experienced personal uplifts during the day, and sample items included, 'I enjoyed ...' and 'I found time to relax and unwind'. Savoring daily experiences measured the degree to which individuals tried to sustain their good feelings toward each daily uplift they experienced. Daily PsyCap measured the four psychological states of hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy. Hope included the item, for example, 'There are lots of ways around any problem'. Optimism included items such as, 'When things were uncertain for me, I usually expected the best' and the reverse item of, 'Things never worked out the way I wanted them to'. Resilience was determined using items as, 'I usually managed difficulties one way or another' along with the opposite item of, 'When I had a setback, I had trouble recovering from it, moving on'. Participants responded to each survey item using a Likert-scale, ranging from 'Strongly agree' to 'Strongly disagree', except for Daily savoring which used an agreement scale ranging from 'Very much' to 'Not at all'.

The results of this study found that uplifting experiences and savoring were positively correlated with overall PsyCap and with each of the four psychological states of PsyCap. On the same day, daily uplifts were positively related to overall PsyCap as well as to each of the four psychological states. This finding shows that experiencing daily positive events is associated with an individual's positive motivational states. Conversely, daily demands were found to be negatively related to overall PsyCap, as well as to hope, optimism, and resilience; but demands were not related to self-efficacy, which implies that when encountering daily demands, the participants' beliefs regarding their ability to succeed or accomplish a task were not diminished. Further, savoring was found to be positively related to PsyCap, optimism, and resilience on the same day of the uplifting experience, implying that savoring a positive experience is related to heightened psychological resource gain.

In relation to Hypothesis 4, the findings revealed that daily savoring significantly interacted with daily demands to predict PsyCap, optimism, and resilience after controlling for same day uplifts and the outcome measured on the previous day. The relationship between savoring and PsyCap was stronger when the daily demands were high ($p < .01$), but not when the daily demands were low (not significant). Likewise, the relationship between savoring and optimism was strong under high daily demands ($p < .01$) but was not significant under low daily demands. The relationship between savoring and resilience was strong under conditions of high demands ($p < .01$) and was not significant in the low demands condition. The interaction effects between savoring and demands did not predict hope or self-efficacy.

The results indicate that individuals who reported little savoring disclosed lower overall PsyCap, optimism, and resilience compared to those who savored more, and these relationships were heightened on high demand days. The suggested interpretation of the data is that on days when the participants savor more, they possess higher capabilities for directing their cognitive resources toward strengthening their

positive expectations, recovering from adversity, and enhancing overall positive mental health, in contrast to focusing on the negative outcomes associated with demands.

The findings show that 'positive reflection' was related to lower negative mental health outcomes, especially for the participants who encountered more positive experiences. Additionally, the findings demonstrated that savoring acted as a buffer between encountering demanding situations and PsyCap.

Sytine et al. (2019) note that several possible processes exist that can explain the positive effects of savoring. First, savoring is related to greater positive affect, which might increase PsyCap as a resource for responding to daily demands. Second, the broaden and build theory of positive emotions explains that positive emotions allow people to expand the range of their thoughts and actions while simultaneously building resources for the future. Third, savoring may facilitate the redirecting of thoughts from focusing on the stress produced by daily demands toward more positive experiences. This reappraisal of daily demand stress and redirecting resources to savoring positive experiences may evoke greater positive affect and thereby increase PsyCap. It is worthy to know that savoring positive experiences may buffer us from the adverse motivational consequences of exposure to high daily demands.

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TEST - SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING: APPLIED RESEARCH

6 Continuing Education Contact Hours

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Passing is 70% or better.

For True/False questions: A = True and B = False.

TRUE/FALSE: A = True and B = False

1. **Implicit theories are a fundamental component of people's motivational systems that impact appraisals.**
A) True B) False
2. **Growth mindsets predict optimistic appraisals regarding the potential for future success.**
A) True B) False
3. **Research does not suggest believing that happiness can change is associated with greater well-being and relationship satisfaction.**
A) True B) False
4. **Clinically, interventions devised to create growth mindsets, deemed to be attainable for many people, can positively affect how individuals experience numerous life domains.**
A) True B) False
5. **In older adults, research reports that possessing a well-developed sense of meaning, which closely relates to a self-transcendent life purpose, associates with higher ratings of subjective well-being and lower depression levels, less serious medical issues and physical decline, and increased longevity.**
A) True B) False
6. **Opposed to popular belief about people committed to beyond the self activities, purposeful respondents do not appear to sacrifice self-oriented endeavors.**
A) True B) False
7. **Exhibiting affective reactivity in response to minor daily inconveniences/upsets predicts general affective distress and a greater chance of reporting chronic physical health conditions or affective disorders 10 years later.**
A) True B) False
8. **Research suggests that the deleterious effects of stressful events (daily hassles and life events) on well-being are not due to the event itself but more so by the emotional reactivity connected to events.**
A) True B) False
9. **Self-serving bias is not a predisposition to attribute successful outcomes to internal and stable causes and unsuccessful outcomes to external and unstable forces.**
A) True B) False
10. **Research found that self-serving bias occurred when participants evaluated the causes of their feeling subjective well-being as well as when feeling a lack of subjective well-being.**
A) True B) False
11. **Research notes that individuals possessing agency are goal-directed and can intentionally modify their environment to perform actions which achieve intended life outcomes.**
A) True B) False
12. **One way to counter the psychological intimidation potentially accompanying flow activities, acknowledged by research, is to execute 'controlled consciousness' which is the capacity to govern the direction of our attention.**
A) True B) False
13. **Focusing on the enjoyable and worthy elements of flow activities might negate the psychological and physical investments involved in commencing these activities.**
A) True B) False

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14. **Advanced planning and arranging coupled with controlled consciousness may help in resolving the activation energy and transition costs that hinder our path to subjective well-being.**
A) True B) False
15. **Research does not support the effectiveness of brief online interventions in decreasing psychological symptoms for distressed individuals (i.e., anxiety), and improving emotional functioning.**
A) True B) False
16. **Positive activities and events only offer short-lived well-being increases due to the dampening of an individual's emotional response to positive or negative experiences over time.**
A) True B) False
17. **Research does not show that framing time as limited facilitates people to gain greater happiness from their surroundings.**
A) True B) False
18. **One mechanism by which savoring heightens well-being is by guiding individuals to perceive they are more connected, competent, and in-control (the three fundamental psychological needs of self-determination theory).**
A) True B) False
19. **Creative pursuit engagement in a given day predicts greater flourishing the next day, thus, creativity promotes well-being in one's daily world.**
A) True B) False
20. **Research findings demonstrated that savoring acted as a buffer between encountering demanding situations and PsyCap.**
A) True B) False

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