



**A Quick Guide To
Positive Psychology
&
Wellbeing**

Contents

What Is Positive Psychology?.....	3
What Is Wellbeing?	4
PERMA.....	5
What Are Positive Psychology Interventions?.....	6
1. Best Possible Self	8
2. Practicing Gratitude	9
3. Expressing Gratitude	10
4. Mindfulness	10
5. Self-Compassion Break	12
6. Character Strengths and Virtues	13
7. Loving Kindness Meditation.....	15
References.....	16



What Is Positive Psychology?

Positive Psychology can be defined as the scientific study of wellbeing, and it encompasses the capacities, potentials, and abilities which enable people to attain optimal functionality and flourish^{13,14}. The field focuses on the simple things in life that provide people with joy and a sense of meaning, as well as the strengths and virtues that allow for people to succeed. Furthermore, Positive Psychology can be described as a movement to address the full spectrum of what it means to be human. Positive Psychology focuses on the capacities of humans and the motivating factors that enable them to achieve their potential¹⁵.



What Is Wellbeing?

Wellbeing can be defined in many ways; although most wellbeing definitions encompass the following elements: psychosocial stability, purpose, positive relationships, positive emotions, and resilience from negative states ^{1,2}. Therefore, satisfying these components gives you a great opportunity to potentially improve your wellbeing ².

The following page features the commonly used wellbeing model **PERMA** which focuses on the different elements that enable a person to achieve high wellbeing ².

Flourishing refers to a state of high wellbeing whereby you are actively able to engage with the world around you, are self-motivated, feel fulfilled and are able to achieve your goals and live up to your potential².



Flourishing does not mean that you will always feel great, instead it means that you will learn to be resilient and hopeful when your day is not okay.

PERMA

Adapted From Martin Seligman's (2018) "PERMA And The Building Blocks Of Well-being"

Positive Emotions



More than just happiness and joy, positive emotions encompass feelings of peace, serenity, awe, hope and love

Engagement



Complete absorption in a task which creates a state of flow whereby time passes quickly, and you are in a deep state of enjoyment

Relationships



Engaging in positive and meaningful relationships where you are accepted and respected

Meaning



Finding purpose in life and actively pursuing activities which are in line with your goals and beliefs

Accomplishments



Celebrating both small and large successes in your life, from getting up and showering each day to getting your dream job



What Are Positive Psychology Interventions?



Positive Psychology Interventions refer to a range of empirically derived practices which are effective at elevating wellbeing through altering thought processes and behaviours, fostering positive emotions, promoting resilience, encouraging the development and use of character strengths, and allowing for the reconciling of negative experiences and emotions ^{16,17}. Positive Psychology Interventions allow for interpersonal growth and despite not being specifically designed to combat mental illness, they are effective mechanisms for reducing depressive symptoms ¹⁸. It is important to be open-minded when trying different Positive Psychology Interventions, as individual differences, such as personality, gender, levels of motivation, ethnicity and culture all affect their ability work¹⁹.



7 Positive
Psychology
Interventions For
Maximising Wellbeing

1. Best Possible Self

Best Possible Self is a form of mental imagery, which entails you **imagining yourself at your greatest** and writing down how you see yourself, where you see yourself and what you see yourself doing³. It involves considering all aspects of your life in the way you wish them to be **in your greatest and most fulfilling dreams**³.



The following link will provide you with access to a free **Best Possible Self** activity on the Greater Good Science Center website:

https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/best_possible_self

DID YOU KNOW...

Imagining yourself at your best can make you more optimistic about the future and increase self-esteem.

It was found that imagining yourself at your best can reduce pessimistic thoughts about the future and increase peoples' positive outlooks on life³.

DID YOU KNOW...

Imagining a positive event can be just as powerful as experiencing the event in real life.

It was found that mental imagery activates the same areas of the brain associated with carrying out the imagined behaviour⁴. This can lead to increased confidence in performing tasks³.

2. Practicing Gratitude

Practicing Gratitude is a type of intervention that involves preferentially drawing your focus away from the negative aspects of your life, by **thinking about all the good things that are present in your life**, even if they are small in nature. It emphasises being thankful for what you have and promotes positive thinking⁴.

This intervention is most effective when practiced daily.

DID YOU KNOW...

Practicing Gratitude can cause you to view your life more positively.

It was found that people who actively contemplated the good in their life were more likely to feel positively about their life and less likely to feel negatively about their life⁴.

DID YOU KNOW...

Practicing Gratitude can increase sleep length and quality.

It was found that people who engaged in gratitude interventions regularly, slept for longer and reported a better night's rest⁴.

"I can see the shining sun" "I have people that care about me" "I live in a country with fresh air" "I am resilient" "I am alive" "I have a warm bed" "I am loved" "I have food to eat" "I live in a country that is not at war" "I have access to high quality medical care" "I am free to be me"



3. Expressing Gratitude

To put it simply, **Expressing Gratitude** is the act of **giving thanks**⁴. It can be for anything that is meaningful to you, whether small or big. It does not require any reading; all you need is insight into how others have helped you in your life. Furthermore, you can do it in a way that suits you: write a letter, say it in person or make a video.

DID YOU KNOW...

Expressing Gratitude is rewarding and helps you experience more positive emotions. It was found that giving thanks can make you feel happier, and make you feel more satisfied with your life⁴.

DID YOU KNOW...

Gratitude can increase optimism and hope. It was found that people who actively engage in gratitude interventions are more likely to report feelings of optimism, and hope⁴.

Thank You! Thank You! Thank You! Thank You
Thank You! Thank You! Thank You! Thank You

4. Mindfulness

Mindfulness involves treating thoughts with **curiosity**, **kindness** and **non-judgementally** and can be practiced informally or formally, as is the case with **Mindful Meditation**. Mindfulness can lead to an increase in **positive moods** and better **control over thoughts** ⁵. Furthermore, Mindfulness can **reduce the mind from wandering**, increase the amount of information a person can perceive and can allow a person to **change how they interact** with the world around them⁵.



The following link will provide you with access to **Mindfulness** activities on the Smiling Mind. The Smiling Mind is a free website with loads of guided and non-guided Mindfulness activities. P.S. They have an app which you can download for when you are on the go!

<https://www.smilingmind.com.au/>

DID YOU KNOW...

Mindfulness requires a good person-activity fit.

It was found that for mindfulness to be effective, participants must be matched to the right intervention ²⁰. This means that it is important to try different forms and see what you like and what agrees with you.

DID YOU KNOW...

Mindfulness can help with emotional regulation.

It was found that mindfulness-based practices allow a person to develop increased attentional capacities and heightened self-regulation (of emotions and behaviours). Additionally, mindfulness-based practices foster positive traits including compassion, composure, and wisdom ²¹.

5. Self-Compassion Break

The Self-Compassion Break is an informal intervention that features three fundamental aspects of self-compassion: **Mindfulness**, which in this case involves maintaining focus on something painful⁶. **Common humanity**, which involves understanding that everyone experiences trying times⁶. And **Self-kindness**, which involves being patient and loving oneself even when challenges arise⁶. Participants are urged to think of something that has been challenging and stress-provoking in their life. Then they must actively **attend to what is troubling them** and try and experience any unsettling emotions or stress through their body. This is followed by the **repetition of a few phrases which focus on mindfulness, common humanity, and self-kindness**.

The **Self-Compassion Break** is a 5-minute meditation that helps lessen the load of life struggles.

The following link will provide you with access to [The Self-Compassion Break Meditation](#), by Kristin Neff:

<https://self-compassion.org/guided-self-compassion-meditations-mp3-2/>

DID YOU KNOW...

The effects of Self-Compassion are long lasting. It was found that the positive effects of Self-Compassion practices can remain present up to 6-months after stopping regular use of the intervention²².

DID YOU KNOW...

Self-Compassion can alleviate feelings of shame and self-criticism. It was found that Self-Compassion based practices, had the capacity to reduce feelings of shame, perceived shame from external sources, inferiority complexes and submissive tendencies²³.

Mindfulness * Common Humanity * Self-Kindness

6. Character Strengths and Virtues

Character Strengths refer to the **positive attributes** that are inherent in people's thought processes, emotions and behaviours. Furthermore, they contribute to the way that a person conducts themselves in their everyday life ⁷.

Virtues refer to **moral-based qualities** that give strength and resilience, provide purpose and meaning and are built upon people's capacity for wisdom and insight ⁸.

Signature Strengths refer to a person's **top traits** which are **positive** in nature and are often used by the person to understand and interact with the world around them⁷.

The benefit of knowing what your **Character Strengths and Virtues** are, is that you can use them to **excel in all areas of life**, whether that be at work, school, or home and it is great to try using them **in a new way whenever you get the chance to** ⁹.

The following link will provide you with access to the free [Values In Action](https://www.viacharacter.org/survey/account/register) survey. All you have to do is register and you can find out what your Character Strengths are.

<https://www.viacharacter.org/survey/account/register>

DID YOU KNOW. . .

Focusing On Your Strengths Can Make You Happier. It has been found that people who use their Character Strengths on a regular basis are more likely to be satisfied with their life, particularly if their Signature Strengths involved Zest, Love, Gratitude and Hope ⁷

Values In Action: Character Strengths And Virtues



Wisdom & Knowledge
Curiosity
Love Of Learning
Open-mindedness
Creativity
Perspective

Transcendence
Appreciation Of Beauty
& Excellence
Gratitude
Hope
Humour
Religiousness



Courage
Authenticity
Bravery
Perseverance
Zest

Temperance
Forgiveness
Prudence
Modesty
Self-regulation



Humanity
Kindness
Love
Social Intelligence

Justice
Teamwork
Fairness
Leadership



Adapted from "Strengths Of Character And Well-being"
By Nansook Park, Christopher Peterson and Martin Seligman (2004)

7. Loving Kindness Meditation

Loving Kindness Meditation is a form of mindfulness meditation which focuses on being open-minded about your experiences and repeating words of **love** and **self-compassion**. This type of intervention has been shown to **increase feelings of self-worth, safety, self-love and happiness** which can in turn alleviate feelings of self-loathing, despair, negativity and downward spiralling ^{10,11}. This type of intervention is great at increasing resilience ¹².

Loving Kindness Meditation is a 20-minute meditation that instantly puts you at ease.

The following link will provide you with access to the [Loving Kindness Meditation](#) by Kristin Neff:

<https://self-compassion.org/guided-self-compassion-meditations-mp3-2/>



Be More Resilient

Be More Resilient

Increase Your Self-Worth

Be More Resilient

Increase Your Self-Worth

Stop Downward Spiralling

Be More Resilient

Increase Your Self-Worth

Stop Downward Spiralling

Reduce Negativity

Increase Your Self-Worth

Stop Downward Spiralling

Reduce Negativity

Be More Resilient

Increase Your Self-Worth

Stop Downward Spiralling

Reduce Negativity

Be More Resilient

Increase Your Self-Worth

Increase Your Self-Worth

Stop Downward Spiralling

Reduce Negativity

Be More Resilient

Increase Your Self-Worth

Stop Downward Spiralling

Reduce Negativity

Be More Resilient

Increase Your Self-Worth

Stop Downward Spiralling

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