# M. A. PSYCHOLOGY

## SEMESTER - II (CBCS)

## PSYCHOLOGY PAPER- COURSE VIII

## (CORE COURSE)

# POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

## SUBJECT CODE : PAPSY204

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**PSYCHOLOGY**
**MA Semester System (CBCS) Revised Course 2022-23**
**Semester II, Course VIII**
**Core course: 4 credits, 60 Hours**
**Positive Psychology: PAPSY204**

**Objectives:**

1. To introduce concepts of positive psychology
2. To acquaint students with positive subjective states and processes
3. To enable students to appreciate importance of human strengths and virtues

**Unit 1. Introduction to Positive Psychology**

a. Need for a science of human strengths and virtues
b. Deconstruction of illness ideology and inclusion of human strengths
c. Positive Psychology: Assumptions, Goals and Definitions
d. Three pillars of positive psychology

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a. Subjective well-being
b. Positive emotions
c. The flow experience
d. Optimism and Hope

**Unit 3. Positive individual traits**

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b. Creativity
c. Wisdom
d. Empathy and altruism

**Unit 4. Positive Institutions**

a. Positive schooling
b. Aging well and role of family
c. Psychology of forgiveness for healthy society
d. The Me/We balance: Building better communities

**Books for study**

Snyder, C. R.; & Lopez, S. J. (2002). Handbook of Positive Psychology. New York: Oxford University Press.

Snyder, C. R.; Lopez, S. J.; & Pedrotti, J. T. (2011). Positive Psychology: The Scientific and Practical Explorations of Human Strengths. New Delhi: Sage South Asia Edition.

**References:**

Seligman, M. E. P (1991). Learned Optimism. NY: Knopf.

Seligman, M.E.P. & Csikszentmihalyi, (2000). Positive Psychology: An Introduction. *American Psychologist*. 55 (1), 5 14.

Carr, A. (2004). *Positive Psychology a science of happiness and human strengths*. NY: BR Publishers
Peterson C. (2006). *A Primer in Positive Psychology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Lopez, S. J. (Ed) (2013). *The Encyclopedia of Positive Psychology*. UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
Seligman, M. E. P.; Steen, T. A.; Park, N.; & Peterson, C. (2005). Positive Psychology Progress: Empirical Validation of Interventions. American Psychologist, 60 (5), 410-421.

**Evaluation**
**Internal Evaluation: 40 marks**
**Semester end Examination: 60 marks**

**Paper Pattern**: 7 questions to be set of 15 marks each out of which 4 are to be attempted. One of these could be short notes question which could combine more than one unit.

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# 1

# INTRODUCTION TO POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

**Unit Structure**



## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Positive psychology has been described in many ways and with many words, but the commonly accepted definition of the field is this:

"Positive psychology is the scientific study of what makes life most worth living" (Peterson, 2008).

To push this brief description a bit further, positive psychology is a scientific approach to studying human thoughts, feelings, and behavior, with a focus on strengths instead of weaknesses, building the good in life instead of repairing the bad, and taking the lives of average people up to "great" instead of focusing solely on moving those who are struggling up to "normal"

## 1.2 NEED FOR A SCIENCE OF HUMAN STRENGTHS AND VIRTUES

While the formal discipline of positive psychology has only existed since 2000,[1] the concepts that form the basis of it have been the subject of empirical study since at least the 1980s,[29][30] and present in religious and philosophical discourse for thousands of years. It has been influenced by humanistic as well as psychodynamic approaches to treatment. Predating the use of the term "positive psychology", researchers within the field of psychology had been focusing on topics that would now be included under this new denomination

The term positive psychology dates back at least to 1954, when Maslow's first edition of *Motivation and Personality* was published with a final chapter titled "Toward a Positive Psychology." In the second edition published in 1970, he removed that chapter, saying in the preface that "a positive psychology is at least available today though not very widely."

There have been indications that psychologists since the 1950s have been increasingly focused on the promotion of mental health rather than merely treating mental illness. From the beginning of psychology, the field has addressed the human experience using the "Disease Model," specifically studying and identifying the dysfunction of an individual.

Positive psychology grew as an important field of study within psychology in 1998 when Martin Seligman chose it as the theme for his term as president of the American Psychological Association. In the first sentence of his book *Authentic Happiness*, Seligman claimed: "for the last half century psychology has been consumed with a single topic only – mental illness," expanding on Maslow's comments. He urged psychologists to continue the earlier missions of psychology of nurturing talent and improving normal life.

Several humanistic psychologists, most notably Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, and Erich Fromm, developed theories and practices pertaining to human happiness and flourishing. More recently, positive psychologists have found empirical support for the humanistic theories of flourishing. In addition, positive psychology has moved ahead in a variety of new directions.

In 1984, Diener published his tripartite model of subjective well-being, positing "three distinct but often related components of wellbeing: frequent positive affect, infrequent negative affect, and cognitive evaluations such as life satisfaction."

In this model, cognitive, affective and contextual factors contribute to subjective well-being. According to Diener and Suh, subjective well-being is "based on the idea that how each person thinks and feels about his or her life is important."

Carol Ryff's Six-factor Model of Psychological Well-being was initially published in 1989, and additional testing of its factors was published in 1995. It postulates six factors which are key for well-being, namely self-acceptance, personal growth, purpose in life, environmental mastery, autonomy, and positive relations with others.

According to Corey Keyes, who collaborated with Carol Ryff and uses the term flourishing as a central concept, mental well-being has three components, namely hedonic (c.q. subjective or emotional), psychological, and social well-being. Hedonic well-being concerns emotional aspects of well-being, whereas psychological and social well-being, c.q. eudaimonic well-being, concerns skills, abilities, and optimal functioning. This tripartite model of mental well-being has received extensive empirical support across cultures

## 1.3 DECONSTRUCTION OF ILLNESS IDEOLOGY AND INCLUSION OF HUMAN STRENGTHS

The short history of clinical psychology suggests that change will not come easily. With the founding of the first "psychological clinic" in 1896 at the University of Pennsylvania, Lightner Witmer started the field of clinical psychology (Reisman, 1991). Witmer and other early clinical psychologists worked primarily with children who had learning or school problems—not with "patients" with "mental disorders" (Reisman, 1991; Routh, 2000). Thus, they were influenced more by psychometric theory and its emphasis on careful measurement than by psychoanalytic theory and its emphasis on psychopathology. Following Freud's 1909 visit to Clark University, however, psychoanalysis and its derivatives soon came to dominate both psychiatry and clinical psychology (Korchin, 1976).

Other developments encouraged clinical psychologists to devote their attention to psychopathology and to view people through the lens of the disease model. First, although clinical psychologists' academic training took place in universities, their practitioner training primarily occurred in psychiatric hospitals and clinics (Morrow, 1946, cited in Routh, 2000) where they worked mostly as psycho-diagnosticians under the direction of psychiatrists. Second, after World War II (1946), the Veterans

Administration joined the American Psychological Association in developing training centers and standards for clinical psychologists. Because these early training centers The short history of clinical psychology suggests that change will not come easily. With the founding of the first "psychological clinic" in 1896 at the University of Pennsylvania, Lightner Witmer started the field of clinical psychology (Reisman, 1991). Witmer and other early clinical psychologists worked primarily with children who had learning or school problems—not with "patients" with "mental disorders" (Reisman, 1991; Routh, 2000). Thus, they were influenced more by psychometric theory and its emphasis on careful measurement than by psychoanalytic theory and its emphasis on psychopathology. Following Freud's 1909 visit to Clark University, however, psychoanalysis and its derivatives soon came to dominate both psychiatry and clinical psychology (Korchin, 1976).

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Collegiate Dictionary, 1976). How little things have changed since the time of Hippocrates. Although few clinical psychologists today literally practice at the bedsides of their patients, too many of its practitioners ("clinicians") and most of the public still view clinical psychology as a kind of "medical practice" for people with "sick souls" or "sick minds." It is time to change clinical psychology's view of itself and the way it is viewed by the public. Positive psychology provides a long-overdue opportunity for making this change.

**How Clinical Psychology Became "Pathological":**

The short history of clinical psychology suggests, however, that any such change will not come easily. The field began with the founding of the first "psychological clinic" in 1896 at the University of Pennsylvania by Lightner Witmer (Reisman, 1991). Witmer and the other early clinical psychologists worked primarily with children who had learning or school problems— not with "patients" with "mental disorders" (Reisman, 1991; Routh, 2000). Thus, they were influenced more by psychometric theory and its attendant emphasis on careful measurement than by psychoanalytic theory and its emphasis on psychopathology. Following Freud's visit to Clark University in 1909, however, psychoanalysis and its derivatives soon came to dominate not only psychiatry but also clinical psychology (Barone, Maddux, & Snyder, 1997; Korchin, 1976).

Several other factors encouraged clinical psychologists to devote their attention to psychopathology and to view people through the lens of the disease model. First, although clinical psychologists' academic training took place in universities, their practitioner training occurred primarily in psychiatric hospitals and clinics (Morrow, 1946, cited in Routh, 2000). In these settings, clinical psychologists worked primarily as psychodiagnosticians under the direction of psychiatrists trained in medicine and psychoanalysis.

Second, after World War II (1946), the Veterans Administration (VA) was founded andsoon joined the American Psychological Association in developing training centers and standards for clinical psychologists. Because these early centers were located in VA hospitals, the training of clinical psychologists continued to occur primarily in psychiatric settings. Third, the National Institute of Mental Health was founded in 1947, and "thousands of psychologists found out that they could make a living treating mental illness" (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi,2000, p. 6).By the 1950s, therefore, clinical psychologists had come "to see themselves as part of a mere subfield of the health professions" (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 6). By this time, the practice of clinical psychology was characterized by four basic assumptions about its scope andabout the nature of psychological adjustment and maladjustment (Barone, Maddux, & Snyder,1997). First, clinical psychology is concerned with psychopathology—deviant, abnormal, and maladaptive behavioral and emotional conditions. Second, psychopathology, clinical problems, and clinical populations differ in kind, not just in degree, from normal problems in living, nonclinical problems and nonclinical populations.

Third, psychological disorders are analogous to biological or medical diseases andreside somewhere inside the individual. Fourth, the clinician's task is to identify (diagnose) the disorder (disease) inside the person (patient) and to prescribe an intervention (treatment) tha twill eliminate (cure) the internal disorder (disease).Clinical Psychology Today: The Illness Ideology and the DSM Once clinical psychology became "pathologized," there was no turning back. Albee (2000) suggests that "the uncritical acceptance of the medical model, the organic explanation of mental disorders, with psychiatric hegemony, medical concepts, and language" (p. 247), was the "fatal flaw" of the standards for clinical psychology training that were established at the 1950 Boulder Conference. He argues that this fatal flaw "has distorted and damaged the development of clinical psychology ever since" (p. 247). Indeed, things have changed little since 1950. These basic assumptions about clinical psychology and psychological health described previously continue to serve as implicit guides to clinical psychologists' activities. In addition, the language of clinical psychology remains the language of medicine and pathology—what may be called the language of the illness ideology. Terms such as symptom, disorder, pathology, illness, diagnosis, treatment, doctor, patient, clinic, clinical, and clinician are all consistent with the four assumptions noted previously.

These terms emphasize abnormality over normality, maladjustment over adjustment, and sickness over health. They promote the dichotomy between normal and abnormal behaviors, clinical and nonclinical problems, and clinical and nonclinical populations. They situate the locus of human adjustment and maladjustment inside the person rather than in the person's interactions with the environment or in sociocultural values and sociocultural forces such as prejudice and oppression. Finally, these terms portray the people who are seeking help as passive victims of intrapsychic and biological forces beyond their direct control who therefore should be the passive recipients of an expert's "care and cure." This illness ideology and its medicalizing and pathologizing language are inconsistent with positive psychology's view that "psychology is not just a branch of medicine concerned with illness or health; it is much larger. It is about work, education, insight, love, growth, and play"

This pathology-oriented and medically oriented clinical psychology has outlived its usefulness. Decades ago the field of medicine began to shift its emphasis from the treatment of illness to the prevention of illness and later from the prevention of illness to the enhancement of health (Snyder, Feldman, Taylor, Schroeder, & Adams, 2000). Health psychologists acknowledged this shift over two decades ago (e.g., Stone, Cohen, & Adler, 1979) and have been influential ever since in facilitating it. Clinical psychology needs to make a similar shift, or it will soon find itself struggling for identity and purpose, much as psychiatry has for the last two or three decades (Wilson, 1993). The way to modernize is not to move even closer to pathology-focused psychiatry but to move closer to mainstream psychology, with its focus on understanding human behavior in the broader sense, and to join the positive psychology movement to build a more positive clinical psychology. Clinical psychologists always

have been "more heavily invested in intricate theories of failure than in theories of success" (Bandura, 1998, p. 3).

They need to acknowledge that "much of the best work that they already do in the counseling room is to amplify strengths rather than repair the weaknesses of their clients" (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Building a more positive clinical psychology will be impossible without abandoning the language of the illness ideology and adopting a language from positive psychology that offers a new way of thinking about human behavior. In this new language, ineffective patterns of behaviors, cognitions, and emotions are problems in living, not disorders or diseases. These problems in living are located not inside individuals but in the interactions between the individual and other people, including the culture at large.

People seeking assistance in enhancing the quality of their lives are clients or students, not patients. Professionals who specialize in facilitating psychological health are teachers, counselors, consultants, coaches, or even social activists, not clinicians or doctors. Strategies and techniques for enhancing the quality of lives are educational, relational, social, and political interventions, not medical treatments. Finally, the facilities to which people will go for assistance with problems in living are centers, schools, or resorts, not clinics or hospitals. Such assistance might even take place in community centers, public and private schools, churches, and people's homes rather than in specialized facilities.

**The Social Deconstruction of the DSM:**

As with all icons, powerful sociocultural, political, professional, and economic forces built the illness ideology and the DSM and continue to sustain them. Thus, to begin this iconoclasm, we must realize that our conceptions of psychological normality and abnormality, along with our specific diagnostic labels and categories, are not facts about people but social constructions— abstract concepts that were developed collaboratively by the members of society (individuals and institutions) over time and that represent a shared view of the world. As Widiger and Trull (1991) have said, the DSM "is not a scientific document. . . . It is a social document"

The illness ideology and the conception of mental disorder that have guided the evolution of the DSM were constructed through the implicit and explicit collaborations of theorists, researchers, professionals, their clients, and the culture in which all are embedded. For this reason, "mental disorder" and the numerous diagnostic categories of the DSM were not "discovered" in the same manner that an archaeologist discovers a buried artifact or a medical researcher discovers a virus. Instead, they were invented. By describing mental disorders as inventions, however, I do not mean that they are "myths" (Szasz, 1974) or that the distress of people who are labeled as mentally disordered is not real. Instead, I mean that these disorders do not "exist" and "have properties" in the same manner that artifacts and viruses do. For these reasons, a taxonomy of mental

disorders such as the DSM "does not simply describe and classify characteristics of groups of individuals, but . . . actively constructs a version of both normal and abnormal . . . which is then applied to individuals who end up being classified as normal or abnormal" (Parker, Georgaca, Harper, McLaughlin, & Stowell-Smith, 1995, p. 93).

The illness ideology's conception of "mental disorder" and the various specific DSM categories of mental disorders are not reflections and mappings of psychological facts about people. Instead, they are social artifacts that serve the same sociocultural goals as our constructions of race, gender, social class, and sexual orientation— that of maintaining and expanding the power of certain individuals and institutions and maintaining social order, as defined by those in power (Beall, 1993; Parker et al., 1995; Rosenblum & Travis, 1996). Like these other social constructions, our concepts of psychological normality and abnormality are tied ultimately to social values—in particular, the values of society's most powerful individuals, groups, and institutions—and the contextual rules for behavior derived from these values (Becker, 1963; Parker et al., 1995; Rosenblum & Travis, 1996). As McNamee and Gergen (1992) state: "The mental health profession is not politically, morally, or valuationally neutral. Their practices typically operate to sustain certain values, political arrangements, and hierarchies or privilege" (p. 2).

Thus, the debate over the definition of "mental disorder," the struggle over who gets to define it, and the continual revisions of the DSM are not searches for truth. Rather, they are debates over the definition of a set of abstractions and struggles for the personal, political, and economic power that derives from the authority to define these abstractions and thus to determine what and whom society views as normal and abnormal. Medical philosopher Lawrie Resnek (1987) has demonstrated that even our definition of physical disease "is a normative or evaluative concept" (p. 211) because to call a condition a disease "is to judge that the person with that condition is less able to lead a good or worthwhile life" (p. 211). If this is true of physical disease, it is certainly also true of psychological "disease." Because they are social constructions that serve sociocultural goals and values, our notions of psychological normality-abnormality and health-illness are linked to our assumptions about how people should live their lives and about what makes life worth living. This truth is illustrated clearly in the American Psychiatric Association's 1952 decision to include homosexuality in the first edition of the DSM and its 1973 decision to revoke homosexuality's disease status (Kutchins & Kirk, 1997; Shorter, 1997).

As stated by psychiatrist Mitchell Wilson (1993), "The homosexuality controversy seemed to show that psychiatric diagnoses were clearly wrapped up in social constructions of deviance" (p. 404). This issue also was in the forefront of the controversies over post-traumatic stress disorder, paraphilic rapism, and masochistic personality disorder (Kutchins & Kirk, 1997), as well as caffeine dependence, sexual compulsivity, low-intensity orgasm, sibling rivalry, self-defeating personality, jet lag, pathological spending, and impaired sleep-related

painful erections, all of which were proposed for inclusion in DSM-IV (Widiger & Trull, 1991). Others have argued convincingly that "schizophrenia" (Gilman, 1988), "addiction" (Peele, 1995), and "personality disorder" (Alarcon, Foulks, & Vakkur, 1998) also are socially constructed categories rather than disease entities.

## 1.4 POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY: ASSUMPTIONS, GOALS, AND DEFINITIONS

Martin Seligman & Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi define positive psychology as "the scientific study of positive human functioning and flourishing on multiple levels that include the biological, personal, relational, institutional, cultural, and global dimensions of life.

Sheldon and King (2001) define positive psychology as "nothing more than the scientific study of ordinary human strengths and virtues"

Gable and Haidt (2005) defined positive psychology is "the study of the conditions and processes that contribute to the flourishing or optimal functioning of people, groups and institutions."

"Positive psychology is the scientific study of what makes life most worth living" (Peterson, 2008)

According to American Psychological Association (APA), Positive Psychology is a field of psychological theory and research that focuses on the psychological states (e.g., contentment, joy), individual traits or character strengths (e.g., intimacy, integrity, altruism, wisdom), and social institutions that enhance subjective well-being and make life most worth living.

**Seligman's (2003) three pillars of positive psychology**

1. Positive subjective experiences (such as joy, happiness, contentment, optimism, and hope)
2. Positive individual characteristics (such as personal strengths and human virtues that promote mental health);
3. Positive social institutions and communities that contribute to individual health and happiness.

**Assumptions of Positive Psychology:**

A major assumption of positive psychology is that the field of psychology has become unbalanced. (Simonton & Baumeister, 2005).

Human goodness and excellence are as authentic as disorders and distress and therefore deserve equal attention from mental health practitioners. Its time to challenge the disease model (Maddux,2002)

Human beings have the potential for good and that we are motivated to pursue a good life (Linley & Joseph,2006)

he most basic assumption of positive psychology is that human goodness and excellence are as authentic as disorders and distress and therefore deserve equal attention from mental health practitioners. The discipline of positive psychology is primarily focused on the promotion of the good life. The good life refers to those factors that contribute most predominately to a well lived life. Qualities that define the good life are those that enrich our lives, make life worth living and foster strong character (Compton, 2005).

Seligman (2002) defines good life as a combination of three elements: Positive connection to others or positive subjective experience; Positive individual traits and; Life regulation qualities.

Positive connection refers to aspects of our behaviour that contribute to positive connectedness to others. It is the positive subjective experiences that includes the ability to love, forgive, and the presence of spiritual connections, happiness and life satisfaction that combine to help and create a sense of deeper meaning and purpose in life. Positive individual traits may include such things as a sense of integrity, the ability to be creative, and the presence of virtues such as courage and humility.

Life regulation qualities are those qualities that allow us to regulate our day to day behaviour in such a way that we can accomplish our goals. Some of these qualities include a sense of individuality or autonomy, a high degree of a healthy self-control and wisdom to guide behaviour. According to positive psychology, the good life must also include the relationship with other people and the society as a whole (Park & Peterson, 2008; Duckworth, Steen & Seligman, 2005).

A primary goal of what could be termed as the positive psychology movement is to be a catalyst for change in the focus of psychology from a preoccupation with repairing the worst things in life to also building positive qualities (Joseph & Linley, 2006). This is especially relevant to the therapeutic context, since positive psychologists would argue that the role of the therapist is not to simply alleviate distress and leave the person free from symptomatology, but also to facilitate wellbeing and fulfilment which is not only a worthwhile goal in its own right, it also serves as a preventive function that buffers against future psychopathology and even recovery from illness (Joseph & Linley, 2006).

**Contributions to Happiness:**

The concept of happiness is the corner stone of the assumptions of positive psychology. Happiness is characterised by the experience of more frequent positive affective states than negative ones as well as a perception that one is progressing toward important life goals (Tkach & Lyubomirsky, 2006). Identifying factors that contribute to happiness has proven to be challenging. Interestingly though, one thing that does stand out in the research to date is that the attainment and pursuit of pleasure may not always lead to happiness.

Certain kinds of environmental factors or conditions have been found to be associated with happiness and include such things as; individual income, labour market status, health, family, social relationships, moral values and many others (Carr, 2004; Selim, 2008; Diener, Oishi & Lucas, 2003). Ultimately, in the pursuit of understanding happiness, there are two main theoretical perspectives which focus on addressing the question of what makes people feel good and happy. These are the hedonic and eudaimonic approaches to happiness (Keyes, Shmotkin, & Ryff, 2002).

Positive Psychology views happiness from both the hedonistic and eudaimonic view in which they define happiness in terms of the pleasant life, the good life and the meaningful life (Norrish & Vella-Brodrick, 2008). Peterson et al. identified three pathways to happiness from the positive psychological view:

Pleasure is the process of maximising positive emotion and minimising negative emotion and is referred to as the pleasant life which involves enjoyable and positive experiences. Engagement is the process of being immersed and absorbed in the task at hand and is referred to as the good life which involves being actively involved in life and all that it requires and demands. Thus the good life is considered to result from the individual cultivating and investing their signature strengths and virtues into their relationships, work and leisure (Seligman, 2002) thus applying the best of self during challenging activities that results in growth and a feeling of competence and satisfaction that brings about happiness.

Meaning is the process of having a higher purpose in life than ourselves and is referred to as the meaningful life which involves using our strengths and personal qualities to serve this higher purpose. The meaningful life, like the good life, involves the individual applying their signature strengths in activities, but the difference is that these activities are perceived to contribute to the greater good in the meaningful life.

Ultimately, it is a combination of each of these three elements described above that positive psychology suggests would constitute authentic and stable happiness

**Goals of Positive Psychology:**

According to Martin Seligman's goal of positive psychology was

- To refocusing the entire field of psychology.
- To find elements of positive psychology represented in so many different areas of psychology, from physiological to clinical psychology.
- To restore balance within the discipline of Psychology which was too much focused on negative aspects.

- To catalyze a change in psychology from a preoccupation only with repairing the worst things in life to also building the best qualities in life.
- To improve understanding of positive human behaviors to balance the negative focus of much mainstream research & theory (Sheldon & King, 2001).
- To develop an empirically-based conceptual understanding and language for describing healthy human functioning that parallels our classification and understanding of mental illness (Keyes, 2003)
  - To boost present well being.
  - To prevent future problems.
  - To make life worthwhile.

Positive psychology is concerned with eudaimonia, a Greek word meaning "good spirit". It is considered an essential element for the pursuit of happiness and a good life. It emphasizes cherishing that which holds the greatest value in life and other such factors that contribute the most to having a good life. While not attempting a strict definition of what makes up a good life, positive psychologists agree that one must be happy, engaged, and meaningful with their experiences. Martin Seligman referred to "the good life" as using your signature strengths every day to produce authentic happiness and abundant gratification.

Positive psychology complements, without intending to replace the traditional fields of psychology. Emphasizing the study of positive human development, could enhance our application and understanding in other fields. More specifically, those which are more clinical and scientific-based. Since they may produce a limited perspective and understanding. Positive psychology has also placed a significant emphasis on fostering positive self-esteem and self-image. Although positive psychologists, with a less humanist direction, focus less on such topics.

The basic premise of positive psychology is that human beings are often driven by the future more than the past. It also suggests that any combination of positive experiences/emotions, past or present, lead to a pleasant, happy life. Another aspect of this may come from our views outside of our own lives. Author of *Grit*, Angela Duckworth, might view this as having a prosocial purpose, which could have a positive psychological effect on our lives. Seligman identified other possible goals: families and schools that allow children to grow, workplaces that aim for satisfaction and high productivity, and teaching others about positive psychology. Psychologist Daniel Gilbert has also written extensively on the effects of time perception and happiness.

Those who practice positive psychology attempt psychological interventions that foster positive attitudes toward one's subjective experiences, individual traits, and life events. The goal is to

minimize pathological thoughts that may arise in a hopeless mindset and to develop a sense of optimism toward life. Positive psychologists seek to encourage acceptance of one's past, excitement and optimism about one's future experiences, and a sense of contentment and well-being in the present.

Related concepts are happiness, well-being, quality of life, contentment, and meaningful life.

- **Happiness:** Has been sought after and discussed throughout time. Research has concluded that happiness can be thought of in the way we act and how we think in relative terms to it.

- **Well-Being:** Has often been referred to what is inherently good for an individual both physically and mentally, though other aspects could be added in to define well-being.

- **Quality of life:** Quality of life encompasses more than just physical and mental well-being; it can also include socioeconomic factors. However, there is a cultural difference with this term, as it can be perceived differently in different cultures and regions around the world. In the simplest of terms, this is how well you are living and functioning in life.[1]

Positive psychology has also been a subject of criticism and accused of advancing misleading ideas about positivity. As a result, the principles of positive psychology are sometimes dismissed as bearing more in common with self-help tactics than scientifically-proven theories.

However, positive psychology techniques are now being utilized in other traditional aspects of therapy, with confirmed results supporting its effectiveness. The practice of well-being therapy, developed by psychologist Giovanni Fava from the University of Bologna, focuses on the self-observed well-being of the patient, rather than solely on their self-reported distress.

Carol Kauffman, director of the Coaching and Positive Psychology Initiative At Harvard University's McLean Hospital, outlined four techniques for integrating positive psychology into traditional therapy methods in the Harvard Mental Health Letter. These techniques mainly involve reversing the focus of therapy from negative events and emotions to more positive ones, developing a language of strength, balancing the negative and positive aspects of certain actions or situations, and building strategies that foster hope, such as identifying skills to tackle a particular problem and shifting focus to those skills.

Though the principles of positive psychology suggest that success can be built on personal strengths, it's also important to work on your weaknesses and achieve a healthy balance, so that you can attain a more fulfilled life.

## 1.5 THREE PILLARS OF POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Positive Psychology has three central concerns:

1. positive experiences,
2. positive individual traits, and
3. positive institutions.

Understanding positive emotions entails the study of contentment with the past, happiness in the present, and hope for the future. Understanding positive individual traits involves the study of strengths, such as the capacity for love and work, courage, compassion, resilience, creativity, curiosity, integrity, self-knowledge, moderation, self-control, and wisdom. Understanding positive institutions entails the study of the strengths that foster better communities, such as justice, responsibility, civility, parenting, nurturance, work ethic, leadership, teamwork, purpose, and tolerance.

Positive psychology is an emerging approach developed by leading psychologists, most notably Martin Seligman and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. The focus of positive psychology is on encouraging positive and effective behaviors [1] that help to bring out desired behaviors and applies well to many business and technical situations. Dr. Seligman noted in his writings that there are essentially three pillars that make up the scientific endeavor of positive psychology. The first two relate to individual behavior and the third is the study of *positive institutions*, which Seligman suggested was "beyond the guild of psychology." [2]This article will focus on that third pillar, which is within the realm of organizational psychology and of great interest to anyone who wants to be part of an effective organization.

The first two pillars of positive psychology focus on positive emotion and positive character, each of which contribute to the development of a sense of self-efficacy and personal effectiveness; these are both very important to individual success. Organizations, not unlike the people who comprise them, often have unique and complex personalities. Individuals who join the army or the police force certainly experience the culture of the organization in a very real way.

When people fail in their jobs, it is sometimes due to factors beyond their direct control; perhaps they could not fit into the culture and the expectations of the organization itself or the organization's culture made success very difficult to attain. What are the traits that we might want to highlight when looking at an organization from a positive psychology perspective?

Organizations that encourage curiosity, interest in the world, and a general love of learning provide an environment that is consistent with what Dr. Seligman had in mind with his first cluster, which he termed *wisdom*. Technology professionals could understand these traits in terms of organizations that encourage learning new technologies and frameworks and provide opportunities for professionals to constantly improve their

skills. Judiciousness, critical thinking, and open-mindedness along with ingenuity, originality, and practical street smarts are also attributes found among employees in effective organizations. Social, personal, and emotional intelligence describes organizations that encourage their members to respectfully understand both individual and group differences, including cultural diversity.

Organizations that encourage employees to feel safe when speaking up or taking the initiative can be understood to exhibit valor and courage, which is the cluster that Seligman termed *bravery*. Integrity and honesty, along with perseverance and diligence, are also grouped with these positive traits. The degree to which these characteristics and their active expression are valued in an organization will significantly impact that firm's functioning and results.

Positive organizations encourage their employees to take initiative and ensure that employees feel safe, even when reporting a potential problem or issue. Dysfunctional organizations punish the whistleblower, while effective organizations recognize the importance of being able to evaluate the risks or problems that have been brought to their attention and actively solicit such self-monitoring efforts.

The cluster of *humanity and love* consists of kindness, generosity, and an intrinsic sense of justice. Organizations that encourage a genuine sense of delivering value to customers and also the idea of giving back to their community model these behaviors and are more likely to see employees living these values on a daily basis. Of paramount importance is good citizenship and teamwork as well as a strong culture of leadership. While many organizations may have individuals who exhibit these strengths, highly effective organizations make these values a cultural norm, which, in turn, becomes the personality of the organization itself.

The cluster of *temperance* includes self-control, humility, and modesty, all of which can be understood in terms of delivering quality to all stakeholders, including ensuring real value to stock-holders instead of simply advertising and marketing hype. Gratitude is a fundamental trait of many successful organizations; this involves modeling positive behaviors and actively participating in helping the communities that support them. These are often the same organizations that have a strong sense of hope and optimism and are mindful of the future; again all traits found in Seligman's view of positive psychology. Some organizations have a culture that exhibits spirituality, faith, and even religiousness, which aligns with their personality. Most importantly, playfulness and humor, along with passion and enthusiasm, all make for a corporate environment that breeds successful and loyal employees.

Over the years, many organizations have unfortunately become associated with greed and dysfunctional behavior. However, the study of positive psychology provides an effective, comprehensive, and attainable model to understand those companies that exhibit cultures that encourage and

nurture the positive behaviors that research indicates leads to success and profitability.

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# 2

# POSITIVE SUBJECTIVE STATES

**Unit Structure**



## 2.1 INTRODUCTION AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

Subjective well-being (SWB) is defined as 'a person's cognitive and affective evaluations of his or her life' (Diener, Lucas, & Oshi, 2002). There are two factors of SWB – cognitive and affective. The cognitive factor refers to one's evaluations about his or her life satisfaction in the specific areas of life such as family or work and life satisfaction as a whole. The affective factor refers to the emotional responses to the various life-events.

SWB comprises of three components – positive affect, negative affect and life satisfaction. A person experiences high SWB when he experiences positive affect, low level of negative affect and high life satisfaction. Positive affect refers to experience of pleasant emotions, moods and feelings (joy, pride, gratitude) Negative affect refers to experience of unpleasant emotions (anger, disgust, fear).

Various philosophers and researchers have contributed to the understanding and development of the concept of SWB. To begin with, the Utilitarian focused on understanding the physical, mental and emotional aspects of pleasure and pain, experienced by individuals. According to Jeremy Bentham, the essence of a good life is presence of pleasure and absence of pain.

Flugel (1925) recorded and studied the emotional reactions of the people to various events and categorized them. George Gallup, Gerald Gurin and Hadley Cantril initiated the use of surveys as assessment method on a

large scale. After the World War II, various researchers started using surveys with general public regarding their happiness and life satisfaction.

Norman Bradburn (1969) showed that the positive and negative affect have different correlates, are independent and merely not just opposites of each other; thus, implying that these two affects must be studied separately to gain broader understanding of its implication on the SWB. Thus, just as elimination of pain does not guarantee experience of pleasure similarly reducing the experience of negative affect will not necessarily increase the experience of positive affect.

Since the mid-1980's, the study of SWB has grown rapidly and emerged as a scientific discipline. SWB emphasizes on the individuals and their evaluations about their life events. With the shift in trend from collectivism to individualism, the significance of SWB has increased. People all over the world have become concerned about their quality of life and not merely about the 'material' possessions. Development of various scientific methods has helped in development of an applied discipline.

## 2.2 MEASURING SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING {SWB}

The earlier survey questionnaires were simplistic concerning single question about happiness and life satisfaction of the people. The scores obtained from these questions about the overall evaluation of people's life were found to be well converged (Andrew & Withey, 1976).

Over the time, the multi-item scales were developed. These multi-item scales had greater validity and reliability as compared to the single-item scales. Factors like life satisfaction, pleasant affect, unpleasant affect and self-esteem were found to be distinct from each other by Lucas, Diener & Suh (1996).

One important issue with the use of self-report instruments is the validity. The use of other methods of assessment like the expert ratings based on the interviews with participants, reporting feelings at random moments in day-to-day life, memories for positive and negative events of the participants' lives, reports obtained from family and friends and smiling were found to converge with the self-report measures by Sandvik, Diener & Seidlitz (1993).

Use of multi-method battery to assess the SWB will be more beneficial rather than merely relying on multi-item questionnaires. Combination of various assessment methods like that of participants' reports and experience sampling can supplement the information obtained through the questionnaires and can also aid in understanding how people construct their judgments about SWB.

Schwarz & Strack (1999) concluded that people's judgments about life satisfaction are not fixed and that they use the latest information to construct their judgments about life satisfaction. Certain information could be more important for some people and not so much for others. Thus,

different people will base their judgments depending on what information seems important to them at that specific point in time. People from individualistic cultures, are more likely to base their judgments on the level of their self-esteem; whereas people from collectivistic cultures are more likely to base their judgments on the opinions of the other people (Diener& Diener, 1995).

People's judgments about their life satisfaction may differ depending upon the type of information they seek to base their judgments. Some people may focus more on the positive/ pleasant aspects of their lives whereas others may focus more on the negative/problematic aspects. People also differ in terms of how much importance they assign to their emotions in basing their life satisfaction judgments (Suh & Diener, 1999). Thus, people's judgments about life satisfaction depend on different information that they consider important and this information may change over the time.

Thomas & Diener (1990) found that the judgments of life satisfaction and happiness are influenced by their current mood, their beliefs about happiness and how easily they can retrieve the positive or the negative information. Researchers have also differentiated between people constricting the judgements about life satisfaction on the basis of momentary thoughts and feelings or global assessment of the same.

According to Kahneman (1999), the momentary evaluations offer more accurate judgments of SWB as they are less likely to be distorted by biases. On the other hand, the global evaluations are also important as they offer an insight into how an individual summarizes his or her life experiences as a whole. Thus, these two types of evaluations - specific and global – offer two distinct sets of information, pertaining to specific aspects of people's life and global judgments about their life satisfaction.

### 2.2.1 Theoretical Approaches to SWB:

The various theories of happiness can be categorized into three groups:

i. Need and goal satisfaction theories

ii. Process or activity theories

iii. Genetic or personality theories

### Need and Goal Satisfaction Theories:

The central idea of the need and goal satisfaction theories is that happiness is experienced when there is elimination of pain and gratification of the biological and psychological needs. These theories believe that the individuals attain higher life satisfaction as they attain their goals or needs and move towards their ideal state. Omodei & Wearing (1990) found that there was a positive correlation between the satisfaction of needs in individuals and their degree of life satisfaction.

The concept of pleasure principle put forth by Sigmund Freud and Maslow's theory of hierarchy of motives represent this category of theories. These theoretical approaches posit that reduction in the amount of tension and satisfaction of the various biological and psychological needs and goals of an individual, causes happiness. Thus, according to these theories happiness is an end state that is achieved when the needs are met and goals are fulfilled.

**Process or Activity Theories:**

These theories posit that engagement in an activity can be a source or cause of happiness. Csikszentmihalyi (1975) suggested that people are happy when they are involved in activities that interest them and match their level of skill sets. This match between the activities and that of the skills lead to a state of mind 'flow' and further said that people who experience this flow are the ones who experience high degree of happiness.

Having significant life goals and being able to pursue them can lead to SWB (Emmons, 1986 & Little, 1989). It was found that people experience more happiness when they are involved in activities for intrinsic reasons (Sheldon, Ryan & Reis, 1996). Individuals who have significant goals in life are more likely to experience positive emotions, are more likely to be energy-driven and feel that their life is more meaningful (McGregor & Little, 1998).

**Genetic or Personality Theories:**

These approaches believe that there is a component of stability in the levels of well-being and happiness experienced by people and that SWB is strongly influenced by the genetic or personality factors. An individuals' judgments about SWB reflect the cognitive and emotional reactions of his life circumstances, these life situations can be relatively stable or short-lived. Hence, the researchers have to study both the aspects of SWB; long-term and momentary.

Diener & Larsen (1984) found that people's reactions change according to the change in circumstances and those changes in reactions are reflected in their momentary SWB. The stable patterns of an individuals' SWB can be predicted through the average of the momentary reports across various situations. They further found that people have specific emotional responses to various life circumstances and that these emotional responses are moderately to strongly stable over the period of time.

The stability and the consistency of the SWB can be attributed to the genetic factors; certain people are prone to be happy or unhappy. Certain personality traits have been lined to SWB. Lucas & Fujita (2000) found that Extraversion is correlated strongly with pleasant affect and Neuroticism is associated with negative affect. Tellegen et al. (1988) studied the genetic influences on SWB. They studied and compared monozygotic twins who were reared apart to dizygotic twins who were

reared apart and also with the monozygotic and dizygotic twins who were reared together.

They found that 40% of the variability in the positive affect and 55% of variability in the negative affect could be predicted by genetic variation. The results could be attributed to the environmental influences as well but genetic factors play an important role in influencing the characteristic emotional responses to the various life circumstances (Tellegen et al., 1988)

Besides theses theoretical explanations, the differences in the SWB can be attributed to various other factors as well. The stable individual differences in how people think about the world can lead to differences in SWB. Some people recall and process the pleasant aspects of the life better than the unpleasant aspects. Some other factors like the cognitive dispositions, optimism, the expectancy for control seem to influence the judgments of SWB.

### 2.2.2 Correlates of Subjective Well-Being:

#### Demographic Correlates of SWB:

Although genetic factors and temperamental predisposition have an impact on the SWB; the other factors related to an individual also play an important role. This section explores the demographic correlates of SWB. Wilson (1967) found that the personality factors and the demographic factors both have an influence on the SWB. Campbell, Converse & Rodgers (1976) found that the demographic factors like that of the age, income and education do not account for much variance in the judgments of SWB.

Diener & Diener (1996) and Diener et al. (1999) analysed the demographic correlates of SWB and came to following conclusions – Demographic factors like age, sex and income are related to SWB, the influence of these demographic factors is usually small, and most of the people are moderately happy. Thus, it can be concluded the demographic factors can distinguish between people who are extremely happy and people who are moderately happy.

An individual's goals and needs must be taken into consideration when understanding the relation between income and SWB. If the person's material needs keep increasing rapidly than the income then the benefits of the rising income will be diminished or negligible. Age and Gender are also related to SWB even if the effects are small; depending on what component of the SWB is being measured.

Other demographic factors like subjective perception of one's physical health, marital status and religious faith are also positively correlated to SWB. However, the way people perceive their health is more important than the objective reality, the effect of marital status varies for men and women, similarly the effect of religious activities will depend on the specific religious inclinations. Hence, it is important to study the

individual components of SWB to understand its correlates (Diener et al., 1999).

### 2.2.3 Culture and SWB:

Not just the demographic factors, the cultural factors also play an important role in SWB. In collectivistic cultures, self-esteem is not strongly associated with SWB (Diener & Diener, 1995) also extraversion seems to be less strongly associated with pleasant affect (Lucas et al., 2000). Cultural differences in the significance of personality congruence plays an important role in SWB.

Personality Congruence is the extent to which the behaviour of a person is consistent with his feelings, across various situations. The collectivistic cultures are less congruent than the individualistic cultures, thus the personality congruence is less strongly associated with SWB in collectivistic cultures than the individualistic cultures (Suh, 1999). In the collectivistic cultures the opinions and the wishes of a person's significant others; rather than his own emotions plays an important role in determining the level of life satisfaction (Suh et al., 1998).

The cultural norms also exert an influence on the demographic correlates of SWB. Wealth can lead to greater SWB in poorer countries, when the basic needs are not met. People in the richer countries are more likely to be happier, but this could either be because they have more luxuries and also high levels of equality, longevity and human rights.

Marriage is also an important correlate of SWB that is influenced by the cultural factor. Unmarried couples are happier than the married couples in the individualistic countries, whereas married couples are happier than the unmarried couples in the collectivistic cultures because of the social approval that comes with marriage (Diener et al., 2000).

Since, SWB is crucial for the being happy hence, several interventions are designed to boost the SWB and eventually the happiness of an individual. Fordyce (1977, 1983) evaluated a program based on the idea that the SWB can be increased if the people learn to imitate the characteristics of people who are happy and have high SWB. Characteristics of happy people include being organized, occupied, more socialization, having positive outlook and healthy personality. The study found lasting effects of this intervention. The programs for enhancing SWB can be effective, given that more efforts have to be directed for development, implementation and evaluation of such interventions.

## 2.3 POSITIVE EMOTIONS

### 2.3.1 Historical Development of Positive Emotions:

Positive Emotions refer to the pleasant or desirable responses to the situations ranging from emotions like joy, contentment, interest, gratitude, love etc. Positive emotions also indicate absence of negative emotions like hate, anger, disgust, fear etc. Positive emotions are capable of producing

optimal functioning in an individual not just momentarily but for longer period of time.

Positive emotions essentially play a very significant role in our lives. Hence, we must work towards cultivating positive emotions in us and also promoting in those among other people around us. Experiencing positive emotions is not an end state rather it is a means to achieve and improve physical and psychological health and thereby greater life satisfaction. Given the significant role the positive emotions play in our life and happiness; we need to focus on conducting research in this area. Before that we also need to look into the historical development of the research conducted in the area of positive emotions.

**Neglected Relative to Negative Emotions:**

Traditionally, the focus of research in psychology has been to understand the problem behaviours (disorders) and to understand the causes and remedies for theses problem behaviours. As a result of this, the focus has always been on understanding the negative emotions rather than the positive emotions. When negative emotions are experienced extremely, inappropriately and over longer periods of time may cause development of behaviours characterized by anxiety, phobias, aggression, depression etc.

Another reason why positive emotions were given secondary importance is because most of the models assume that the emotions are associated with or followed by specific action tendencies. These specific action tendencies were assumed to be adaptive in nature and evolved over generations as they helped for survival.

Most of the specific action tendencies that were researched were the ones associated with the negative emotions. For example, fear is associated with escape and anger is associated with physical aggression. The action tendencies that are associated with the positive emotions are not specific in nature rather they are non-specific and vague in nature. For example, joy is associated with activation and contentment is associated with inactivity; theses action tendencies are too general than specific (Fredrickson & Levenson, 1998).

**Confused with related Affective States:**

The distinction between positive emotions and the other affective states like the sensory pleasure and positive mood has always been quite fuzzy. Various forms of sensory pleasure are confused with that of the positive emotions because both involve physiological changes and pleasant subjective feel; moreover, sensory pleasure and positive emotions often co-occur.

However, emotions are different from that of the physical sensations. Emotions require some form of cognitive appraisal – assigning meaning to the event. As against that, pleasure can be caused merely by a change in the physical environment. Another distinction is that, pleasure relies on the

body stimulation whereas, emotions can occur even in the absence of the external physical stimulation.

Emotions and mood are conceptually quite different from each other. Emotions occupy the foreground of the consciousness, are short-lived, and have an object. Mood on the other hand occupy the background of the consciousness, are long-lasting and objectless or free-floating in nature (Oatley & Jenkins, 1996; Rosenberg, 1998).

**Functions identified as Approach Behavior or Continued Action:**

The previous experiences of positive emotions, causes an individual to interact with their environment and engage in activities that are adaptive in nature from an evolutionary aspect. The connection between the positive emotions and activity engagement lead people to experience positive affect (Diener & Diener, 1996). Without this experience of positive affect, people would be disengaged or unmotivated to interact with their environment.

Thus, the most common function of the positive emotions is to facilitate approach behaviour or continued action. The other positive affective states like that of the sensory pleasure and the positive mood also play a role in approach behaviour or continues action. The sensory pleasure motivates people to approach or continue engaging in activities that are biologically useful to them, similarly the positive moods motivate the people to approach or continue to engage in the thoughts and action that was initiated (Cabanac, 1971; Clore, 1994).

### 2.3.2 The Broaden-And-Build Theory of Positive Emotions:

Fredrickson (1998) put forth the Broaden-and-Build theory of Positive Emotions stating that the positive emotions broaden the people's thoughts and actions and help them build their personal resources. The traditional approaches of positive emotions largely confused them with the other affective states, trying to fit them into the general models of emotions and focusing on approach or continuation as their basic function.

This new model is based on the specific action tendencies, which can best describe the function of the negative emotions. A specific action tendency can be described as the consequence of a psychological process that helps narrow down the thought-action sequence by urging the person to act in a particular way. In a life-threatening situation, such narrowed thought-action sequence helps the person to make quick decisions and facilitates immediate actions. Such specific action tendencies triggered by the negative emotions, have helped our ancestors for their survival.

Positive emotions do not or very rarely occur during the life-threatening situations, hence a specific action tendency to narrow the thought-action sequence in order to facilitate quick decision and action may not be required. On the contrary, the positive emotions have a completely opposite effect; they broaden the people's thought-action sequence, thus opening up a wide array of thoughts and actions. For instance, joy

stimulates creativity, interest stimulates exploration and contentment stimulates integration. Each of these sequences, explains the ways in which positive emotions broaden the thought-action sequences.

The specific action tendencies triggered by the negative emotions have direct and immediate benefits, that are adaptive for us in life-threatening situations. The specific action tendencies triggered by the positive emotions are indirect and long-term in nature, as the broadening helps us to build enduring resources. The positive emotions facilitate the building up of personal resources that ranges from physical, social, cognitive, emotional and psychological resources (Fredrickson, 1998 & 2000).

This theory explains that, through the experience of positive emotions people can evolve. As the following figure 1 explains; the experiences of positive emotions broaden the thought-action repertoires, which helps people build enduring personal resources, that transforms people into becoming more knowledgeable, creative, resilient, socially adaptable and physically and psychologically healthy individuals. The theory further explains that the initial experiences of positiveemotions create upward spirals towards further experiences of positive emotions.

**The Broadening Hypothesis:**

The broaden-and-build theory explains that the experiences of positive emotions, broaden the person's momentary thought-action tendencies. To put it in simple words, the positive emotions widen the array of our thoughts and actions. Isen et.al. (1985) found that positive emotions can impact the thoughts to become more inclusive, flexible, creative and receptive; and can produce more creative and variable actions.

The broadening hypothesis posits the win hypotheses, that the positive emotions broaden the people's thought-action repertoire and the negative emotions narrow the people's thought-action repertoires. The positive emotions widen the array of thoughts and actions whereas, the negative emotions narrow down the array of thoughts and actions. Fredrickson & Branigan (2001) conducted an experiment to test the twin hypotheses.

They induced the specific emotions of joy, contentment, fear and anger by showing the participants emotionally evocative short film clips. Participants were also shown non-emotional film clip for the neutral condition for comparison. Immediately following each of the film clip, the breadth of the participants' thought-action repertoires was measured. They were asked to imagine themselves in situation where similar feelings (emotions) would arise, and then to list what things they would do in such situations.

The results showed that, the participants in the two positive emotions condition (joy and contentment) identified significantly more things that they would do compared to the participants in the two negative emotions condition (fear and anger) and the participants in the neutral condition. The participants in the negative emotions condition named significantly

fewer things than those in the neutral condition (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2001).

**The Building Hypothesis:**

The broaden-and-build theory explains further that the experiences of positive emotions broaden the person's momentary thought-action tendencies which helps the person to build enduring personal resources. Positive emotions build enduring personal resources in terms of physical, intellectual and social resources.

The evidence suggestive of link between positive emotions and intellectual resources comes from the individual differences in attachment styles. The children who receive secure attachment from their caregivers tend to be more flexible, persistent and resourceful problem-solvers compared to their peers (Arend et. Al. 1978; 1979). They are more likely to seek exploration of novel places and thus develop better cognitive maps of the places (Hazen & Durrett, 1982). These intellectual resources acquired in the childhood extend into their adulthood as well.

The experience of positive emotions, broaden the thought-action repertoires, build enduring personal resources which together results in improved well-being of an individual. With improved personal resources people learn better coping strategies and resilience that will be helpful in the face of adversities and stressful situations. This theory proposes that the positive emotions and the broadened thinking influence each other in a reciprocal manner, thus creating upward spiral towards enhanced resilience and coping.

Fredrickson and Joiner conducted a study to understand the building hypothesis and concluded that over the time, positive emotions and broad-minded coping build on each other mutually. The broaden-and-build theory explains that experiences of positive emotions can build enduring psychological resilience and trigger the upward spirals towards psychological and emotional well-being. Thus positive emotions not only make people feel good at the present moment but also increases the likelihood of people being happy in the future.

**The Undoing Hypothesis:**

The broaden-and-build theory states that the experiences of positive emotions broaden the person's momentary thought-action repertoires whereas the negative emotions narrow down the thought-action repertoires; and hence, the positive emotions can also function in ways to 'undo' the effects of the negative emotions. This is called the undoing hypothesis (Fredrickson & Levenson, 1998).

The key components of the positive and the negative emotions cannot coexist simultaneously because a person's momentary thought-action repertoire cannot be simultaneously narrow and broad. The mechanism responsible for this incompatibility could be the 'broadening'. The positive emotions broaden the person's thought-action repertoire which

will loosen the hold gained by the negative emotions on the person's mind and body, by undoing the preparation for specific action.

Fredrickson et al., (2000) conducted an experiment to test the undoing hypothesis. The participants were first induced a high arousal negative emotion and then by random assignment; immediately induced mild joy, contentment, neutrality or sadness by showing short, emotionally evocative film clips. The results showed that the participants in the mild joy and contentment (two positive emotion conditions) exhibited faster cardio-vascular recovery than those in the neutral control condition and faster than those in the sadness condition.

The positive and the neutral films do not differ in what they do to the cardio-vascular system, they differ in what they can undo within the cardio-vascular system. The two distinct types of positive emotions (mild joy and contentment) were capable of undoing the cardio-vascular effects of the negative emotions because the positive emotions broaden the people's thought-action repertoire.

There are individual differences in the ability to make use of the undoing effect of the positive emotions. Block & Kremen (1996) found that people who score high on the self-report measures of psychological resilience show faster cardio-vascular recovery after the negative emotional arousal as compared to the people who score low of psychological resilience.

Highly resilient people experience more positive emotions than the less resilient people. The experience of the positive emotions helps them bounce back from the negative emotional arousal. Thus, the resilient people are experts in harnessing the undoing effect of the positive emotions.

**Intervention Programs:**

There are no techniques or interventions directly based on the broaden-and-build theory for increasing the prevalence of positive emotions. However, the broaden-and-build theory can explain the effectiveness of the existing techniques that can be reframed to increase the prevalence of the positive emotions.

There are no direct methods for inducing emotions among people. All the emotion inducing techniques are indirect in nature; they often focus on one component of the multi-component system. Emotions typically arise from the appraisals of the personal meaning of the of a specific event thus, the most useful emotion inducing technique is to shape the person's appraisals of a situation. The most effective technique is to recalling situations that elicit certain emotions. The other emotion-inducing techniques include a facial or a muscle configuration, a physiological state or a mode of thinking.

The interventions that have been discussed in this section are practicing relaxation and increasing pleasant activities.

**Practicing Relaxation:**

The various relaxation techniques range from meditation and yoga to imagery exercises and progressive muscle relaxation. These techniques have shown to produce relaxation and help treat problems caused or exacerbated by the negative emotions. The relaxation techniques are highly effective as they initiate the positive emotion of contentment (Fredrickson, 2000).

Contentment is a positive emotion that elicits cognitive changes rather than the physical changes. It integrates the present moment with the experiences into an enriched appreciation of one's place in the world (Fredrickson, 1998 & 2000). The relaxation techniques create conditions for experiencing the positive emotions by inducing the key components of contentment.

The Mediation exercises induce a state of mindfulness (full awareness of the present moment) that resemble the characteristic of contentment. The use of Imagery exercises, focus on specific situations (nature, previous experiences) known to be frequent precursors of contentment. Use of Progressive Muscle Relaxation creates tension-release sequence which gives way for relaxed contentment. The various relaxation techniques induce the components of contentment which further increases the probability of multi-component experience of contentment. The relaxation techniques are effective in treating problems caused by negative emotions because of the undoing effect of the positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2000). In the long term, the use of relaxation techniques can be useful for psychological growth and well-being.

**Increasing Pleasant Activities:**

The behavioural theories suggest that depression is caused due to deficit in response-dependent positive reinforcement. The interventions focusing on increasing the pleasant activities are based on the behavioural theories. The various interventions include; increasing the engagement of pleasant activities like being physically active (exercising), being creative, being close to the nature and socializing.

These interventions place emphasis on pleasant activities and not on pleasant subjective experiences (positive emotions). Although pleasant activities are capable of producing positive emotions, to what extent it happens depends on the subjective meanings attached by the individuals to those activities. The effectiveness of these interventions can be accelerated by increasing the pleasant activities and connecting it to the broadening and building effects of the positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2000).

Folkman (1997) suggested that positive emotions result from finding positive meaning. People find positive meaning in the activities and events of day-to-day life by reattaching those events and activities with positive values. In this context, engaging in physical activity can be viewed as personal achievement, attending a social event can be viewed as an opportunity to connect with other people and being close to the nature can

be seen as a shift from the monotonous activities. Finding positive meaning in such ways can produce experiences of contentment, joy, love and other positive emotions.

Finding positive meaning can produce significant therapeutic effects and can cause improvement in physical as well as psychological health and well-being. Fredrickson (2000) argued that finding positive meaning produces positive emotions that broaden the modes of thinking and build enduring personal resources. The intervention strategies focusing on increasing the pleasant activities can be used to focus more directly on finding positive meaning and experiencing positive emotions.

The broaden-and-build theory emphasizes on the ways in which positive emotions are significant elements of optimal functioning and hence essential aspect of positive psychology. The important contribution that this theory makes is that it is important to cultivate positive emotions un our lives and those around us, which can transform us into better persons, leading better lives.

## 2.4 THE FLOW OF EXPERIENCE

Studying the creative process in the 1960s (Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi, 1976), Csikszentmihalyi was struck by the fact that when work on a painting was going well, the artist persisted single-mindedly, disregarding hunger, fatigue, and discomfort—yet rapidly lost interest in the artistic creation once it had been completed. Flow research and theory had their origin in a desire to understand this phenomenon of intrinsically motivated, or autotelic, activity: activity rewarding in and of itself (auto self, telos goal), quite apart from its end product or any extrinsic good that might result from the activity. Significant research had been conducted on the intrinsic motivation concept by this period (summarized in Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Nevertheless, no systematic empirical research had been undertaken to clarify the subjective phenomenology of intrinsically motivated activity. Csikszentmihalyi (1975/2000) investigated the nature and conditions of enjoyment by interviewing chess players, rock climbers, dancers, and others who emphasized enjoyment as the main reason for pursuing an activity. The researchers focused on play and games, where intrinsic rewards are salient.

Additionally, they studied work—specifically, surgery—where the extrinsic rewards of money and prestige could by themselves justify participation. They formed a picture of the general characteristics of optimal experience and its proximal conditions, finding that the reported phenomenology was remarkably similar across play and work settings. The conditions of flow include:

- Perceived challenges, or opportunities for action, that stretch (neither overmatching nor underutilizing) existing skills; a sense that one is engaging challenges at a level appropriate to one’s capacities

- Clear proximal goals and immediate feedback about the progress that is being made. Being "in flow" is the way that some interviewees described the subjective experience of engaging just-manageable challenges by tackling a series of goals, continuously processing feedback about progress, and adjusting action based on this feedback.

Under these conditions, experience seamlessly unfolds from moment to moment, and one enters a subjective state with the following characteristics:

- Intense and focused concentration on what one is doing in the present moment • Merging of action and awareness
- Loss of reflective self-consciousness (i.e., loss of awareness of oneself as a social actor)
- A sense that one can control one's actions; that is, a sense that one can in principle deal with the situation because one knows how to respond to whatever happens next
- Distortion of temporal experience (typically, a sense that time has passed faster than normal)
- Experience of the activity as intrinsically rewarding, such that often the end goal is just an excuse for the process. When in flow, the individual operates at full capacity (cf. de Charms, 1968; Deci, 1975; White, 1959). The state is one of dynamic equilibrium. Entering flow depends on establishing a balance between perceived action capacities and perceived action opportunities (cf. optimal arousal, Berlyne, 1960; Hunt, 1965).

The balance is intrinsically fragile. If challenges begin to exceed skills, one first becomes vigilant and then anxious; if skills begin to exceed challenges, one first relaxes and then becomes bored. Shifts in subjective state provide feedback about the changing relationship to the environment. Experiencing anxiety or boredom presses a person to adjust his or her level of skill and/ or challenge in order to escape the aversive state and reenter flow.

The original account of the flow state has proven remarkably robust, confirmed through studies of art and science (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996), aesthetic experience (Csikszentmihalyi & Robinson, 1990), sport (Jackson, 1995, 1996), literary writing (Perry, 1999), and other activities. The experience is the same across lines of culture, class, gender, and age, as well as across kinds of activity. Flow research was pursued throughout the 1980s and 1990s in the laboratories of Csikszentmihalyi and colleagues in Italy (e.g., Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1988; Inghilleri, 1999; Massimini & Carli, 1988; Massimini & Delle Fave, 2000). The research in Italy employed the Experience Sampling Method (ESM), using pagers to randomly sample everyday experience. It yielded several refinements of the model of experiential states and dynamics in which the flow concept is embedded. The ESM and the theoretical

advances that it made possible are discussed in the section on measuring flow. During the 1980s and 1990s, the flow concept also was embraced by researchers studying optimal experience (e.g., leisure, play, sports, art, intrinsic motivation) and by researchers and practitioners working in contexts where fostering positive experience is especially important (in particular, formal schooling at all levels).

In addition, the concept of flow had growing impact outside academia, in the spheres of popular culture, professional sport, business, and politics. In the 1980s, work on flow was assimilated by psychology primarily within the humanistic tradition of Maslow and Rogers (McAdams, 1990) or as part of the empirical literature on intrinsic motivation and interest (e.g., Deci & Ryan, 1985; Renninger, Hidi, & Krapp, 1992). In recent years, a model of the individual as a proactive, self-regulating organism interacting with the environment has become increasingly central in psychology (for reviews, see Brandsta ¨dter, 1998; Magnusson & Stattin, 1998). This is highly compatible with the model of psychological functioning and development formed in concert with the flow concept (Csikszentmihalyi & Rathunde, 1998; Inghilleri, 1999).

A key characteristic that the flow model shares with these other contemporary theories is interactionism (Magnusson & Stattin, 1998). Rather than focusing on the person, abstracted from context (i.e., traits, personality types, stable dispositions), flow research has emphasized the dynamic system composed of person and environment, as well as the phenomenology of person-environment interactions. Rock climbers, surgeons, and others who routinely find deep enjoyment in an activity illustrate how an organized set of challenges and a corresponding set of skills result in optimal experience.

The activities afford rich opportunities for action. Complementarily, effectively engaging these challenges depends on the possession of relevant capacities for action. The effortless absorption experienced by the practiced artist at work on a difficult project always is premised upon earlier mastery of a complex body of skills. Because the direction of the unfolding flow experience is shaped by both person and environment, we speak of emergent motivation in an open system (Csikszentmihalyi, 1985): what happens at any moment is responsive to what happened immediately before within the interaction, rather than being dictated by a preexisting intentional structure located within either the person (e.g., a drive) or the environment (e.g., a tradition or script).

Here, motivation is emergent in the sense that proximal goals arise out of the interaction; later we will consider the companion notion of emergent long-term goals, such as new interests. In one sense, an asymmetry characterizes the person-environment equation. It is the subjectively perceived opportunities and capacities for action that determine experience. That is, there is no objectively defined body of information and set of challenges within the stream of the person’s experience, but rather the information that is selectively attended to and the opportunities for action that are perceived. Likewise, it is not meaningful to speak about

a person's skills and attentional capacities in objective terms; what enters into lived experience are those capacities for action and those attentional resources and biases (e.g., trait interest) that are engaged by this presently encountered environment.

Sports, games, and other flow activities provide goal and feedback structures that make flow more likely. A given individual can find flow in almost any activity, however—working a cash register, ironing clothes, driving a car. Similarly, under certain conditions and depending on an individual's history with the activity, almost any pursuit—a museum visit, a round of golf, a game of chess—can bore or create anxiety. It is the subjective challenges and subjective skills, not objective ones, that influence the quality of a person's experience. Flow, Attention, and the Self To understand what happens in flow experiences, we need to invoke the more general model of experience, consciousness, and the self that was developed in conjunction with the flow concept (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1988).

According to this model, people are confronted with an overwhelming amount of information. Consciousness is the complex system that has evolved in humans for selecting information from this profusion, processing it, and storing it. Information appears in consciousness through the selective investment of attention. Once attended to, information enters awareness, the system encompassing all of the processes that take place in consciousness, such as thinking, willing, and feeling about this information (i.e., cognition, motivation, and emotion). The memory system then stores and retrieves the information. We can think of subjective experience as the content of consciousness. The self emerges when consciousness comes into existence and becomes aware of itself as information about the body, subjective states, past memories, and the personal future. Mead (1934; cf. James, 1890/1981) distinguished between two aspects of the self, the knower (the "I") and the known (the "me").

In our terms, these two aspects of the self reflect (a) the sum of one's conscious processes and (b) the information about oneself that enters awareness when one becomes the object of one's own attention. The self becomes organized around goals (see Locke, this volume; Snyder, Rand, & Sigmon, this volume). Consciousness gives us a measure of control, freeing us from complete subservience to the dictates of genes and culture by representing them in awareness, thereby introducing the alternative of rejecting rather than enacting them. Consciousness thus serves as "a clutch between programmed instructions and adaptive behaviors" (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1988, p. 21). Alongside the genetic and cultural guides to action, it establishes a teleonomy of the self, a set of goals that have been freely chosen by the individual (cf. Brandsta¨dter, 1998; Deci & Ryan, 1985). It might, of course, prove dangerous to disengage our behavior from direct control by the genetic and cultural instructions that have evolved over millennia of adapting to the environment. On the other hand, doing so may increase the chances for adaptive fit with the present environment, particularly under conditions of radical or rapid change.

## 2.5 OPTIMISM AND HOPE

**Learned optimism-seligman and colleagues:**

**The Historical Basis of Learned Optimism:**

Abramson, Seligman, and Teasdale (1978) reformulated their model of helplessness (see also Peterson, Maier, & Seligman, 1993) to incorporate the attributions (explanations) that people make for the bad and good things that happen to them. University of Pennsylvania psychologist Martin

Seligman (Seligman, 1991, 1998b; see also Seligman, Reivich, Jaycox, & Gillham, 1995) later used this attributional or explanatory process as the basis for his theory of learned optimism. A Definition of Learned Optimism In the Seligman theory of learned optimism, the optimist uses adaptive causal attributions to explain negative experiences or events. Thus, the person answers the question, "Why did that bad thing happen to me?" In technical terms, the optimist makes external, variable, and specific attributions for failure-like events rather than the internal, stable, and global attributions of the pessimist. Stated more simply, the optimist explains bad things in such a manner as (1) to account for the role of other people and environments in producing bad outcomes (i.e., an external attribution), (2) to interpret the bad event as not likely to happen again (i.e., a variable attribution), and (3) to constrain the bad outcome to just one performance area and not others (Le., a specific attribution).

Thus, the optimistic student who has received a poor grade in a high school class would say, (1) "It was a poorly worded exam" (external attribution), (2) "I have done better on previous exams" (variable attribution), and (3) "I am doing better in other areas of my life such as my relationships and sports achievements" (specific attribution). Conversely, the pessimistic student who has received a poor grade would say, (1) "I screwed up" (internal attribution), (2) "I have done lousy on previous exams" (stable attribution), and (3) "I also am not doing well in other areas of my life" (global attribution).

Seligman's theory implicitly places great emphasis upon negative outcomes in determining one's attributional explanations. Therefore, as shown Distance Oneself Link Oneself Seligman's theory uses an excuse-like process of "distancing" from bad things that have happened in the past, rather than the more usual notion of optimism involving the connection to positive outcomes desired in the future (as reflected in the typical dictionary definition, as well as Scheier and Carver's definition, which we explore shortly in this chapter).

Within the learned optimism perspective, therefore, the optimistic goaldirected cognitions are aimed at distancing the person from negative outcomes of high importance.

**Childhood Antecedents of Learned Optimism:**

Seligman and colleagues (Abramson et ai., 2000; Gillham, 2000; Seligman, 1991, 1995, 1998b) carefully described the developmental roots of the optimistic explanatory style. To begin, there appears to be some genetic component of explanatory style, with learned optimism scores more highly correlated for monozygotic than dizygotic twins (correlations = .48 vs .. 0; Schulman, Keith, & Seligman, 1993).

Additionally, learned optimism appears to have roots in the environment (or learning). For example, parents who provide safe, coherent environments are likely to promote the learned optimism style in their offspring (Franz, McClelland, Weinberger, & Peterson, 1994). Likewise, the parents of optimists are portrayed as modeling optimism for their children by making explanations for negative events that enable the offspring to continue to feel good about themselves (i.e., external, variable, and specific attributions), along with explanations for positive events that help the offspring feel extra-good about themselves (i.e., internal, stable, and global attributions).

Moreover, children who grow up with learned optimism are characterized as having had parents who understood their failures and generally attributed those failures to external rather than internal factors (i.e., they taught their children adaptive excusing; see Snyder, Higgins, & Stucky, 1983/2005). On the other hand, pessimistic people had parents who also were pessimistic. Furthermore, experiencing childhood traumas (e.g., parental death, abuse, incest, etc.) can yield pessimism (Bunce, Larsen, &

Peterson, 1995; Cerezo & Frias, 1994), and parental divorce also may undermine learned optimism (Seligman, 1991). (Not all studies have found the aforementioned negative parental contributions to the explanatory styles of their offspring, and thus these conclusions must be viewed with caution. For a balanced overview of parental contributions, see Peterson & Steen, 2002.)

Television watching is yet another potential source of pessimism. American children ages 2 through 17 watch an average of almost 25 hours of television per week (3.5 hours per day; Gentile & Walsh, 2002). As but one recent example of pessimism-related behaviors that stem from children's television watching, Zimmerman, Glew, Christakis, and Katon (2005) found that greater amounts of television watched at age 4 years were related significantly to higher subsequent likelihoods of those children becoming bullies. Likewise, a steady diet of television violence can predispose and reinforce a helpless explanatory style that is associated with low learned optimism in children (Nolen-Hoeksema, 1987).

What Learned Optimism Predicts The various indices of learned optimism have spawned a large amount of research (see Carr, 2004), with the learned optimistic rather than pessimistic explanatory style associated with the following:

1. Better academic performances (Peterson & Barrett, 1987; Seligman, 1998b)
2. Superior athletic performances (Seligman, Nolen-Hoeksema, Thornton, & Thornton, 1990)
3. More productive work records (Seligman & Schulman, 1986)
4. Greater satisfaction in interpersonal relationships (Fincham, 2000)
5. More effective coping with life stressors (Nolen-Hoeksema, 2000)
6. Less vulnerability to depression (Abramson, Alloy et aI., 2000)
7. Superior physical health (Peterson, 2000).

## 2.5 HOPE

Given the considerable attention that C. R. Snyder's theory of hope (Snyder, 1994; Snyder, Harris, et aI., 1991) has received in the last two decades, we explore this approach to explaining hopeful thinking in some detail. (Snyder is professor of psychology at the University of Kansas and the senior author of this book.) Additionally, the book *Hope and Hopelessness: Critical Clinical Constructs* by Farran, Herth, and Popovich (1995) provides a good overview of various approaches for defining and measuring hope.

**A Definition:**

Both the Snyder hope theory and the definition of hope emphasize cognitions that are built on goal-directed thought. We define hope as goaldirected thinking in which the person utilizes pathways thinking (the perceived capacity to find routes to desired goals) and agency thinking (the requisite motivations to use those routes). Only those goals with considerable value to the individual are considered applicable to hope. Also, the goals can vary temporally-from those that will be reached in the next few minutes (short-term) to those that will take months or even years to reach (long-term). Likewise, the goals entailed in hoping may be approach oriented (that is, aimed at reaching a desired goal) or preventative (aimed at stopping an undesired event) (Snyder, Feldman, Taylor, Schroeder, & Adams, 2000).

Lastly, goals can vary in relation to the difficulty of attainment, with some quite easy and others extremely difficult. Even with purportedly impossible goals, however, people may join together and succeed through supreme planning and persistent efforts. On this latter issue, coordinated and successful group efforts illustrate why we should refrain from characterizing extremely difficult goals as being based on "false hopes" (Snyder, Rand, King, Feldman, & Taylor, 2002) Pathways thinking has been shown to relate to the production of alternate routes when original ones are blocked (Snyder, Harris, et aI., 1991), as has positive self-talk about finding routes to desired goals (e.g., ''I'll find a way to solve this";

Snyder, LaPointe, Crowson, & Early, 1998). Moreover, those who see themselves as having greater capacity for agency thinking also endorse energetic personal self-talk statements, such as "I will keep going" (Snyder, LaPointe, et aI., 1998), and they are especially likely to produce and use such motivational talk when encountering impediments.

High hopers have positive emotional sets and a sense of zest that stems from their histories of success in goal pursuits, whereas low hopers have negative emotional sets and a sense of emotional flatness that stems from their histories of having failed in goal pursuits. Lastly, high- or low-hope people bring these overriding emotional sets with them as they undertake specific goal-related activities. The various components of hope theory can be viewed in Figure 9.2, with the iterative relationship of pathways and agency thoughts on the far left. Moving left to the right from the developmental agency-pathways thoughts, we can see the emotional sets that are taken to specific goal pursuit activities. Next in Figure 9.2 are the values associated with specific goal pursuits. As noted previously, sufficient value must be attached to a goal pursuit before the individual will continue the hoping process. At this point, the pathways and agency thoughts are applied to the desired goal. Here, the feedback loop entails positive emotions that positively reinforce the goal pursuit process, or negative emotions to curtail this process.

Along the route to the goal, the person may encounter a stressor that potentially blocks the actual goal pursuit. Hope theory proposes that the successful pursuit of desired goals, especially when circumventing stressful impediments, results in positive emotions and continued goal pursuit efforts (Le., positive reinforcement). On the other hand, if a person's goal pursuit is not successful (often because that person cannot navigate around blockages), then negative emotions should result (Ruehlman & Wolchik, 1988), and the goal pursuit process should be undermined (i.e., punishment). Furthermore, such a stressor is interpreted differently depending on the person's overall level of hope. That is to say, high hopers construe such barriers as challenges and will explore alternate routes and apply their motivations to those routes. Typically having experienced successes in working around such blockages, the high hopers are propelled onward by their positive emotions. The low hopers, however, become stuck because they cannot find alternate routes; in turn, their negative emotions and ruminations stymie their goal pursuits.

**Childhood Antecedents of Hope:**

More details on the developmental antecedents of the hope process can be found in Snyder (1994, pp. 75-114) and Snyder, McDermott, Cook, and Rapoff (2002, pp. 1-32). **In** brief, however, Snyder (1994) proposes that hope has no hereditary contributions but rather is entirely a learned cognitive set about goal-directed thinking. The teaching of pathways and agency goal-directed thinking is an inherent part of parenting, and the components of hopeful thought are in place by age two. Pathways thinking reflects basic cause-and-effect learning that the child acquires from caregivers and others. Such pathways thought is acquired before agency

thinking, with the latter being posited to begin around age one year. Agency thought reflects the baby's increasing insights as to the fact that she is the causal force in many of the cause-and-effect sequences in her surrounding environment.

**What hope predicts:**

For a detailed review of the predictions flowing from Hope Scale scores, see Snyder (2002a). What is noteworthy about the results related to these predictions is that the statistically significant findings typically remain, even after mathematical correction for the influences of a variety of other self-report psychological measures, such as optimism, self-efficacy, and self-esteem. In general, Hope Scale scores have predicted outcomes in academics, sports, physical health, adjustment, and psychotherapy. For example, in the area of academics, higher Hope Scale scores taken at the beginning of college have predicted better cumulative grade point averages and whether students remain in school (Snyder, Shorey, et aI., 2002).

In the area of sports, higher Hope Scale scores taken at the beginning of college track season have predicted the superior performances of male athletes and have done so beyond the coach's rating of natural athletic abilities (Curry, Snyder, Cook, Ruby, & Rehm, 1977). In the area of adjustment, higher Hope Scale scores have related to various indices of elevated happiness, satisfaction, positive emotions, getting along with others, etc. (Snyder, Harris, et aI., 1991). Additionally, hope has been advanced as the common factor underlying the positive changes that happen in psychological treatments (Snyder, Ilardi, Cheavens, et aI., 2000). In regard to interventions to enhance hope, see our discussion of the various approaches in Chapter 15. For the reader with considerable background in psychotherapy, a thorough overview of hope theory interventions can be found in Snyder's edited volume, the Handbook of Hope (2000b).

For the reader with less experience in psychotherapy, "how-to" descriptions for enhancing adults' hopes can be found in McDermott and Snyder's Making Hope Happen (1999) and in Snyder's The Psychology of Hope: You Can Get There From Here (1994/2004); "how to" descriptions for raising children's hopes are described in McDermott and Snyder's The Great Big Book of Hope (2000) and in Snyder, McDermott, et al.'s Hope for the Journey: Helping Children Through the Good Times and the Bad (2002). **The latest frontier-collective hope** As with the concept of self-efficacy, hope researchers also have expanded their construct to explore what is called collective hope (see Snyder & Feldman, 2000). Simply put, collective hope reflects the level of goal-directed thinking of a large group of people. Often, such collective hope is operative when several people join together to tackle a goal that would be impossible for anyone person. Snyder and Feldman (2000) have applied the notion of collective hope more generally to the topics of disarmament, preservation of environmental resources, health insurance, and government.

## 2.6 REFERENCES

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# 3

# POSITIVE INDIVIDUAL TRAITS

**Unit Structure**



## 3.1 SELF EFFICACY

Some of the most powerful truths also are the simplest—so simple that a child can understand them. The concept of self-efficacy deals with one of these truths—one so simple it can be captured in a children's book of 37 pages (with illustrations), yet so powerful that fully describing its implications has filled thousands of pages in scientific journals and books over the past two decades.

This truth is that believing that you can accomplish what you want to accomplish is one of the most important ingredients— perhaps the most important ingredient— in the recipe for success. Any child who has read The Little Engine That Could knows this is so. For over 20 years, hundreds of researchers have been trying to tell us why this is so.

The basic premise of self-efficacy theory is that "people's beliefs in their capabilities to produce desired effects by their own actions" (Bandura, 1997, p. vii) are the most important determinants of the behaviors people choose to engage in and how much they persevere in their efforts in the face of obstacles and challenges. Self-efficacy theory also maintains that these efficacy beliefs play a crucial role in psychological adjustment, psychological problems, and physical health, as well as professionally guided and self-guided behavioral change strategies. Since the publication of Albert Bandura's 1977 Psychological Review article titled "Self-Efficacy: Toward a Unifying Theory of Behavior Change," the term self-efficacy has become ubiquitous in psychology and related fields.

Hundreds of articles on every imaginable aspect of self-efficacy have appeared in journals devoted to psychology, sociology, kinesiology, public health, medicine, nursing, and other fields. In this chapter, I attempt to summarize what we have learned from over two decades of research on self-efficacy. I will address three basic questions: What is self-efficacy? Where does it come from? Why is it important? What Is Self-Efficacy?

Where Does Self-Efficacy Come From? As noted previously, self-efficacy is not a genetically endowed trait. Instead, self-efficacy beliefs develop over time and through experience. The development of such beliefs begins, we assume, in infancy and continues throughout life.

Understanding how self-efficacy develops requires understanding a broader theoretical background. Self-efficacy is best understood in the context of social cognitive theory—an approach to understanding human cognition, action, motivation, and emotion that assumes that we are active shapers of rather than simply passive reactors to our environments (Bandura, 1986, 1997; Barone, Maddux, & Snyder, 1997).

**Social cognitive theory's four basic premises, shortened and simplified, are as follows:**

1. **We have powerful cognitive** or symbolizing capabilities that allow for the creation of internal models of experience, the development of innovative courses of action, the hypothetical testing of such courses of action through the prediction of outcomes, and the communication of complex ideas and experiences to others. We also can engage in self-observation and can analyze and evaluate our own behavior, thoughts, and emotions. These self-reflective activities set the stage for self-regulation.

2. **Environmental events,** inner personal factors (cognition, emotion, and biological events), and behaviors are reciprocal influences. We respond cognitively, effectively, and behaviorally to environmental events. Also, through cognition we exercise control over our own behavior, which then influences not only the environment but also our cognitive, affective, and biological states.

3. **Self and personality** are socially embedded. These are perceptions (accurate or not) of our own and others' patterns of social cognition, emotion, and action as they occur in patterns of situations. Because they are socially embedded, personality and self are not simply what we bring to our interactions with others; they are created in these interactions, and they change through these interactions.

4. **We are capable** of self-regulation. We choose goals and regulate our behavior in the pursuit of these goals. At the heart of self-regulation is our ability to anticipate or develop expectancies—to use past knowledge and experience to form beliefs about future events and states and beliefs about our abilities and behavior.

Efficacy beliefs and a sense of agency continue to develop throughout the life span as we continually integrate information from five primary sources.

**Performance Experiences** Our own attempts to control our environments are the most powerful source of self-efficacy information (Bandura, 1977, 1997). Successful attempts at control that I attribute to my own efforts will

strengthen self-efficacy for that behavior or domain. Perceptions of failure at control attempts usually diminish self-efficacy.

**Vicarious Experiences** Self-efficacy beliefs are influenced also by our observations of the behavior of others and the consequences of those behaviors. We use this information to form expectancies about our own behavior and its consequences, depending primarily on the extent to which we believe that we are similar to the person we are observing. Vicarious experiences generally have weaker effects on self-efficacy expectancy than do performance experiences (Bandura, 1997).

**Imaginal Experiences** We can influence self-efficacy beliefs by imagining ourselves or others behaving effectively or ineffectively in hypothetical situations. Such images may be derived from actual or vicarious experiences with situations similar to the one anticipated, or they may be induced by verbal persuasion, as when a psychotherapist guides a client through imaginal interventions such as systematic desensitization and covert modeling (Williams, 1995). Simply imagining myself doing something well, however, is not likely to have as strong an influence on my self-efficacy as will an actual experience (Williams, 1995).

**Verbal Persuasion** Efficacy beliefs are influenced by what others say to us about what they believe we can or cannot do. The potency of verbal persuasion as a source of self-efficacy expectancies will be influenced by such factors as the expertness, trustworthiness, and attractiveness of the source, as suggested by decades of research on verbal persuasion and attitude change (e.g., Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Verbal persuasion is a less potent source of enduring change in selfefficacy expectancy than performance experiences and vicarious experiences.

**Physiological and Emotional States** Physiological and emotional states influence self-efficacy when we learn to associate poor performance or perceived failure with aversive physiological arousal and success with pleasant feeling states. Thus, when I become aware of unpleasant physiological arousal, I am more likely to doubt my competence than if my physiological state were pleasant or neutral. Likewise, comfortable physiological sensations are likely to lead me to feel confident in my ability in the situation at hand. Physiological indicants of self-efficacy expectancy, however, extend beyond autonomic arousal. For example, in activities involving strength and stamina, such as exercise and athletic performances, perceived efficacy is influenced by such experiences as fatigue and pain (e.g., Bandura, 1986, 1997).

### 3.1.1 Self-Efficacy and Psychological Adjustment:

Most philosophers and psychological theorists agree that a sense of control over our behavior, our environment, and our own thoughts and feelings is essential for happiness and a sense of well-being. When the world seems predictable and controllable, and when our behaviors, thoughts, and emotions seem within our control, we are better able to meet life's challenges, build healthy relationships, and achieve personal satisfaction

and peace of mind. Feelings of loss of control are common among people who seek the help of psychotherapists and counselors. Self-efficacy beliefs play a major role in a number of common psychological problems, as well as in successful interventions for these problems. Low self-efficacy expectancies are an important feature of depression (Bandura, 1997; Maddux & Meier, 1995). Depressed people usually believe they are less capable than other people of behaving effectively in many important areas of life. Dysfunctional anxiety and avoidant behavior are often the direct result of low selfefficacy expectancies for managing threatening situations (Bandura, 1997; Williams, 1995).

People who have strong confidence in their abilities to perform and manage potentially difficult situations will approach those situations calmly and will not be unduly disrupted by difficulties. On the other hand, people who lack confidence in their abilities will approach such situations with apprehension, thereby reducing the probability that they will perform effectively. Those with low self-efficacy also will respond to difficulties with increased anxiety, which usually disrupts performance, thereby further lowering self-efficacy, and so on. Finally, self-efficacy plays a powerful role in attempts to overcome substance abuse problems and eating disorders (Bandura, 1997; DiClemente, Fairhurst, & Piotrowski, 1995). For each of these problems, enhancing self-efficacy for overcoming the problem and for implementing self-control strategies in specific challenging situations is essential to the success of therapeutic interventions

### 3.1.2 Self-Efficacy and Physical Health:

Health and medical care in our society gradually have been shifting from an exclusive emphasis on treating disease to an emphasis on preventing disease and promoting good health. Most strategies for preventing health problems, enhancing health, and hastening recovery from illness and injury involve changing behavior. Research on self-efficacy has greatly enhanced our understanding of how and why people adopt healthy and unhealthy behaviors and of how to change behaviors that affect health (Bandura, 1997; Maddux, Brawley, & Boykin, 1995; O'Leary & Brown, 1995). Beliefs about self-efficacy influence health in two ways.

First, self-efficacy influences the adoption of healthy behaviors, the cessation of unhealthy behaviors, and the maintenance of behavioral changes in the face of challenge and difficulty. All the major theories of health behavior, such as protection motivation theory (Maddux & Rogers, 1983; Rogers & Prentice-Dunn, 1997), the health belief model (Strecher, Champion, & Rosenstock, 1997), and the theory or reasoned action/planned behavior (Ajzen, 1988; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Maddux & DuCharme, 1997), include self-efficacy as a key component (see also Maddux, 1993; Weinstein, 1993). In addition, researchers have shown that enhancing self-efficacy beliefs is crucial to successful change and maintenance of virtually every behavior crucial to health, including exercise, diet, stress management, safe sex, smoking cessation, overcoming alcohol abuse, compliance with treatment and prevention

regimens, and disease detection behaviors such as breast selfexaminations (Bandura, 1997; Maddux et al., 1995).

Second, self-efficacy beliefs influence a number of biological processes that, in turn, influence health and disease (Bandura, 1997). Selfefficacy beliefs affect the body's physiological responses to stress, including the immune system (Bandura, 1997; O'Leary & Brown, 1995). Lack of perceived control over environmental demands can increase susceptibility to infections and hasten the progression of disease (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy beliefs also influence the activation of catecholamines, a family of neurotransmitters important to the management of stress and perceived threat, along with the endogenous painkillers referred to as endorphins (Bandura, 1997; O'Leary & Brown, 1995).

### 3.1.3 Self-Efficacy and Self-Regulation:

Social cognitive theory and self-efficacy theory assume that we have the capacity for selfregulation and self-initiated change, and studies of people who have overcome difficult behavioral problems without professional help provide compelling evidence for this capacity.

Research on self-efficacy has added greatly to our understanding of how we guide our own behavior in the pursuit of happiness. Selfregulation (simplified) depends on three interacting components (Bandura, 1986, 1997; Barone et al., 1997): goals or standards of performance, self-evaluative reactions to performance, and self-efficacy beliefs. Goals are essential to self-regulation because we attempt to regulate our actions, thoughts, and emotions to achieve desired outcomes.

The ability to envision desired future events and states allows us to create incentives that motivate and guide our actions. Through our goals, we adopt personal standards and evaluate our behavior against these standards. Thus, goals provide us with standards against which to monitor our progress and evaluate both our progress and our abilities

## 3.2 CREATIVITY

### The Origins of Creativity as a Cultural Phenomenon:

Given the manifest importance of creativity, it is rather surprising to learn that it is actually a somewhat recent concept. It is not listed among the classic human virtues, for example. The philosophers of ancient Greece listed prudence, temperance, fortitude, and justice, whereas the Christian theologians added faith, hope, and love—but creativity is overlooked entirely.

Part of the reason for this neglect is that creativity originally was conceived as a defining characteristic of an omnipotent divine creator rather than an attribute of mere fragile mortals. In the biblical book of Genesis, for instance, God is portrayed as the Creator of the cosmos, the earth, and all life. Indeed, almost every culture possesses creation myths in which their gods have this very function and capacity. Even when

individual humans were seen as the locus of creative activity, the causal agents still sprung from a spiritual world.

This linkage is apparent in the Greek doctrine of the Muses. There was a Muse for all major creative activities of classical times, including heroic or epic poetry, lyric and love poetry, sacred poetry, tragedy, comedy, music, dance, and even astronomy and history. The corresponding Muse was thought to provide a guiding spirit or source of inspiration for the mortal creator. This usage underlies several commonplace expressions, such as to say that one has lost one's muse when one has run out of creative ideas. The Romans are responsible for a concept that is closely related to creativity—that of genius.

According to Roman mythology, each individual was born with a guardian spirit who watched out for the person's fate and distinctive individuality. With time, the term was taken to indicate the person's special talents or aptitudes. Although in the beginning everybody could be said to "have a genius," at least in the sense of possessing a unique capacity, the term eventually began to be confined to those whose gifts set them well apart from the average. The expression "creative genius" thus unites two concepts with Greek and Roman roots pertaining to how the spiritual world permeates human affairs.

Outstanding creativity was the gift of the gods or spirits, not a human act. Even during the Italian Renaissance, when European civilization was becoming secularized by the advent of humanism, rudiments of this ascription remain. In Vasari's classic (a. 1550/1968, p. 347) Lives of the Painters, Sculptors, and Architects, for example, we can read how "the great Ruler of Heaven looked down" and decided "to send to earth a genius universal in each art." This person would be endowed with such special qualities that his works would seem "rather divine than earthly." Vasari was speaking of Michelangelo. With the increased secularization of European thought, however, the causal locus of creativity gradually moved away from the spiritual to the human world. Once this cultural shift took place, the phenomenon became the subject of psychological inquiry.

**The Origins of Creativity as a Research Topic**:

In the early history of the field, psychologists occasionally would discuss creative thought and behavior. William James (1880), for example, described the creative process in terms of Darwinian theory (also see Campbell, 1960). In the 20th century, the Gestalt psychologists—most notably Wolfgang Ko¨ hler (1925) and Max Wertheimer (1945/1982)—displayed considerable interest in creative problem solving. Likewise, creativity sometimes would attract the attention of psychologists of differing theoretical persuasions, including the behaviorist B. F. Skinner (1972), the cognitive psychologist Herbert A. Simon (1986), the personality psychologist David C. McClelland (1962), and the humanistic psychologists Carl Rogers (1954), Abraham Maslow (1959), and Rollo May (1975).

Although several psychologists touched upon this topic, the one who deserves more credit than any other for emphasizing creativity as a critical research topic is the psychometrician J. P. Guilford (1950). His address as president of the American Psychological Association, which was published in a 1950 issue of American Psychologist, is often considered a "call to arms" on behalf of this overlooked subject. More important, Guilford made many direct contributions to the research literature, most notably by devising widely used instruments for assessing individual differences in creativity (Guilford, 1967). In the latter half of the 20th century, the interest in creativity steadily grew and diversified such that researchers were covering a fairly wide range of subtopics (Feist & Runco, 1993).

Following a minor lull in activity in the 1970s, creativity research has attained new heights in the 1980s and 1990s (Simonton, 1999a). This growth is demonstrated by (a) the advent of several creativity handbooks (e.g., Glover, Ronning, & Reynolds, 1989; Runco, 1997; Sternberg, 1999); (b) the appearance in 1988 of the Creativity Research Journal, which complemented the Journal of Creative Behavior founded previously in 1967; and (c) the 1999 publication of the two-volume Encyclopedia of Creativity (Runco & Pritzker, 1999). Indeed, creativity now can be considered as a legitimate topic for scientific inquiry in mainstream psychological research.

**Measurement Approaches:**

Before a concept can be measured, it first must be defined. Fortunately, at least in the abstract, there is virtually universal agreement on what creativity is. In particular, creativity usually is said to entail the generation of ideas that fulfill the two following conditions: 1. Creativity must be original. These days, no one can be called "creative" who decides to "reinvent the wheel," nor can one earn that ascription for writing the lines "To be, or not to be." Creative ideas are novel, surprising, unexpected—sometimes even shocking. Originality is a necessary but not sufficient criterion for creativity, which brings us to the second condition. 2. Creativity must be adaptive. Someone who decides to make a blimp out of solid concrete can no doubt claim considerable originality, but whether this strange idea "can fly" is quite a different matter. Similarly, someone may propose a highly unusual advertising slogan like "The worst wurst in the West," but whether that phrase will convince potential consumers to buy more of that brand of sausage is highly unlikely.

Given the general definition of creativity as "adaptive originality," how can it be best measured? This turns out to be difficult. Creativity researchers have not agreed on the optimal instrument for assessing individual differences on this trait (Hocevar & Bachelor, 1989). The reason for this lack of consensus is that creativity can manifest itself in three distinct ways. First, creativity may be viewed as some kind of mental process that yields adaptive and original ideas (e.g., Sternberg & Davidson, 1995; Ward, Smith, & Vaid, 1997).

Second, it can be seen as a type of person who exhibits creativity (e.g., Gardner, 1993; Wallace & Gruber, 1989). Third, creativity can be analyzed in terms of the concrete products that result from the workings of the creative process or person (e.g., Martindale, 1990; Simonton, 1980, 1998b). Each of these three manifestations suggests rather distinct measures, as will become apparent next.

**The Creative Process:**

If the emphasis is on the thought processes that yield creative ideas, then the best assessment approach should be to tap individual differences in access to these processes. This was the approach adopted by Guilford (1967), who began by proposing a profound distinction between two kinds of thinking. Convergent thought involves the convergence on a single correct response, such as is characteristic of most aptitude tests, like those that assess intelligence.

Divergent thought, in contrast, entails the capacity to generate many alternative responses, including ideas of considerable variety and originality. Guilford and others have devised a large number of tests purported to measure the capacity for divergent thinking (e.g., Torrance, 1988; Wallach & Kogan, 1965). Typical is the Alternate Uses test, in which the subject must come up with many different ways of using a common object, such as a paper clip or brick. Another test that views the creative process in a manner similar to divergent thinking is the Remote Associates Test, or RAT, of Mednick (1962).

This test was based on the premise that creativity involves the ability to make rather remote associations between separate ideas. Highly creative individuals were said to have a flat hierarchy of associations in comparison to the steep hierarchy of associations of those with low creativity. A flat associative hierarchy means that for any given stimulus, the creative person has numerous associations available, all with roughly equal probabilities of retrieval. Because such an individual can generate many associative variations, the odds are increased that he or she will find that one association that will make the necessary remote connection. The RAT can therefore be said to operate according to an implicit variation-selection model of the creative process. Many investigators have tried to validate these divergent-thinking tests against other criteria of creative performance (see, e.g., Crammond, 1994). Although the researchers in these validation studies have had some modicum of success, it also has become clear that generalized tests do not always have as much predictive validity as tests more specifically tailored to a particular domain of creativity (Baer, 1993, 1994; for discussion, see Baer, 1998; Plucker, 1998). Creativity in music, for example, is not going to be very predictable on the basis of how many uses one can imagine for a toothpick.

**The Creative Person:**

To the extent that the content of the creative process is domain specific, it would seem necessary to construct as many creativity instruments as there are creative domains. Fortunately, an alternative psychometric tactic exists

that is based on the assumption that the creative individual is distinctively different in various personal characteristics. Especially pertinent is the evidence that creative people display personality profiles that depart from those of the average person (Barron & Harrington, 1981; Martindale, 1989; Sternberg & Lubart, 1995).

Creative personalities tend to possess those characteristics that would most favor the production of both numerous and diverse ideas. In particular, creative individuals tend to be independent, nonconformist, unconventional, even bohemian; they also tend to have wide interests, greater openness to new experiences, and a more conspicuous behavioral and cognitive flexibility and boldness (see Simonton, 1999a). The only major complication in this general picture is that the personality profiles of artistic creators tend to differ noticeably from those of scientific creators (Feist, 1998). In a nutshell, the creative scientists tend to fall somewhere between the creative artists and noncreative personalities in terms of their typical traits. Not surprising given these results, several measures of creativity are based on personality scales, such as the 16 Personality Factor Questionnaire (e.g., Cattell & Butcher, 1968) or the Adjective Check List (e.g., Gough, 1979).

Yet this is not the only person-based assessment strategy. Presumably, the personality contrasts between creative and noncreative individuals may partially reflect significant differences in their biographical characteristics, including family background, educational experiences, and career activities. As a consequence, some psychometricians have designed instruments based on biographical inventories (e.g., Schaefer & Anastasi, 1968; Taylor & Ellison, 1967). For instance, creative persons often report having much broader interests and a wider range of hobbies than is the case for their less creative colleagues.

**The Creative Product:**

Because process- and person-based creativity measures are relatively easy to design and administer, the bulk of the literature on creativity has tended to use them. Yet one might argue that the ultimate criterion of whether someone can be considered creative is whether or not that individual has successfully generated a product that meets both requirements of creative behavior— originality and adaptiveness. This productbased assessment is more direct and objective, but it also has more than one operational definition. One approach is to simply ask individuals to identify what they would consider samples of their creative activities, such as poems, paintings, and projects (e.g., Richards, Kinney, Lunde, Benet, & Merzel, 1988a). Another approach is to have research participants generate creative products under controlled laboratory conditions and then have these products evaluated by independent judges (e.g., Amabile, 1982; Smith, Ward, & Finke, 1995; Sternberg & Lubart, 1995). These two operational definitions have the advantage that they are best designed to assess individual differences in more everyday forms of the phenomenon.

Yet it is obvious that at higher levels of creative activity, the investigator can go beyond a participant's self-report or a judge's subjective evaluation. Inventors hold patents, scientists publish journal articles, dramatists write plays, directors create movies, and so forth. Hence, cross-sectional variation in creativity can be assessed in terms of individual differences in the output of such professionally or culturally acknowledged works (e.g., Simonton, 1991b, 1997a). Investigators may count total output (quantity), select output (quality), or output influence (impact).

For example, researchers of scientific creativity may tabulate the total number of publications, just those publications that are actually cited in the literature, or the total number of citations those publications have received (e.g., Feist, 1993; Helmreich, Spence, Beane, Lucker, & Matthews, 1980). Happily, researchers have demonstrated quite conclusively that these three alternative measures correlate very highly among each other (e.g., Simonton, 1992b). If creative persons have generated a substantial body of highly influential products, it is inevitable that they should attain eminence for their accomplishments (Simonton, 1991c). In fact, the single most powerful predictor of eminence in any creative domain is the number of works an individual has contributed (Simonton, 1977, 1991a, 1997a).

Accordingly, sometimes cross-sectional variation in creativity will be assessed using some variety of eminence indicator (e.g., Cox, 1926; Feist, 1993; Simonton, 1976a). These may include expert ratings, the receipt of major honors, or having entries in biographical dictionaries and encyclopedias (e.g., Simonton, 1976b, 1998a). Empirical Findings Judging from the previous section, there seems to be an embarrassment of riches when it comes to the assessment of creativity. This superfluity, however, is only superficial. One of the most critical findings in the empirical research is that these alternative measures tend to display fairly respectable intercorrelations (Eysenck, 1995; Simonton, 1999b). In other words, creative products tend to emerge from creative persons who use the creative process in generating their output. The correlations are by no means perfect, but they do suggest that each instrument is gauging the same fundamental reality.

Consequently, the various measures often yield the same general conclusions about the nature of human creativity. For example, a considerable literature exists on the relation between age and creativity (Simonton, 1988a). Despite some differences due to the creative domain and other factors, pretty much the same developmental trends are observed for product- and processbased measures (see, e.g., Dennis, 1966; Lehman, 1953; McCrae, Arenberg, & Costa, 1987). That is, whether we are counting creative products or assessing the capacity for divergent thinking, longitudinal changes in creativity appear to be best described by a single-peaked curvilinear function. The only major discrepancy is that creativity according to the productivity definition can undergo a resurgence in the latter years of life that has no counterpart according to the psychometric definition (e.g., Simonton, 1989). Because extensive reviews are readily

available elsewhere (Simonton, 1999a), the best choice here is to discuss just two sets of empirical findings that have special relevance for a positive psychology of creativity.

These concern early trauma and psychological disorder. Early Trauma According to the empirical literature, child prodigies and intellectually gifted children tend to have enjoyed rather happy childhoods (Feldman & Goldsmith, 1986; Terman, 1925). That is, their parents provided them with financially comfortable homes and ample intellectual and aesthetic stimulation; their parents had stable marriages, and the children were both physically healthy and educationally successful. Yet when researchers turn to highly creative individuals, a rather contrasting picture emerges (e.g., Goertzel & Goertzel, 1962; Goertzel, Goertzel, & Goertzel, 1978). The family may have experienced severe economic ups and downs, and the parents' marriage may have fallen far short of the ideal; the child may have been sickly or have endured some physical or cognitive disability (e.g., Roe, 1953). More remarkably, early development of the future creator may have been plagued with one or more traumatic experiences, such as the loss of one or both parents in childhood or adolescence (Eisenstadt, 1978; Roe, 1953). Yet what makes these findings all the more intriguing is that the same developmental events also are associated with negative life outcomes, such as juvenile delinquency or suicidal depression (Eisenstadt, 1978).

This peculiar paradox suggests that under the right conditions, exposure to traumatic or difficult experiences early in life can make a positive contribution to the development of creative potential (Simonton, 1994). Perhaps those who have the capacity to "rise to the challenge" will benefit, and creativity itself may be an adaptive response to such circumstances (Eisenstadt, 1978). Events that might have yielded a societal misfit instead produce an individual who can respond constructively with an adulthood of creative achievement rather than disappointment or alienation. Psychological Disorder One of the oldest debates in the study of creativity is the "mad-genius controversy" (Prentky, 1980).

As far back as Aristotle, thinkers have speculated that outstanding creativity is associated with psychopathology. This view has persisted in more modern times, as is apparent in psychoanalytic psychobiographies of creative geniuses (i.e., "psychopathographies"). Not every psychologist agrees with this thesis, however. Humanistic psychologists, in particular, tend to see creativity as a symptom of mental health, not illness (e.g., Maslow, 1959; May, 1975). Based on the empirical research on this issue, it appears that there is some truth in both viewpoints (Eysenck, 1995). On the one hand, the rates of apparent psychological disorder in samples of highly creative individuals do seem to be somewhat higher than in the general population (Eysenck, 1995; Richards, Kinney, Lunde, Benet, & Merzel, 1988b). The incidence rates are especially elevated for those who pursue artistic forms of creative expression (Jamison, 1993; Ludwig, 1995).

Furthermore, there is a positive relation between the amount of psychopathological symptoms and the level of creative achievement attained (Barron, 1969; Eysenck, 1995; Ludwig, 1995). Finally, and perhaps most provocatively, family lines with disproportionate numbers of individuals with psychological disorders also are more likely to have highly creative individuals (Juda, 1949; Karlson, 1970; Richards et al., 1988b). As such, pathological and creative pedigrees tend to overlap to a degree that far exceeds chance expectation. On the other hand, the empirical research also suggests that creativity and psychopathology are by no means equivalent (Rothenberg, 1990).

For one thing, creative individuals often have character traits, such as high ego strength, which are not found in clinical populations (Barron, 1969; Eysenck, 1995). However bizarre their thoughts or behaviors may be, creators remain in self-command—even exploiting their eccentricities for creative ends. In addition, their symptomatology is below pathological levels (Barron, 1969; Eysenck, 1995). Though their profiles do not fall in the normal range, they also do not reach truly pathological levels— they are at the borderline between the normal and the abnormal. Finally, psychopathology may be the consequence rather than the cause of a creative career (Simonton, 1994). That is, a life of creativity can have exceptional stresses related to the tremendous disappointments of failures and the unexpected distractions of fame (Schaller, 1997).

It is telling that a standard measure of life stressors, the Social Readjustment Rating Questionnaire, assigns 28 points for any "outstanding personal achievement" (Holmes & Rahe, 1967). This is about the same weight granted to "change in responsibilities at work," a "son or daughter leaving home," or "in-law troubles." These 28 points probably understate the true magnitude of stress for the highest levels of creativity. After all, the weights assigned by this questionnaire were based on more everyday forms of achievement rather than creations on the level of the Sistine Chapel or War and Peace. When one places these psychopathology findings alongside those for traumatic experiences, a significant lesson emerges:

Events and traits that might severely disable or retard personal development can sometimes be converted into forces for positive growth. Or, if that is too strong an inference, one can safely infer the following optimistic alternative: Such events and conditions need not prevent the development of exceptional creativity. Indeed, people can be phenomenally robust, as they transform "liabilities" into assets.

**Theoretical Issues:**

Despite the abundance of empirical findings, creativity researchers continue to wrestle with profound theoretical questions, two of which involve nature versus nurture and small-c versus big-C creativity. I explore these next. The Nature-Nurture Issue Is creativity born or made, or some combination of the two? Galton (1869) introduced this question in

his book Hereditary Genius, and he later coined the terms nature and nurture in his book English Men of Science:

**Their Nature and Nurture** (1874):

Subsequent researchers have suggested that creativity reflects a complex interaction of genetic and environmental factors (Eysenck, 1995; Simonton, 1999b). For example, genes may contribute to creativity according to a multiplicative (emergenic) rather than a simple additive model (Lykken, 1998; Simonton, 1999c). As a further complication, it may very well be that various environmental influences interact with genetic factors with equally complex functional relationships (Eysenck, 1995). To some extent, creative development requires a specific congruence between genetic inheritance and environmental stimulation. This intricate genetic-environmental determination helps to explain why creativity may display a highly skewed cross-sectional distribution in the general population (Simonton, 1999b).

When optimal creative development requires a precise configuration of many different factors, it makes it more difficult for people to emerge who have the total package. Small-c Versus Big-C Creativity Small-c creativity enhances everyday life and work with superior problem-solving skills, whereas big-C creativity makes lasting contributions to culture and history. In the first case, we are speaking of the creative person, whereas in the latter case we are talking about the creative genius. The enigma is whether these two grades of creative behavior are qualitatively or quantitatively distinct. If everyday creativity is qualitatively different from genius-level creativity, then the personal attributes underlying the first may be different from those responsible for the second (e.g., any tendency toward psychopathology). If the two are only quantitatively different, however, then the factors that predict levels of small-c creativity would also predict levels of big-C creativity. The evidence to date supports the notion that these two grades represent regions on a continuous scale of creative activity

## 3.3 WISDOM

Wisdom has been discussed and studied in philosophy and religion for thousands of years (for an overview, see Assmann, 1994; Kekes, 1995; Rice, 1958). More recently, scholars from other disciplines such as cultural anthropology, political science, education, and psychology also have shown interest in wisdom. Indeed, one can argue that wisdom is becoming a center of transdisciplinary discourse (e.g., Agazzi, 1991; Arlin, 1990; Assmann, 1994; Baltes, 1993; Lehrer, Lum, Slichta, & Smith, 1996; Maxwell, 1984; Nichols, 1996; Nozick, 1993; Oelmu¨ ller, 1989; Smith & Baltes, 1990; Staudinger & Baltes, 1996b; Sternberg, 1990; Welsch, 1995).

In defining and studying wisdom from a psychological point of view, we attempt to pay careful attention to what philosophers offer regarding the nature of the structure and function of wisdom. Without such attention, we

would lose the special strength that the concept of wisdom holds for specifying the content and form of the primary virtues and behaviors that individuals aspire to as they attempt to regulate their lives toward an "universal canon of a good life."

To prevent a possible misunderstanding, we acknowledge the scientific limits of our work on wisdom. Specifically, any empirical manifestation of wisdom falls short of the theoretical aspiration. In this spirit, we do not maintain that a psychological theory will ever capture wisdom in its full-blown cultural complexity. Our hope, however, is that this intermarriage of philosophy and psychology results in lines of psychological inquiry where virtues, values, and the mind can meet in a new and productive collaboration. We believe that this may be possible because, at a high level of analysis, the concept of wisdom appears to be culturally universal.

**General Criteria Derived from an Analysis of Cultural-Historical and Philosophical Accounts of Wisdom**

Wisdom addresses important and difficult questions and strategies about the conduct and meaning of life. Wisdom includes knowledge about the limits of knowledge and the uncertainties of the world. Wisdom represents a truly superior level of knowledge, judgment, and advice. Wisdom constitutes knowledge with extraordinary scope, depth, measure, and balance. Wisdom involves a perfect synergy of mind and character, that is, an orchestration of knowledge and virtues. Wisdom represents knowledge used for the good or well-being of oneself and that of others. Wisdom, though difficult to achieve and to specify, is easily recognized when manifested.

**Psychological Theories of Wisdom: From Implicit to Explicit Theories:**

Because of its enormous cultural and historical heritage, a psychological definition and operationalization of wisdom is extremely difficult. This could be why many wisdom researchers have restricted their research efforts to laypersons' implicit theories of wisdom and wise persons (Clayton & Birren, 1980; Holliday & Chandler, 1986; Kramer, 2000; Sowarka, 1989; Staudinger, Sowarka, Maciel, & Baltes, 1997; Sternberg, 1985, 1990). Empirical research based on explicit theories of wisdom-related behavior is relatively rare.

**Implicit Theories:**

With implicit theories, we mean the beliefs or mental representations that people have about wisdom and the characteristics of wise persons. In studies on implicit beliefs about wisdom and wise persons, one finds quite a high degree of overlap in the core aspects of wisdom, even though authors have focused on slightly different aspects and named their components differently. All conceptions include cognitive as well as social, motivational, and emotional components (e.g., Birren & Fisher, 1990; Kramer, 2000).

The cognitive components usually include strong intellectual abilities, rich knowledge and experience in matters of the human condition, and an ability to apply one's theoretical knowledge practically. A second basic component refers to reflective judgment that is based on knowledge about the world and the self, an openness for new experiences, and the ability to learn from mistakes. Socioemotional components generally include good social skills, such as sensitivity and concern for others and the ability to give good advice. A fourth motivational component refers to the good intentions that usually are associated with wisdom. That is, wisdom aims at solutions that optimize the benefit of others and oneself. Sternberg's (1998) effort at specifying a comprehensive theory of wisdom is in the tradition of these implicit lines of inquiry.

In his theory, consisting so far of a coordinated set of characterizations rather than empirical work, Sternberg emphasizes the role of "balance." Specifically, wisdom is conceptualized as the application of tacit knowledge toward the achievement of a common good achieved through a balance among multiple interests, including one's own interests and those of others. A factor-analytic study conducted by Staudinger, Sowarka, et al. (1997) illustrates the implicit theories tradition of wisdom. One hundred and two participants rated 131 attributes regarding the degree to which each represents the notion of an ideally wise person. The attributes were selected from past work on implicit theories and work generated by the Berlin Wisdom Paradigm (see subsequently).

Consistent with past research, these dimensions refer to (a) exceptional knowledge concerning the acquisition of wisdom; (b) exceptional knowledge concerning its application; (c) exceptional knowledge about contextual and temporal variations of life; and (d) person-related competencies.

**Explicit Theories:**

The second cluster of wisdom theories represents explicit psychological theories (Baltes & Smith, 1990; Baltes & Staudinger, 1993; Pasupathi & Baltes, in press; Sternberg, 1990). They are meant to focus on cognitive and behavioral expressions of wisdom and the processes involved in the joining of cognition with behavior.

One main objective of such theories is to develop theoretical models of wisdom that allow for empirical inquiry—by means of quantitative operationalization of wisdom-related thought and behavior—as well as for the derivation of hypotheses that can be tested empirically (e.g., about predictors of behavioral expressions of wisdom).

To date, the theoretical and empirical work on explicit psychological conceptions of wisdom can be divided roughly into three groups:

(a) the conceptualization of wisdom as a personal characteristic or a personality disposition (e.g., Erikson, 1959; McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1998);

(b) the conceptualization of wisdom in the neo- Piagetian tradition of postformal and dialectical thinking (e.g., Alexander & Langer, 1990; Kramer, 1986, 2000; Labouvie-Vief, 1990; Peng & Nisbett, 1999); and

(c) the conceptualization of wisdom as an expert system dealing with the meaning and conduct of life, as advocated in the Berlin Wisdom Paradigm (e.g., Baltes & Smith, 1990; Dittmann-Kohli & Baltes, 1990; Staudinger & Baltes, 1994).

**The Berlin Wisdom Project:**

Wisdom as Expertise in the Fundamental Pragmatics of Life In this section, we shall describe the conception of wisdom upon which the Berlin Wisdom Project is based. Thereafter, we will discuss some general considerations concerning the development of wisdom across the life span.

**The Content Domain of Wisdom:**

Proceeding from the notion that wisdom involves some form of excellence (see Table 24.1), the Berlin Wisdom Project conceptualizes wisdom as an expertise in the meaning and conduct of life. Our conceptualization of wisdom as expertise signals that we expect most people not to be wise. What we expect, however, is that the behavioral expressions we observe in individuals can be ordered on a "wisdom scale." In general, wisdom is foremost a cultural product deposited in books of wisdom rather than in individuals. The contents to which this expertise of wisdom refers are the "fundamental pragmatics of life," that is, knowledge about the essence of the human condition and the ways and means of planning, managing, and understanding a good life (cf. Baltes & Smith, 1990; Baltes & Staudinger, 1993, 2000). Examples of the fundamental pragmatics of life include knowledge and skills about the conditions, variability, ontogenetic changes, and historicity of human development; insight into obligations and goals in life; knowledge and skills about the social and situational influences on human life; as well as knowledge and skills about the finitude of life and the inherent limits of human knowledge.

As these examples reveal, the contents to which wisdom refers are markedly different from those of other domains that have been reported in the traditional expertise literature (Ericsson & Smith, 1991). Most research on ex332 pertise has focused on domains where well-defined problems can be used to systematically study experts' and laypersons' knowledge systems (e.g., physics or chess). In the domain of the fundamental pragmatics of life, contrariwise, problems are almost by definition illdefined, and no clear-cut "optimal" solutions exist (see also Arlin, 1990). Nevertheless, we assume that wisdom has a clear conceptual core and that its manifestations can be evaluated.

As our empirical studies show, most people, after some training, are able to reach high levels of consensus in their evaluation of wisdom-related products. Antecedents of Wisdom Our concept of wisdom as expertise and

the linkage of this concept to life span theory (Baltes, 1987, 1997) suggest an ensemble of three broad domains of antecedents or determining factors—each comprising internal and external factors and processes—to be influential in the development of wisdom at the level of individuals. Before describing these three domains in detail, we need to discuss five more general considerations concerning the ontogenesis of wisdom. First, as is typical for the development of expertise, we assume that wisdom is acquired through an extended and intense process of learning and practice. This clearly requires a high degree of motivation to strive for excellence, as well as a social-cultural and personal environment that is supportive of the search for wisdom.

Second, wisdom is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon; therefore, for wisdom to emerge, a variety of experiential factors and processes on micro- and macro-levels are required to interact and collaborate. Third, given that wisdom involves the orchestration of cognitive, personal, social, interpersonal, and spiritual factors, its antecedents are diverse in nature. Fourth, because developmental tasks and adaptive challenges change across life, and the human condition is inherently a life-course phenomenon, we expect wisdom to reach its peak relatively late in adult life. Fifth, we believe that, as with other fields of expertise, the guidance of mentors, as well as the experience and mastery of critical life experiences, are conducive to individual manifestations of wisdom.

We now turn to the three domains of ontogenetic conditions and processes that influence the development of wisdom, namely, facilitative experiential contexts, expertise-relevant factors, and person-related factors (for a graphical representation of our developmental model, see Baltes & Staudinger, 2000, Figure 1, p. 121). In our developmental model, facilitative experiential contexts for the development of wisdom include chronological age, education, parenthood, professions that require individuals to strengthen their skills in social-emotional intelligence, familiarity with books such as autobiographical novels, or the historical period, which varies along dimensions of salience and facilitation in matters of the human condition.

A second domain that is central to the development of wisdom refers to expertise-relevant factors such as experience in life matters, organized tutelage, the availability of mentorship in dealing with life problems, and motivational factors such as a general interest in aspects of human life or a motivation to strive for excellence. Finally, we consider person-related factors such as basic cognitive processes, aspects of intelligence, creativity, flexible cognitive styles, and personality dispositions such as openness to experience or ego strength.

These three domains of ontogenetic influences are interrelated, and we believe that, in the sense of equifinality (Kruglanski, 1996), different combinations of the domains may lead to similar outcomes. Thus, there is no single “optimal” pathway, but rather several different ways to acquire wisdom. Nevertheless, it is assumed that there is a productive collaboration among the relevant factors. For example, external factors

like the presence of mentors or the experience and mastery of critical life experiences are certainly conducive to the development of wisdom. For these factors to be influential, however, preconditions such as being highly motivated to live in a "good" way and a requisite level of cognitive efficacy probably are necessary. The notion that wisdom requires the presence of several intra- and interindividual factors that need to interact in certain ways underlines that wisdom refers to qualities that can be acquired only by very few people.

**The Berlin Wisdom Paradigm:**

Our paradigm for assessing wisdom comprises the following three core features: (a) Study participants are confronted with difficult life probllems of fictitious people under standardized conditions. Specifically, they are asked to read short vignettes about problems of life management, planning, and review. (b) Participants are then instructed to think aloud about those life problems, and their responses are tape-recorded and transcribed. (c) A selected panel of trained judges then rates the protocols according to five criteria (see subsequent criteria) that were developed based on the general theoretical framework outlined. As an illustration, two responses that would be scored as either high or low on wisdom are presented in  In the context of our empirical work, we have developed five qualitative criteria that can be used for evaluating wisdom in any kind of material.

The development of these five criteria was guided by several lines of research, including research on expertise, life-span psychology of cognition and personality, the neo-Piagetian tradition of cognitive development in adulthood, and our cultural-historical analyses of wisdom The first two criteria derive logically from our view of wisdom as an expert system. They are rich factual (declarative) knowledge about the fundamental pragmatics of life and rich procedural knowledge about the fundamental pragmatics of life. Factual knowledge related to wisdom includes topics like human nature, lifelong development, interpersonal relations, social norms, and individual differences in development and outcomes. Procedural knowledge comprises strategies and heuristics for dealing with life problems, for example, heuristics for the structuring and weighing of life goals, ways to handle conflicts, or alternative backup strategies. We view these two knowledge criteria as basic criteria—they are necessary but not sufficient for achieving wisdom. The three other criteria we refer to as metacriteria. Life span contextualism refers to knowledge about the many different themes and contexts of human life (education, family, work, friends, etc.), their interrelations, and cultural variations.

This criterion includes a life span perspective, for example, regarding changes in the relevance of different domains and in motivational priorities during ontogeny from birth into old age. Value relativism and tolerance refers to the acknowledgment of individual and cultural differences in values. Note, however, that wisdom does not mean tolerance of any possible value or priority system. On the contrary,

wisdom includes an explicit interest in achieving a balance between individual and collective interests and a focus on human virtues. Aside from this fundamental constraint, however, wisdom encompasses a high level of tolerance and sensitivity for different opinions and values. Recognition and management of uncertainty refers to knowledge about the limitations of human information processing and about the low predictability of occurrences and consequences in human life.

Wisdom-related knowledge involves knowledge about such uncertainties, but also about ways to deal with such uncertainty. For the purpose of evaluating the protocols according to the five criteria, a select panel of raters has been extensively trained in the application of the criteria. A protocol is classified as approaching "wise" only if it has received high ratings on all five criteria. Raters are trained on the basis of a manual (Staudinger, Smith, & Baltes, 1994). Reliability and stability of the rating procedure have been shown to be very satisfactory.

**Selected Findings From the Berlin Wisdom Project:**

In the following, we will discuss results regarding the relationship between age and wisdom-related performance, the influence of professional experience on wisdom-related performance, the performance of persons nominated as wise, the main variables that predict wisdom-related performance, and the activation of wisdom-related knowledge in the context of intervention or optimization research. Age and Wisdom-Related Performance Guided by the search for positive aspects of human aging, age-comparative studies of wisdomrelated performance have been one of our central foci (Baltes & Staudinger, 2000; Pasupathi, Staudinger, & Baltes, 2000; Smith & Baltes, 1990; Staudinger, 1999. Note that these data are cross-sectional rather than longitudinal and therefore are contaminated with cohort-related sampling and historical change (cohort) factors.

Our findings suggest that wisdom-related performance, as measured by the Berlin Wisdom Paradigm, increases sharply during adolescence and young adulthood (i.e., between 15 and 25 years) but, on average, remains relatively stable during middle adulthood and young old age (i.e., between 25 and 75 years). Peak performances, however, seem to be more likely in the 50s and 60s (Baltes, Staudinger, Maercker, & Smith, 1995). Tentatively, our data also suggest that wisdom-related performance may decline in very old age, beginning in current cohorts, at the average age of 75. At first sight, it is surprising that wisdom seems to remain relatively stable during adulthood and old age, at least up to age 75. This empirical finding is inconsistent with the notion that wisdom may be a positive aspect of the aging process. In interpreting the empirical evidence, however, it is important to consider the dramatically different results from agecomparative studies on the fluid mechanics of cognitive functioning.

## 3.4 EMPATHY AND ALTRUISM

**A Basic Question: Is Altruism Part of Human Nature?:**

Clearly, we humans devote much time and energy to helping others. We send money to rescue famine victims halfway around the world—or to save whales. We stay up all night to comfort a friend who has just suffered a broken relationship. We stop on a busy highway to help a stranded motorist change a flat tire. Why do we humans help? Often, of course, the answer is easy. We help because we have no choice, because it is expected, or because it is in our own best interest. We may do a friend a favor because we do not want to lose the friendship or because we expect to see the favor reciprocated. But it is not for such easy answers that we ask ourselves why we help; it is to press the limits of these answers.

We want to know whether our helping is always and exclusively motivated by the prospect of some benefit for ourselves, however subtle. We want to know whether anyone ever, in any degree, transcends the bounds of self-interest and helps out of genuine concern for the welfare of another. We want to know whether altruism is within the human repertoire. Proponents of universal egoism claim that everything we do, no matter how noble and beneficial to others, is really directed toward the ultimate goal of self-benefit. Proponents of altruism do not deny that the motivation for much of what we do, including much that we do for others, is egoistic. But they claim more. They claim that at least some of us, to some degree, under some circumstances, are capable of a qualitatively different form of motivation, motivation with an ultimate goal of benefiting someone else.

Those arguing for universal egoism have elegance and parsimony on their side in this debate. It is simpler to explain all human behavior in terms of self-benefit than to postulate a motivational pluralism in which both self-benefit and another's benefit can serve as ultimate goals. Elegance and parsimony are important criteria in developing scientific explanations, yet they are not the most important criterion. The most important task is to explain adequately and accurately the phenomena in question. We need to know if altruistic motivation exists, even if this knowledge plays havoc with our assumptions about human nature. If altruistic motivation is within the human repertoire, then both who we are as a species and what we are capable of doing are quite different than if it is not.

Altruism, if it exists, provides an important cornerstone for positive psychology. Whether altruism exists is not a new question. This question has been central in Western thought for centuries, from Aristotle (384–322 b.c.) and St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), through Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), the Duke de la Rochefoucauld (1613–1680), David Hume (1711–1776), Adam Smith (1723–1790), and Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832), to Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) and Sigmund Freud (1856–1939). The majority view among Renaissance and post-Renaissance philosophers, and more recently among biologists and psychologists, is that we are, at heart, purely egoistic— we care for others only to the extent that their welfare affects ours (see Mansbridge, 1990, and Wallach & Wallach, 1983, for reviews).

The many forms of self-benefit that can be derived from helping make the case for universal egoism seem very persuasive. Some forms of self-benefit are obvious, as when we get material rewards and public praise or when we escape public censure. But even when we help in the absence of external rewards, we still may benefit. Seeing someone in distress may cause us to feel distress, and we may act to relieve that person's distress as an instrumental means to relieve our own. Alternatively, we may gain self-benefit by feeling good about ourselves for being kind and caring, or by escaping the guilt and shame we might feel if we did not help. Even heroes and martyrs can benefit from their acts of apparent selflessness.

Consider the soldier who saves his comrades by diving on a grenade or the man who dies after relinquishing his place in a rescue craft. These persons may have acted to escape anticipated guilt and shame for letting others die. They may have acted to gain the admiration and praise of those left behind— or benefits in an afterlife. Perhaps they simply misjudged the situation, not thinking that their actions would cost them their lives. To suggest that heroes' noble acts could be motivated by self-benefit may seem cynical, but the possibility must be faced if we are to responsibly address the question of whether altruism exists.

**Empathic Emotion: A Possible Source of Altruistic Motivation:**

In both earlier philosophical writings and more recent psychological works, the most frequently mentioned possible source of altruistic motivation is an other-oriented emotional reaction to seeing another person in need. This reaction has variously been called "empathy" (Batson, 1987; Krebs, 1975; Stotland, 1969); "sympathy" (Eisenberg & Strayer, 1987; Heider, 1958; Wispe´, 1986, 1991); "sympathetic distress" (Hoffman, 1981); "tenderness" (McDougall, 1908); and "pity" or "compassion" (Hume, 1740/1896; Smith, 1759/1853). We shall call this otheroriented emotion empathy. Empathy has been named as a source—if not the source—of altruism by philosophers ranging from Aquinas to Rousseau to Hume to Adam Smith, and by psychologists ranging from William McDougall to contemporary researchers such as Hoffman (1981), Krebs (1975), and Batson (1987).

Formally, we define empathy as an otheroriented emotional response elicited by and congruent with the perceived welfare of someone else. If the other is perceived to be in need, then empathic emotions include sympathy, compassion, softheartedness, tenderness, and the like. It is important to distinguish this other-oriented emotional response from a number of related psychological phenomena, each of which also has at one time or another been called empathy. We have identified seven related concepts from which empathic emotion should be distinguished. Seven Related Concepts

(1) Knowing another person's internal state, including thoughts and feelings. Some clinicians and researchers have called knowing another person's internal state "empathy" (e.g., Brothers, 1989; de Waal, 1996; Dymond, 1950; Kohler, 1929; Wispe´, 1986). Others

have called this knowledge "being empathic" (Rogers, 1975), "accurate empathy" (Truax & Carkuff, 1967), or "empathic accuracy" (Ickes, 1993). Still others speak of "understanding" (Becker, 1931) or "perceiving accurately" (Levenson & Ruef, 1992). It might appear that such knowledge is a necessary condition for the other-oriented emotional response claimed to evoke altruistic motivation, but it is not. Empathic emotion requires that one think one knows the other's state because empathic emotion is based on a perception of the other's welfare. It does not, however, require that this perception be accurate, or even that it match the other's perception, which is often the standard used to define empathic accuracy (Ickes, 1993). An attempt to help motivated by empathic feeling is, of course, more likely to be beneficial if the feeling is based on an accurate perception of the other's needs. Thus, it is not surprising that clinicians, whose primary concern is to help the client, tend to emphasize accurate perception of the client's feelings more than feeling for the client.

(2) Assuming the posture of an observed other. Assuming the physical posture or attitude of an observed other is a definition of empathy in many dictionaries. Among psychologists, however, assuming another's posture is more likely to be called "motor mimicry" (Bavelas, Black, Lemeray, & Mullett, 1987; Hoffman, 1981; Murphy, 1947; Dimberg, Thunberg, & Elmehed, 2000); "physiological sympathy" (Ribot, 1911); or "imitation" (Becker, 1931; Lipps, 1903; Titchener, 1909). Feeling empathic emotion may be facilitated by assuming another's posture, but assuming the other's posture is neither necessary nor sufficient to produce empathy as we are using the term.

(3) Coming to feel as another person feels. Feeling the same emotion that another person feels also is a common dictionary definition of empathy, and it is a definition used by some psychologists (Berger, 1962; Eisenberg & Strayer, 1987; Englis, Vaughan, & Lanzetta, 1982; Freud, 1922; Stotland, 1969). Among philosophers, coming to feel as the other feels is more likely to be called "sympathy" (Hume, 1740/1896; Smith, 1759/1853). Scientists—including psychologists—who have been influenced by philosophy also typically refer to this state as "sympathy" (Allport, 1924; Cooley, 1902; Darwin, 1871; McDougall, 1908; Mead, 1934; Spencer, 1870; Wundt, 1897). Feeling the same emotion as another also has been called "fellow feeling" (Hume, 1740/1896; Smith, 1759/1853); "emotional identification" (Freud, 1922), "emotional contagion" (Becker, 1931; de Waal, 1996; Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1992; Heider, 1958); "affective reverberation" (Davis, 1985), and "empathic distress" (Hoffman, 1981). Although feeling as the other feels may be an important stepping-stone to the other-oriented feeling that has been claimed to be a source of altruism, it is neither a necessary nor a sufficient precondition (Batson, Early, & Salvarani, 1997). Feeling as the other feels may actually inhibit feeling for the other if it leads one to become focused on one's own emotional state. For example, sensing the nervousness of other passengers on an airplane in rough weather,

one may become nervous, too, and focused on one's own nervousness.

(4) Intuiting or projecting oneself into another's situation. Projecting oneself into another's situation is the psychological state referred to by Lipps (1903) as Einfu¨ lung and for which Titchener (1909) originally coined the term "empathy." This state also has been called "projective empathy" (Becker, 1931). Originally, these terms were intended to describe an artist's act of imagining what it would be like to be some person or, more often, some inanimate object—such as a gnarled, dead tree on a windswept hillside. This original definition of empathy as aesthetic projection often appears in dictionaries, but it is rarely what is meant by the term in contemporary psychology (although Wispe´, 1968, has called this state "aesthetic" empathy).

(5) Imagining how another is feeling. Wispe´ (1968) called imagining how another is feeling "psychological" empathy in order to differentiate it from the aesthetic empathy just described. Stotland (1969) spoke of this as a particular form of perspective taking—an "imagine him" (or, more generally, an "imagine other") perspective. Experimental instructions to adopt this imagine-other perspective often have been used to induce empathic emotion in participants in laboratory research (see Batson, 1991, and Davis, 1994, for reviews).

(6) Imagining how one would think and feel in the other's place. Adam Smith (1759/1853) prosaically referred to this act of imagination as "changing places in fancy." Mead (1934) sometimes called it "role taking" and sometimes "empathy"; Becker (1931) coined the term "mimpathizing." In the Piagetian tradition, imagining how one would think in the other's place has been called either "perspective taking" or "decentering" (Piaget, 1932/1965; Steins & Wicklund, 1996). Stotland (1969) called this an "imagine-self" perspective, distinguishing it from the imagine-other perspective described previously. These imagine-self and imagineother forms of perspective taking often have been confused or equated in spite of research evidence suggesting that they should not. When attending to another person in distress, an imagine-other perspective stimulates the otheroriented emotional response that we are calling empathy, whereas an imagine-self perspective may stimulate empathy but is also likely to elicit more self-oriented feelings of personal distress (Batson, Early, & Salvarani, 1997).

(7) Being upset by another person's suffering. The state of personal distress evoked by seeing another in distress to which we just referred has been given a variety of names. It has been called "sympathetic pain" (McDougall, 1908); "promotive tension" (Hornstein, 1982); "unpleasant arousal occasioned by observation" (Piliavin, Dovidio, Gaertner, & Clark, 1981); and "empathy" (Krebs, 1975). Here, one does not feel distressed for the other nor distressed as the other but feels distressed by the state of the other. We have listed these seven other empathy concepts for three reasons. First, we wish to point out

the range of psychological states to which the term empathy has been applied, hoping both to reduce confusion and to discourage imperialist attempts to identify it with only one of these phenomena. Second, we wish to distinguish each of the seven other empathy concepts from the other-oriented emotional response that has been claimed to be a source of altruistic motivation. Third, we wish to suggest how each of the other seven concepts relates to this empathic emotional response. Most of the other empathy concepts describe cognitive or perceptual states that are potential precursors to and facilitators of empathic emotion (Concepts 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6). Two describe alternative emotional states: feeling as the other feels (Concept 3) and feeling personal distress (upset) as a result of witnessing the other's suffering (Concept 7). Feeling as the other feels may serve as a stepping-stone to empathic feelings and, hence, to altruistic motivation, but it also may lead to self-focused attention and inhibit other-oriented feelings. Feeling personal distress is not likely to be a stepping-stone to altruism. Instead, it is likely to evoke an egoistic motive to relieve one's own distress (Batson, Fultz, & Schoenrade, 1987; Piliavin et al., 1981). Although distinctions among the eight concepts in the empathy cluster are sometimes subtle, there seems little doubt that each of these states exists. Indeed, most are familiar experiences. Their familiarity, however, should not lead us to ignore their psychological significance. The processes whereby one person can sense another's cares and wishes are truly remarkable, as are the range of emotions that these processes can arouse. Some great thinkers (e.g., David Hume) have suggested that these processes are the basis for all social perception and interaction. They are certainly key—and underappreciated—elements of our social nature.

**Empathic Emotion as Situational, Not Dispositional:**

Note that all eight of the empathy concepts we have considered are situation specific. None refers to a general disposition or personality trait. There may well be individual differences in the ability and inclination to experience these various states (see Davis, 1994, for a suggestive discussion), but attempts to measure these differences by standard retrospective self-report questionnaires seem suspect at best. Such questionnaires are more likely to reveal the degree of desire to see oneself and to be seen by others as empathic rather than to provide a valid measure of one's proclivity to be empathic.

**Testing the Empathy-Altruism Hypothesis:**

The claim that feeling empathic emotion for someone in need evokes altruistic motivation to relieve that need has been called the empathyaltruism hypothesis (Batson, 1987, 1991). According to this hypothesis, the greater the empathic emotion, the greater the altruistic motivation. Considerable evidence supports the idea that feeling empathy for a person in need leads to increased helping of that person (Coke, Batson, & McDavis, 1978; Dovidio, Allen, & Schroeder, 1990; Krebs, 1975; see Batson, 1991, and Eisenberg & Miller, 1987, for reviews). To

observe an empathy-helping relationship, however, tells us nothing about the nature of the motivation that underlies this relationship. Increasing the other person's welfare could be an ultimate goal, an instrumental goal sought as a means to the ultimate goal of gaining one or more selfbenefits, or both. That is, the motivation could be altruistic, egoistic, or both.

Three general classes of self-benefits can result from helping a person for whom one feels empathy. Helping enables one to

(a) Reduce one's empathic arousal, which may be experienced as aversive;

(b) Avoid possible social and self-punishments for failing to help; and

(c) Gain social and self-rewards for doing what is good and right.

The empathy-altruism hypothesis does not deny that these self-benefits of empathy-induced helping exist. It claims, however, that with regard to the motivation evoked by empathy, these self-benefits are unintended consequences of reaching the ultimate goal of reducing the other's need. Advocates of egoistic alternatives to the empathy-altruism hypothesis disagree; they claim that one or more of these self-benefits is the ultimate goal of empathyinduced helping. In the past two decades, more than 25 experiments have tested these three egoistic alternatives to the empathy-altruism hypothesis.

**Aversive-Arousal Reduction :**

The most frequently proposed egoistic explanation of the empathy-helping relationship is aversive-arousal reduction. According to this explanation, feeling empathy for someone who is suffering is unpleasant, and empathically aroused individuals help in order to eliminate their empathic feelings. Benefiting the person for whom empathy is felt is simply a means to this self-serving end. Researchers have tested the aversive-arousal reduction explanation against the empathyaltruism hypothesis by varying the ease of escape from further exposure to a person in need without helping. Because empathic arousal is a result of witnessing the person's suffering, either terminating this suffering by helping or terminating exposure to it by escaping should reduce one's own aversive arousal. Escape does not, however, enable one to reach the altruistic goal of relieving the other's distress. Therefore, the aversive-arousal explanation predicts elimination of the empathy-helping relationship when escape is easy; the empathy-altruism hypothesis does not. Results of experiments testing these competing predictions have consistently supported the empathy-altruism hypothesis, not the aversive-arousal reduction explanation. These results cast serious doubt on this popular egoistic explanation (see Batson, 1991, for a review of these experiments).

**Empathy-Specific Punishment:**

A second egoistic explanation claims that people learn through socialization that additional obligation to help, and so additional shame and guilt for failure to help, is attendant on feeling empathy for someone in need. As a result, when people feel empathy, they are faced with impending social or self-censure beyond any general punishment associated with not helping. They say to themselves, "What will others think—or what will I think of myself—if I don't help when I feel like this?" and then they help out of an egoistic desire to avoid these empathy-specific punishments. Once again, experiments designed to test this explanation have consistently failed to support it; instead, results have consistently supported the empathyaltruism hypothesis (again, see Batson, 1991).

**Empathy-Specific Reward:**

The third major egoistic explanation claims that people learn through socialization that special rewards in the form of praise, honor, and pride are attendant on helping a person for whom they feel empathy. As a result, when people feel empathy, they think of these rewards and help out of an egoistic desire to gain them. The general form of this explanation has been tested in several experiments and received no support (Batson et al., 1988, Studies 1 and 5; Batson & Weeks, 1996), but two variations have been proposed for which at least some support has been claimed. Best known is the negativestate relief explanation proposed by Cialdini et al. (1987), who suggested that the empathy experienced when witnessing another person's suffering is a negative affective state—a state of temporary sadness or sorrow—and the person feeling empathy helps in order to relieve this negative state. At first glance, this negative-state relief explanation may appear to be the same as the aversive-arousal reduction explanation.

In fact, it is not. Although both explanations begin with the proposition that feeling empathy for some490 one in need involves a negative affective state, from this common starting point they diverge. The aversive-arousal reduction explanation claims that the goal of helping is to eliminate the negative state; the negative-state relief explanation claims that the goal of helping is to gain mood-enhancing self-rewards that one has learned are associated with helping. Although the negative-state relief explanation received some initial support (Cialdini et al., 1987; Schaller & Cialdini, 1988), subsequent researchers have found that this support was likely due to procedural artifacts.

Experiments avoiding these artifacts have consistently supported the empathy-altruism hypothesis (Batson et al., 1989; Dovidio et al., 1990; Schroeder, Dovidio, Sibicky, Matthews, & Allen, 1988). It now seems clear, therefore, that the motivation to help evoked by empathy is not directed toward the egoistic goal of negative-state relief. A second variation on an empathy-specific reward explanation was proposed by Smith, Keating, and Stotland (1989). They proposed that, rather than helping to gain the rewards of seeing oneself or being seen by others as a helpful person, empathically aroused individuals help in order to feel joy at the needy individual's relief: "It is proposed that the prospect of

empathic joy, conveyed by feedback from the help recipient, is essential to the special tendency of empathic witnesses to help. . . . The empathically concerned witness . . . helps in order to be happy" (Smith et al., 1989, p. 641).

Some early self-report data were supportive, but more rigorous experimental evidence has failed to support this empathic-joy hypothesis. Instead, experimental results consistently have supported the empathy-altruism hypothesis (Batson et al., 1991; Smith et al., 1989). The empathic-joy hypothesis, like other versions of the empathy-specific reward explanation, seems unable to account for the empathy-helping relationship.

A Tentative Conclusion Reviewing the empathy-altruism research, as well as recent literature in sociology, economics, political science, and biology, Piliavin and Charng (1990) observed: There appears to be a "paradigm shift" away from the earlier position that behavior that appears to be altruistic must, under closer scrutiny, be revealed as reflecting egoistic motives. Rather, theory and data now being advanced are more compatible with the view that true altruism—acting with the goal of benefiting another—does exist and is a part of human nature. (p. 27) Pending new evidence or a plausible new egoistic explanation of the existing evidence, this observation seems correct. It appears that the empathy-altruism hypothesis should—tentatively— be accepted as true.

**Other Possible Sources of Altruistic Motivation:**

Might there be sources of altruistic motivation other than empathic emotion? Several have been proposed, including an "altruistic personality" (Oliner & Oliner, 1988), principled moral reasoning (Kohlberg, 1976), and internalized prosocial values (Staub, 1974). There is some evidence that each of these potential sources is associated with increased motivation to help, but as yet it is not clear that this motivation is altruistic. It may be, or it may be an instrumental means to the egoistic ultimate goals of maintaining one's positive self-concept or avoiding guilt (Batson, 1991; Batson, Bolen, Cross, & Neuringer-Benefiel, 1986; Carlo, Eisenberg, Troyer, Switzer, & Speer, 1991; Eisenberg et al., 1989). More and better research exploring these possibilities is needed. Two Other Possible Prosocial Motives Thinking more broadly, beyond the egoismaltruism debate that has been a focus of attention and contention for the past two decades, might there be other forms of prosocial motivation, forms in which the ultimate goal is neither to benefit self nor to benefit another individual? Two seem worthy of consideration, collectivism and principlism.

**Collectivism:**

Collectivism is motivation to benefit a particular group as a whole. The ultimate goal is not to increase one's own welfare or the welfare of the specific others who are benefited; the ultimate goal is to increase the welfare of the group. Robyn Dawes and his colleagues put it succinctly:

"Not me or thee but we" (Dawes, van de Kragt, & Orbell, 1988). They suggested that collectivist motivation is a product of group identity (Tajfel, 1981; Turner, 1987). As with altruism, what looks like collectivism may actually be a subtle form of egoism. Perhaps attention to group welfare is simply an expression of enlightened self-interest. After all, if one recognizes that ignoring group needs and the public good in headlong pursuit of self-benefit will lead to less self-benefit in the long run, then one may decide to benefit the group as a means to maximize overall self-benefit. Certainly, appeals to enlightened self-interest are commonly used by politicians and social activists to encourage response to societal needs: They warn of the long-term consequences for oneself and one's children of pollution and squandering natural resources; they remind that if the plight of the poor becomes too severe, the well-off may face revolution. Such appeals seem to assume that collectivism is simply a form of egoism.

The most direct evidence that collectivism is independent of egoism comes from research by Dawes, van de Kragt, and Orbell (1990). They examined the responses of individuals who had been given a choice between allocating money to themselves or to a group. Allocation to oneself maximized individual but not group profit; allocation to the group maximized collective but not individual profit. Dawes et al. found that if individuals faced with this dilemma made their allocation after discussing it with other members of the group, they gave more to the group than if they had no prior discussion. Moreover, this effect was specific to the in-group with whom the discussion occurred; allocation to an out-group was not enhanced. Based on this research, Dawes et al. (1990) claimed evidence for collectivist motivation independent of egoism, arguing that their procedure ruled out the two most plausible egoistic explanations—enlightened self-interest and socially instilled conscience.

There is reason to doubt, however, that their procedure effectively ruled out self-rewards and selfpunishments associated with conscience. We may have a standard or norm that says "share with your buddies" rather than one that simply says "share." So, although this research is important and suggestive, more and better evidence is needed to justify the conclusion that collectivist motivation is not reducible to egoism.

**Principlism:**

Most moral philosophers argue for the importance of a prosocial motive other than egoism. Most since Kant (1724–1804) shun altruism and collectivism as well. Philosophers reject appeals to altruism, especially empathy-induced altruism, because feelings of empathy, sympathy, and compassion are judged to be too fickle and too circumscribed. Empathy is not felt for everyone in need, at least not in the same degree. They reject appeals to collectivism because group interest is bounded by the limits of the group. Collectivism not only permits but may even encourage doing harm to those outside the group. Given these problems with altruism and collectivism, moral philosophers typically advocate prosocial motivation

with an ultimate goal of upholding a universal and impartial moral principle, such as justice (Rawls, 1971).

This moral motivation has been called principlism (Batson, 1994). Is acting with an ultimate goal of upholding a moral principle really possible? When Kant (1785/1898, pp. 23–24) briefly shifted from his analysis of what ought to be to what is, he admitted that concern we show for others that appears to be prompted by duty to principle may actually be prompted by self-love. The goal of upholding a moral principle may only be an instrumental means to reach the ultimate goal of self-benefit. If this is true, then principle-based motivation is actually egoistic. The self-benefits of upholding a moral principle are conspicuous. One can gain the social and self-rewards of being seen and seeing oneself as a good person. One also can avoid the social and self-punishments of shame and guilt for failing to do the right thing. As Freud (1930) suggested, society may inculcate such principles in the young in order to bridle their antisocial impulses by making it in their best personal interest to act morally (also see Campbell, 1975). Alternatively, through internalization (Staub, 1989) or development of moral reasoning (Kohlberg, 1976; Gilligan, 1982), principles may come to be valued in their own right and not simply as instrumental means to self-serving ends.

The issue here is the same one faced with altruism and collectivism. Once again, we need to know the nature of a prosocial motive. Is the desire to uphold justice (or some other moral principle) an instrumental goal on the way to the ultimate goal of self-benefit? If so, then this desire is a subtle and sophisticated form of egoism. Alternatively, is upholding the principle an ultimate goal, with the ensuing self-benefits unintended consequences? If so, then principlism is a fourth type of prosocial motivation, independent of egoism, altruism, and collectivism. Results of recent research suggest that people often act so as to appear moral while, if possible, avoiding the cost of actually being moral; this sham morality has been called moral hypocrisy (Batson, Kobrynowicz, Dinnerstein, Kampf, & Wilson, 1997; Batson, Thompson, Seuferling, Whitney, & Strongman, 1999).

Results of this research also suggest that if moral motivation exists, it is easily overpowered by self-interest. Many of us are, it seems, quite adept at moral rationalization. We are good at justifying to ourselves—if not to others—why a situation that benefits us or those we care about does not violate our moral principles: why, for example, storing our nuclear waste in someone else's backyard is fair; why terrorist attacks by our side are regrettable but necessary evils, whereas terrorist attacks by the other side are atrocities; why we must obey orders, even if it means killing innocent people. The abstractness of most moral principles, and their multiplicity, makes such rationalization easy.

But this may be only part of the story. Perhaps upholding a moral principle can serve as an ultimate goal, defining a form of motivation independent of egoism. If so, then perhaps these principles can provide a rational basis for responding to the needs of others that transcends reliance on self-

interest or on vested interest in and feeling for the welfare of certain other individuals or groups. This is quite an "if," but it seems well worth conducting research to find out.

**Toward a General Model of Prosocial Motivation:**

Staub (1989) and Schwartz (1992) have for many years emphasized the importance of values as determinants of prosocial behavior. Batson (1994) has proposed a general model that links prosocial values and motives: The value underlying egoism is enhanced personal welfare; the value underlying altruism is the enhanced welfare of one or more individuals as individuals; the value underlying collectivism is enhanced group welfare; and the value underlying principlism is upholding a moral principle. Four experiments have provided evidence for the predicted link between empathic emotion— a source of altruistic motivation—and valuing another individual's welfare (Batson, Turk, Shaw, & Klein, 1995); the other value-motive links await test. Prosocial values usually are assumed to be mutually supportive and cooperative; concern for the welfare of others and concern for the welfare of the society are assumed to be moral (Hoffman, 1989; Staub, 1989).

If, however, the different values evoke different ultimate goals and therefore different motives, they may at times conflict rather than cooperate. For example, concern for the welfare of a specific other person (altruism) may conflict not only with self-interest but also with concern for the welfare of the group as a whole (collectivism) or concern to uphold a moral principle (principlism). Evidence of such conflicts has been found (Batson, Ahmad, et al., 1999; Batson, Batson, et al., 1995; Batson, Klein, Highberger, & Shaw, 1995). To entertain the possibility of multiple prosocial motives (egoism, altruism, collectivism, and principlism) based on multiple prosocial values (self, other, group, principle) begs for a better understanding of cognitive representation of the self-other relationship.

Several representations have been proposed. Concern for another's welfare may be a product of:

(a) A sense of we-ness based on cognitive unit formation or identification with the other's situation (Hornstein, 1982; Lerner, 1982);

(b) The self expanding to incorporate the other (Aron & Aron, 1986);

(c) Empathic feeling for the other, who remains distinct from self (Batson & Shaw, 1991; Jarymowicz, 1992); (d) the self being redefined at a group level, where me and thee become interchangeable parts of a self that is we (Dawes et al., 1988; Turner, 1987); or

(e) The self dissolving in devotion to something outside itself, whether another person, a group, or a principle (James, 1910/1982). Most of these proposals seem plausible, some even profound.

Yet not all can be true, at least not at the same time. Based on research to date, it appears that empathic feelings are not a product of self-other

merging (Batson, Sager, et al., 1997; Cialdini, Brown, Lewis, Luce, & Neuberg, 1997), but the effect on one's self-concept of caring for people, groups, and principles is not, as yet, well understood. Theoretical Implications of the Empathy- Altruism Relationship Returning to the empathy-altruism relationship, it is clear that this relationship has broad theoretical implications. Universal egoism—the assumption that all human behavior is ultimately directed toward self-benefit—has long dominated not only psychology but also other social and behavioral sciences (Campbell, 1975; Mansbridge, 1990; Wallach & Wallach, 1983).

If individuals feeling empathy act, at least in part, with an ultimate goal of increasing the welfare of another, then the assumption of universal egoism must be replaced by a more complex view of motivation that allows for altruism as well as egoism. Such a shift in our view of motivation requires, in turn, a revision of our underlying assumptions about human nature and human potential. It implies that we humans may be more social than we have thought: Other people can be more to us than sources of information, stimulation, and reward as we each seek our own welfare.

We have the potential to care about their welfare as well. The empathy-altruism relationship forces us to face the question of why empathic feelings exist. What evolutionary function do they serve? Admittedly speculative, the most plausible answer relates empathic feelings to parenting among higher mammals, in which offspring live for some time in a very vulnerable state (de Waal, 1996; Hoffman, 1981; Mc- Dougall, 1908; Zahn-Waxler & Radke-Yarrow, 1990).

Were parents not intensely interested in the welfare of their progeny, these species would quickly die out. Empathic feelings for offspring—and the resulting altruistic motivation— may promote one's reproductive potential not by increasing the number of offspring but by increasing the chance of their survival. Of course, empathic feelings extend well beyond one's own children. People can feel empathy for a wide range of targets (including nonhumans), as long as there is no preexisting antipathy (Batson, 1991; Krebs, 1975; Shelton & Rogers, 1981). From an evolutionary perspective, this extension is usually attributed to cognitive generalization whereby one "adopts" others, making it possible to evoke the primitive and fundamental impulse to care for progeny when these adopted others are in need (Batson, 1987; Hoffman, 1981; MacLean, 1973).

Such cognitive generalization may be facilitated by human cognitive capacity, including symbolic thought, and the lack of evolutionary advantage for sharp discrimination of empathic feelings in early human small hunter-gatherer bands. In these bands, those in need were often one's children or close kin, and one's own welfare was tightly tied to the welfare even of those who were not close kin (Hoffman, 1981). William McDougall (1908) long ago described these links in his depiction of the "parental instinct." As with all of McDougall's theorized instincts, the parental instinct involved cognitive, affective, and conative (motivational) components: Cues of distress from one's offspring, including cognitively

adopted offspring (e.g., a pet), evoke what McDougall called "the tender emotion" (our "empathy"), which in turn produces altruistic motivation.

Although few psychologists would wish to return to McDougall's emphasis on instincts, his attempt to integrate

(a) Valuing based on cognitive generalization of the perception of offspring in distress,

(b) Empathic (sympathetic, compassionate, tender) emotional response, and

(c) Goal-directed altruistic motivation seems at least as much a blueprint for the future as a curio from the past.

## 3.5 REFERENCE

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# 4

# POSITIVE INSTITUTIONS

**Unit Structure**



## 4.1 POSITIVE SCHOOLING

We agree that some instructors are so bad that they should not go near classrooms. Such teachers are the ones "who, when given the honor and the privilege to teach, bore rather than inspire, settle for the lowest common denominator rather than aspire to the highest possible numerator, take the job for granted rather than being continually amazed at the blessing-sins against all the minds they have closed, misinformed and alienated from education" (Zimbardo, 2005, p. 12). That these bad teachers can do harm is more than sheer speculation; the related research consistently shows that poor teachers have adverse effects on their students (for an overview, see Jennifer King Rice's 2003 book, *Teacher Quality).* In fact, the low quality of teachers has been found to be the most influential of all school-related factors in terms of undermining students' learning and their attitudes about education in general (Rice, 2003). Furthermore, the effects of poor teachers are both additive and cumulative over time (Sanders & Rivers, 1996), with teacher quality accounting for 7.5% of the variance in students' achievements (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, as reported in Goldhaber, 2002).

What factors determine teacher quality? Of the various ways of tapping quality, a teacher's relevant educational background and degrees are two of the most influential sources when it comes to enhancing students' learning (Monk & King, 1994; Rowan, Chiang, & Miller, 1997). Likewise, Darling-Hammond and Youngs (2002) reported that indices of Positive Schooling teacher achievements and adequate preparation were robust predictors of students' achievements in the areas of mathematics and reading. To concretize the impact of teacher quality, consider the finding that the difference between having had a bad teacher and a good teacher reflects an entire grade level in student achievement (Hanushek, 1994).

Overall, therefore, poor teachers leave behind trails of intellectual boredom and disrespect. Of course, there are legitimate reasons that some teachers "turn bad." The most obvious is burnout, where the instructor loses enthusiasm after repeatedly encountering blockages and lack of support for his or her efforts (see Maslach, 1999). There is no excuse, however, for a teacher who does nothing to address such burnout. It is hard to have sympathy for the teachers who continue to just "send it in" when it comes to enthusiasm and preparation for their students. Not only have they failed to teach formative young minds when they are most open to the excitement of learning, but they also may have turned off these minds for life (see Zimbardo, 1999). Although negative teachers are relatively rare, even one is too many. It would be bad enough if these poor teachers only impaired the learning of their students, but they also may inflict psychological pain and damage. Students tragically may become the unwilling participants in self-fulfilling prophecies in which they fail in both the academic and interpersonal spheres.

Thus, as impassioned as we are about seeing to it that positive psychology fills the minds and classrooms of our teachers and their students, so, too, are we adamant about wanting poor teachers identified very early in their careers and either taught to change or shown the door out of the classroom. Should your own education have included one or more poor teachers, we have prepared an exercise for you. We encourage you to follow the steps outlined in the Personal Mini-Experiments, which may help you to "bury" the bad influences of your previous poor teachers.

**"No Child Left Behind" and Beyond:**

In a letter to John Adams (anthologized in Barber & Battistoni, 1993, p. 41), Thomas Jefferson shared his vision of changing the American aristocracy of "privilege by inheritance" to a more natural type of aristocracy based on talent. Since those early times, the American ideal has been that public education should make one's life outcomes less dependent upon family status and more dependent on the use of public education. Thus, schools were idealized as making huge differences in the lives of our children.

### 4.1.1 The Components of Positive Schooling:

Before reviewing the components of positive schooling (which is an approach to education that consists of a foundation of care, trust, and respect for diversity, where teachers develop tailored goals for each student to engender learning and then work with him or her to develop the plans and motivation to reach their goals), we acknowledge briefly some of the major educators who have paved the way for this approach. Noted philosophers such as Benjamin Franklin, John Stuart Mill, Herbert Spencer, and John Dewey focused on the assets of students (Lopez, Janowski, & Wells, 2005). Alfred Binet (Binet & Simon, 1916) often is considered the father of the concept of mental age, but he also emphasized the Positive Schooling enhancement of student skills rather than paying attention only to the remediation of weaknesses. Likewise, Elizabeth

Hurlock (1925) accentuated praise as more influential than criticism as a determinant of students' efforts. Similarly, Lewis Terman (Terman & Oden, 1947) spent his whole career exploring the thinking of truly brilliant learners, and Arthur Chickering (1969) sought to understand the evolution of students' talents. (See Chapter 14 for a discussion of Chickering's views of college student development.)

More recently, Donald Clifton identified, and then expanded on, the particular talents of students, rather than focusing on their weaknesses (see Buckingham & Clifton, 2001; Clifton & Anderson, 2002; Clifton & Nelson, 1992; Rath & Clifton, 2004). We next explore the major components of positive schooling (see Buskist et al., 2005; Lopez et al., 2005; Ritchel, 2005). For the reader interested in an actual one-week curriculum to instill positive psychology ideas in a high-school course, we recommend Amy Fineburg's (2002) unit; moreover, details of various college curricula for positive teaching can be attained at http://www.positivepsychology.org/teachingpp.htm. This figure shows the positive psychology schoolhouse as being built of six parts, from the ground up. We begin with the foundation, where we describe the importance of care, trust, and diversity. Then, the first and second floors of our positive schoolhouse represent teaching goals, planning, and the motivation of students. The third floor holds hope, and the roof represents the societal contributions and paybacks produced by our positive psychology school graduates.

### 4.1.2 Care, trust, and respect for diversity:

We begin with a foundation that involves caring, trust, and respect for diversity. It is absolutely crucial to have a supportive atmosphere of care and trust because students flourish in such an environment. In attending award ceremonies for outstanding teachers, we have noticed that both the teachers and their students typically comment on the importance of a sense of caring. Students need as role models teachers who consistently are responsive and available. Such teacher care and positive emotions provide the secure base that allows young people to explore and find ways to achieve their own important academic and life goals (Shorey, Snyder, Yang, & Lewin, 2003).

### Goals (Content):

The component of goals is represented by the second floor of the strengths schoolhouse. Exploring the responses of students from kindergarten to college, Stanford University Professor Carol Dweck has put together an impressive program of research showing that goals provide a means of targeting students' learning efforts. Moreover, such goals are especially helpful if agreed upon by the teacher and students (Dweck, 1999; Locke, & Latham, 2002). Perhaps the most conducive targets are the stretch goals, in which the student seeks a slightly more difficult learning goal than attained previously. Reasonably challenging goals engender productive learning, especially if the goals can be tailored to particular students (or groups of students). It is important for students to feel some sense of input

in regard to their teachers' conduct of classes. Of course, the instructors set the classroom goals, but in doing so they are wise to consider the reactions of their

**Positive Environments:**

The success of class goals involves making the materials relevant to students' real-life experiences whenever possible (Snyder & Shorey, 2002). In turn, tailoring to students' experiences makes it more likely that students will become involved in and learn the material (see Dweck, 1999). We advise against emphasizing grades too strictly once learning goals are set. Adherence to grading curves, for example, can turn students into grade predators who are more fascinated with their performances and with doing better than their peers than they are with learning. Indeed, this set has been linked to lower levels of hope (Shorey et al., 2004) and more test-taking anxieties (Dweck, 1999). It also helps to make the goals understandable and concrete, as well as to take a larger learning goal and divide it into smaller subgoals that can be tackled in stages. Likewise, as we noted with respect to diversity issues in the previous section, goal setting is facilitated when teachers allow part of students' grades to be determined by group activities in which cooperation with other students is essential. Again, Aronson's "jigsaw classroom" (www.jigsaw.org) paradigm is very useful in setting such goals.

**Plans:**

The first floor of the strengths schoolhouse is divided into plans and motivation, both of which interact with the educational goals on the second floor (and with content). Like building science on accumulating ideas, teaching necessitates a careful planning process on the part of instructors. Yet another planning approach is championed by the noted social psychologist Robert Cialdini of Arizona State University (see Cialdini, 2005). Once Professor Cialdini has established a teaching goal regarding given psychological content, he then poses mystery stories for students. By solving the mystery, the student has learned the particular content. (The inherent need for closure [see Kruglanksi & Webster, 1996] regarding the mysteries also motivates the students; motivation is the companion to planning, which we discuss in the next section. Likewise, because the mystery stories have beginnings, middles, and ends, there is the inherent desire on the part of students to get to the conclusion [see Green, Strange, & Brock, 2002, on the drive to traverse a narrative].)

Another consideration in raising students' motivations is to make the material relevant to them (Buskist et al., 2005). At the most basic level, when the course information is relevant, students are more likely to attend class, to pay attention, and to make comments during the lectures (Lowman, 1995; Lutsky, 1999). To increase the relevance of material, instructors can develop classroom demonstrations and at-home exploration (such as the Personal Mini-Experiments and Life Enhancement Strategies Positive School i ng in this book) of various phenomena applicable to situations that the students encounter outside the classroom.

Some instructors conduct surveys at the beginning of a semester, in which they ask students to describe positive and negative events that have happened in their lives. Then, the instructor can use the more frequently cited events to construct classroom demonstrations (Snyder, 2004). Or, once the instructor has described a phenomenon, students can be asked to give examples from their own experience. Before leaving the topic of relevance, we caution aging instructors against trying to co-opt the lifestyle manifestations of much younger students. This is a sure-fire way to turn off student motivation. In the words of Snyder (2004),

Have you ever seen a 50- or 60-something professor who is trying everything possible to be as "hip" as his or her 21-year-old students? I do not know what is most pitiful about this specter. Is it the aging professor's youthful clothes that look so wrong? Is it the out-of-place punked hairstyle fashioned on the head with far too few hairs? Or it is the graying professor's awkward attempts to borrow college students' language? It is folly, in my view, for an older instructor to try to remain "hip" and be part of the young crowd. Indeed, I think that such professors come across as ludicrous and pandering. Give it up, I say, for it is only when we are young-for it is who we really are then-that such hipness is appropriate. Additionally, the truth is that our students do not want a hip-hop "pal" as their instructor. (pp. 17-18)

**Motivation (Plus Enlivening the Course Contents for Students):**

Teachers must be enthused about their materials so as to carry out the plans that they have made for their classes (see the interactive arrow between plans and motivation on the first floor of Figure 16.1). Instructors are models of enthusiasm for their students. Therefore, when instructors make lesson goals and plans interesting to themselves, their students easily can pick up on this energy. Motivated teachers are sensitive to the needs and reactions of their students. Strengths-based instructors also take students' questions very seriously and make every effort to give their best answers. If the teacher does not know the answer to a student question, it is enlivening to the class to inform them that, although the instructor doesn't know the answer at that time, he or she will make every effort to find it. Then, the teacher follows through to locate the answer to the question and presents it at the next class period; students typically are very appreciative of such responsiveness.

**Positive Environments:**

Teachers also raise the motivational level when they take risks and try new approaches in class (Halperin & Desrochers, 2005). When such risktaking results in a classroom exercise that does not work, the instructor can have a good laugh at him- or herself. Humor raises the energy for the next classroom exercise, along with the effort level of the teacher. A strengths-based teaching motto is, "If you don't laugh at yourself, you have missed the biggest joke of all" (Snyder, 2005a). Anything an instructor can do to increase students' accountability also can raise their motivation (Halperin & Desrochers, 2005). Relatedly, students who expect to be called upon by

their instructors typically are prepared for each class-they read the material and follow the lecture (McDougall & Granby, 1996).

Recall that the previously discussed jigsaw classroom approach fosters the learning and planning of group goals and that in doing so it also imparts motivation to students as they work together. Indeed, a sense of energy can come from being part of a team effort. Lastly, praise is very motivating. It is best to deliver this privately, however, because an individual student may feel uncomfortable when singled out in front of peers. Public praise also may raise the propensities of students to compete with each other. An office visit or a meeting with the student outside the classroom is a good time to note the student's good work or progress (or even to offer praise for asking good questions). Furthermore, e-mail is a ready-made vehicle for privately delivering positive feedback that may be motivating. The opportunities for appropriately interacting with and motivating students are many, and positive psychology teachers often try to convey such energizing feedback.

## 4.2 AGING WELL AND ROLE OF FAMILY

With the baby boomers joining the older adult group of Americans, stories of successful aging are becoming more prominent in today's media. The stories of older adults provide valuable lessons to all of us. This was definitely the case in the life of Morrie Schwartz (the focus of Mitch Alborn's 2002 book, Tuesdays with Morrie), who lived life to its fullest and found great meaning during his physical decline and death. The study of the positive aspects of aging (referred to as positive aging, healthy aging, successful aging, and aging well) is only several decades old. It will become a primary focus of psychological science, however, given the trends in American demography that will demand the attentions of scientists and the general public. Our goal for this section is to describe successful aging based on the MacArthur Study of Successful Aging and the prospective study by Vaillant (2002).

### 4.2.1 What is successful aging?:

The term successful aging was popularized by Robert Havighurst (1961) when he wrote about "adding life to years" (p. 8) in the first issue of The Gerontologist. Havighurst also primed scholarly interest in healthy aspects of getting older. Rowe and Kahn (1998), summarizing the findings from the MacArthur Study of Successful Aging, proposed three components of successful aging:

(1) Avoiding disease,

(2) Engagement with life, and

(3) Maintaining high cognitive and physical functioning.

These three components are aspects of «maintaining a lifestyle that involves normal, valued, and beneficial activities" (Williamson, 2002, p. 681). Vaillant (2002) simplifies the definition further by characterizing

successful aging as joy, love, and learning. These descriptions, though not detailed, provide an adequate image of successful aging.

### 4.2.2 The MacArthur Foundation Study of Successful Aging:

They investigated physical, social, and psychological factors related to abilities, health, and well-being. A sample of 1189 healthy adult volunteers between the ages of 70 and 79 was selected from a pool of 4030 potential participants, using physical and cognitive criteria. These high functioning adults participated in a 90-minute personal interview and then were followed for an average of 7 years, during which time they completed periodic interviews.

As mentioned previously, the MacArthur study revealed that the three components of successful aging were avoiding disease, engaging with life, and maintaining physical and cognitive functioning (Rowe & Kahn, 1998). Here, we focus on life engagement because it is the component of successful aging that positive psychologists are most likely to address in their research and practice. Indeed, the two components of life engagement, social support and productivity (Rowe & Kahn), parallel the life pursuits of love, work, and play that we address in many of the chapters in this book. Social support is most potent when it is mutual; the support given is balanced by support received.

Two kinds of support are important for successful aging: socioemotional support (liking and loving) and instrumental support (assistance when someone is in need). Further examination of the MacArthur data revealed that support increased over time (Gurung, Taylor, & Seeman, 2003). Moreover, the respondents with more social ties showed less decline in functioning over time (Unger, McAvay, Bruce, Berkman, & Seeman, 1999). The positive effects of social ties were shown to vary according to the individual's gender and baseline physical capabilities (Unger et al.). Gender also influenced how married participants (a 439-person subset of the total sample) received social support: «Men Living Well at Every Stage of Life received emotional support primarily from their spouses, whereas women drew more heavily on their friends and relatives and children for emotional support" (Gurung et al., p. 487).

Regarding productive activity in later adulthood, Glass et al. (1995) examined patterns of change in the activities of the highly functioning sample of 70-to-79-year-olds and in a group of 162 moderateto- low-functioning 70-to-79-year-olds over a 3-year period. The highest functioning cohort was found to be significantly more productive than the comparison group. Changes in productivity over time were associated with more hospital admissions and strokes, whereas age, marriage, and increased mastery of certain skills were related to greater protection against declines. These findings are consistent with the work of Williamson (2002), who suggests that sustained physical activity (an aspect of productive activity) helps to maintain healthy functioning. Accordingly, interruptions of physical activity regimens often precipitate declines in overall well-being.

**The Adult Development Study:**

Vaillant (2002) acknowledges that subjective evaluation of functioning is not the most rigorous approach to identifying those who age successfully. He has relied on a system of independent evaluations of the functioning (e.g., physical, psychological, occupational) of the participants in the Study of Adult Development. The original 256 Caucasian, socially advantaged participants were identified in the late 1930s by the deans at Harvard (who viewed the students as sound in all regards). For the past 80 years, these participants have been studied via physical examinations, personal interviews, and surveys. More than 80% of the study participants lived past their 80th birthdays, whereas only 30% of their contemporaries lived to that age. His extensive study of these older adults (and members of two other prospective studies) identified the following lifestyle predictors of healthy aging: not smoking, or stopping smoking while young; coping adaptively, with mature defenses; not abusing alcohol; maintaining a healthy weight, a stable marriage, and some exercise; and being educated. These variables distinguished people on the ends of the health spectrum: The happy-well (62 individuals who experienced good health objectively and subjectively, biologically and psychologically) and the sad-sick (40 individuals who were classified as unhappy in at least one of three dimensions: mental health, social support, or life satisfaction.) The most robust predictor of membership in the happywell group versus the sad-sick group was the extent to which people used mature psychological coping styles (e.g., altruism, humor) in everyday life.

**A More Developmental Focus In Positive Psychology:**

We face daily hassles and adversities. This is true during childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and older adulthood. Hopefully, as we age, we become more resourceful and adaptable. This appears to be the case Living Well at Every Stage of Life because there are numerous positive developmental factors that help children and adults to bounce back. The findings discussed in this chapter also suggest that positive psychology is well on its way to identifying and sharing meaningful information about how to live a better life.

## 4.3 PSYCHOLOGY OF FORGIVENESS FOR HEALTHY SOCIETY

In this section, we explore how forgiveness can be taught. Accordingly, we show how three sources-another person, oneself, and even a situation or circumstance-can be used as targets in forgiveness instruction. Forgiving Another Person In this most typical category of forgiveness, forgiving another individual, one can imagine lyrics of a blues song in which one partner in a **Empathy and Egotism** relationship has been "done wrong" (e.g., the other partner had an affair). In our therapy experiences with couples dealing with forgiveness in the wake of martial infidelities, we have found that the model of Gordon, Baucom, and Snyder is a useful one (2004, 2005; Gordon & Baucom, 1998). In this model, in

which forgiveness is the goal, the first step is to promote a nondistorted, realistic appraisal of the relationship of the two people.

The second step is the attempt to facilitate a release from the bond of ruminative, negative affect held toward the violating (transgressing) partner. Finally, the third step is to help the victimized partner lessen his or her desire to punish the transgressing partner. Over time, forgiveness makes it possible for the hurt and the outpouring of negative feelings to diminish-especially for the victimized partner. Likewise, the treatment enhances the empathy for the transgressing partner, and the therapist tries to make both people feel better about themselves. Forgiveness parallels the stages of recovery from psychological trauma. Over time, the couple progresses from the initial impact stage to a search for meaning or understanding of what happened to them. Finally, the couple moves to a recovery stage, in which they "get on with their lives" (Gordon et aI., 2005).

In the impact stage, there is typically a rampage of negative emotions-hurt, fear, and anger. At this time, the partners may swing from numbness to very bad feelings. Then, in the meaning stage, the partners search desperately to comprehend why the affair happened. Surely, the couple reasons, there must be some meaning in this relationship- shaking event. Last, the couple slowly begins to recapture a sense of control over their lives; a major goal in this stage is to keep the affair from ruling every waking thought of these two people.

To forgive does not necessarily mean that the couple decides to stay together-but at least the forgiving process enables them to make more informed decisions about what to do next. Another productive approach for helping couples to deal with infidelity is the forgiveness model of Everett Worthington of Virginia Commonwealth University (see Ripley & Worthington, 2002; Worthington, 1998; Worthington & Drinkard, 2000). This model is based on helping the partners through the five steps of the acronym REACH: Recall the hurt and the nature of the injury caused; promote Empathy in both partners; Altruistically give the gift of forgiveness between partners; Commit verbally to forgive the partner, and Hold onto the forgiveness for each other.

**Forgiving Oneself:**

A clinician will be alerted to the potential need for forgiveness of the self when a client is feeling either shame or guilt. In this regard, shame reflects an overall sense that "I am a bad person." As such, shame cuts across particular circumstances, and it reflects an all-encompassing view of the self as powerless and worthless. In contrast, guilt taps a situation-specific negative self-view, for example, "I did a bad thing" (Tangney, Boone, & Dearing, 2005). A person who feels guilt has a sense of remorse and typically regrets something that he or she has done. To correct for such guilt, some sort of reparative action is warranted, such as confessing or apologizing.

The process of helping a person to deal with shame is a more difficult one for the helper than is the treatment for guilt. This follows because shame cuts through more situations than the single-situational focus of guilt. Self-forgiveness has been defined as "a process of releasing resentment toward oneself for a perceived transgression or wrongdoing" (DeShea & Wahkinney, 2003, p. 4). Given that we all must live with ourselves, it can be seen that the consequences of not forgiving oneself can be much more severe than the consequences of not forgiving another person (Hall & Fincham, 2005). Interventions to lessen counterproductive criticism of the self are aimed at helping the individual take responsibility for the bad act or actions and then let go so that she or he can move forward with the tasks in life. In fact, any client who is absorbed in very negative or very positive self-thoughts feels "caught:'

Accordingly, helpers attempt to help their clients understand how their self-absorbed thoughts and feelings interfere with positive living. Holmgren (2002) has captured this sentiment: To dwell on one's own past record of moral performance, either with a sense of self-hatred and self-contempt or with a sense of superiority, is an activity that is overly self-involved and devoid of any real moral value. The client will exercise his moral agency much more responsibly if he removes his focus from the fact that he did wrong and concentrates instead on the contribution he can make to others and on the growth he can experience in the moral and nonmoral realms. (p. 133)

**Forgiveness of a Situation:**

Recall the Enright position (described previously) that forgiveness should be applied only to people, not to inanimate objects such as tornadoes. We disagree with this premise; our views are consistent with the Thompson model of forgiveness, in which the target can be another person, oneself, or a situation. A psychotherapy case of CRS's some 20 years ago shows how forgiveness can be applied to a situation. We live in Lawrence, Kansas, where tornadoes occasionally descend on our community. In this particular instance, a tornado had damaged houses and their inhabitants. After this tornado, I saw a man in therapy who held severe angry and bitter thoughts toward the tornado for destroying his house and making him feel psychologically victimized. In the course of treatment, the goal was to help this man to stop ruminating about the tornado, as well as to stop blaming it for having ruined his life (Snyder, 2003). Therefore, the man was taught to let go of his resentment toward the tornado. This was part of a larger Empathy and Egotism treatment goal aimed at teaching this person to release the bitterness he felt about a series of "bad breaks" that he had received in life. Moreover, he came to understand that the tornado had struck other houses and families, but those people had picked up the pieces and moved on with their lives. For this client, ruminations about the tornado kept him stuck in the past, and he realized that letting go was part of moving forward so as to have hope in his life (see Lopez, Snyder, et al., 2004; Snyder, 1989).

For professionals who have done considerable psychotherapy, this case will not seem unusual, in that clients often point to their life circumstances as the causes of their problems (i.e., they blame the happenings in their lives). For such clients, therefore, a crucial part of their treatments entails instruction in stopping thoughts about earlier negative life events so that they instead can look ahead toward their futures (Michael & Snyder, in press).

**Development of the Disposition to Forgive:**

Darby and Schlenker (1982) were the first researchers to notice age-related trends in forgiveness. Consistent with Darby and Schlenker's (1982) original findings, other researchers have found that people appear generally to become more forgiving as they age (Enright et al., 1989; Girard & Mullet, 1997; Mullet & Girard, 2000; Mullet et al., 1998; Park & Enright, 1997; Subkoviak et al., 1995). For example, Enright et al. (1989) found that chronological age and reasoning about forgiveness were correlated strongly in a sample of American children, adolescents, and adults. Girard and Mullet (1997) also reported age differences in willingness to forgive among a sample of 236 French adolescents, adults, and older adults (age range, 15–96). They found that older adults reported significantly higher likelihoods of forgiving in a variety of transgression scenarios than did the adolescents and adults. Furthermore, the adults were more forgiving than were the adolescents. Mullet et al. (1998) also found that older adults scored considerably higher than did young adults on measures of the disposition to forgive (but cf. Mauger et al., 1992). It is reasonable to ask whether these agerelated trends in forgiveness are linked to agerelated trends in general cognitive or moral development. Enright and colleagues (e.g., Enright et al., 1989; Enright & Human Development Study Group, 1994) hypothesized that reasoning about forgiveness develops along the same trajectory as does Kohlbergian moral reasoning (Kohlberg, 1976). Correspondingly, they proposed that people at the earliest stages of moral reasoning about forgiveness—the stages of *revengeful forgiveness* and *restitutional forgiveness*— reason that forgiveness is only appropriate after the victim has obtained revenge and/ or the transgressor has made restitution. People at the intermediate stages—*expectational forgiveness* and *lawful expectational forgiveness*— reason that forgiveness is appropriate because social, moral, or religious pressures compel them to forgive. People at the high stages—*forgiveness as social harmony* and *forgiveness as love*—reason that forgiveness is appropriate because it promotes a harmonious society and is an expression of unconditional love. In support of this hypothesis, Enright et al. (1989) found in two studies that Kohlbergian moral reasoning, as assessed with standard interview measures, was positively correlated with people's stage of reasoning about forgiveness.

**Personality and Forgiveness:**

Forgiving people differ from less-forgiving people on many personality attributes. For example, forgiving people report less negative affect such as anxiety, depression, and hostility (Mauger, Saxon, Hamill, & Pannell,

1996). Forgiving people are also less ruminative (Metts & Cupach, 1998), less narcissistic (Davidson, 1993), less exploitative, and more empathic (Tangney et al., 1999) than their less-forgiving counterparts. Forgivers also tend to endorse socially desirable attitudes and behavior (Mauger et al., 1992). Moreover, self-ratings of the disposition to forgive correlate negatively with scores on hostility and anger (Tangney et al., 1999), as well as with clinicians' ratings of hostility, passive-aggressive behavior, and neuroticism (Mauger et al., 1996). What can we deduce from this array of correlates? To some extent, they probably convey redundant information because many personality traits can be reduced to a handful of higher order personality dimensions. Within the Big Five personality taxonomy (e.g., John & Srivastava, 1999), for example, the disposition to forgive appears to be related most strongly to agreeableness and neuroticism (McCullough & Hoyt, 1999). Adjectives such as *vengeful* and *forgiving* tend to be excellent markers for the Agreeableness dimension of the Big Five taxonomy, and other research confirms the link between agreeableness and forgiveness (Ashton et al., 1998; Mauger et al., 1996). Researchers have found also that forgiveness is related inversely to measures of neuroticism (Ashton et al., 1998; McCullough & Hoyt, 1999). Thus, the forgiving person appears to be someone who is relatively high in agreeableness and relatively low in neuroticism/ negative emotionality.

**Social Factors Influencing Forgiveness:**

Forgiveness is influenced also by the characteristics of transgressions and the contexts in which they occur. Generally, people have more difficulty forgiving offenses that seem more intentional and severe and that have more negative consequences (Boon & Sulsky, 1997; Girard & Mullet, 1997). The extent to which an offender apologizes and seeks forgiveness for a transgression also influences victims' likelihood of forgiving (Darby & Schlenker, 1982; Girard & Mullet, 1997; McCullough, Worthington, & Rachal, 1997; McCullough et al., 1998; Weiner, Graham, Peter, & Zmuidinas, 1991). Why do apologies facilitate forgiveness? By and large, the effects of apologies appear to be indirect. They appear to cause reductions in victims' negative affect toward their transgressors (Ohbuchi, Kameda, & Agarie, 1989) and increases in empathy for their transgressors (McCullough et al., 1997; McCullough et al., 1998). Victims also form more generous impressions of apologetic transgressors (Ohbuchi et al., 1989).

Perhaps apologies and expressions of remorse allow the victim to distinguish the personhood of the transgressor from his or her negative behaviors, thereby restoring a more favorable impression and reducing negative interpersonal motivations. In this way, apologies may represent an effective form of reality negotiation (Snyder, Higgins, & Stucky, 1983). Indeed, Snyder's theory of reality negotiation explains why many of transgressors' posttransgression actions (including cancellation of the consequences of the offense; Girard & Mullet, 1997) influence the extent to which victims forgive. Other general theories of social conduct (e.g., Weiner, 1995) lead to similar predictions. Interpersonal Correlates of Forgiveness Forgiveness may be influenced also by characteristics of the

interpersonal relationship in which an offense takes place. In several studies (Nelson, 1993; Rackley, 1993; Roloff & Janiszewski, 1989; Woodman, 1991), researchers have found that people are more willing to forgive in relationships in which they feel satisfied, close, and committed. McCullough et al. (1998) surveyed both partners in over 100 romantic relationships to examine more closely the association of relational variables to acts of forgiveness. Both partners rated their satisfaction with and commitment to their romantic partner. Partners also used the Transgression-Related Interpersonal Motivations (TRIM) Inventory to indicate the extent to which they had forgiven their partner for two transgressions—the worst transgression their partner ever committed against them, and the most recent serious transgression their partner committed against them. Partners' forgiveness scores were correlated both with their own relational satisfaction and commitment and with their partners' relational satisfaction and commitment. McCullough et al. (1998) also found evidence consistent with the idea not only that relationship closeness facilitates forgiveness but also that forgiveness facilitates the reestablishment of closeness following transgressions. The proposition that forgiveness is related to relationship factors such as satisfaction, commitment, and closeness raises the question of whether the dynamics of forgiveness could vary for different types of relationships. We would not expect people to forgive perfect strangers in the same way they forgive their most intimate relationship partners, for example. However, currently we know little about the unique dynamics of forgiveness within specific types of relationships (Fincham, 2000).

**Forgiveness, Health, and Well-Being:**

Empirical research on the links between forgiveness and mental health had a humble beginning in the 1960s. In the first known study of forgiveness and well-being, Emerson (1964) used a Q-sort method and found what he perceived as a link between emotional adjustment and forgiveness. Following Emerson's work, however, researchers did not consider the links between forgiveness, health, and well-being again until the 1990s.

## 4.4 THE ME/WE BALANCE: BUILDING BETTER COMMUNITIES WHERE WE ARE GOING: FROM ME TO WE TO US

In this chapter, we use two important human motives as a framework. The first motive is the individualistic focus, in which one pursues a sense of specialness relative to others. A second motive is the collectivistic focus, in which one tries to maximize the link to others (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985, 1988; Snyder & Fromkin, 1980). We first explore the individualistic focus on the one-the ME-followed by the collectivistic focus on the many-the WE. Last, we propose a blend of the one and the many-the WE/ME, or, more simply, US. This approach represents an intermingling in which both the individual and the group are considered essential for satisfying and productive lives. As we see it, the

US perspective reflects a viable positive psychology resolution for the future of humankind.

**Individualism: The Psychology of ME:**

In this section, we touch on the American history of rugged individualism (also discussed in Chapter 2), along with the core and secondary emphases that define a person as individualistic. We then discuss one aspect of individualism, the need for uniqueness, and show how this need can be measured and manifested in a variety of activities. **Emphases In Individualism** When concern for the individual is greater than concern for the group, then the culture is said to be individualistic; however, when each person is very concerned about the group, then the society is collectivistic. As shown in Figure 18.1, when the average person in a society is disposed toward individual independence, that society is deemed individualistic (see the bell-shaped curve drawn with the dotted line). **Core Emphases** We have used the terms core emphases and secondary emphases to capture the more and less central aspects of individualistic and collectivistic societies. Underlying each culture is a set of expectations and memories about what is thought to be appropriate for the members of that society. In individualistic societies such as America, social patterns resemble a loosely interwoven fabric, and it is the norm for each person to see him- or herself as independent of the surrounding group of people (Triandis, 1995). On this point, research involving many studies supports the conclusion that American individualism reflects a sense of independence rather than dependence (see Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002). A second core emphasis within individualism is that the person wants to stand out relative to the population as a whole.

Within individualistic societies, therefore, people follow their own motives and preferences instead of adjusting their desires to accommodate those of the group (this sometimes is called *conforming).* The individualistic person thus sets personal goals that may not match those of the groups to which he or she belongs (Schwartz, 1994; Triandis, 1988, 1990). Because of the individualistic propensity to manifest one's specialness, coupled with societal support for actions that show such individuality, it follows that the citizens of individualistic societies such as the United States will have a high need for uniqueness. Research related to this point supports the robustness of uniqueness-seeking thoughts and actions among Americans (e.g., Snyder & Fromkin, 1977, 1980). We explore this fascinating motive in greater detail later in this section. A third core emphasis of individualism is that the self or person is the unit of analysis in understanding how people think and act in a society. That is, explanations of events are likely to involve the person rather than the group. Therefore, the various definitions of individualism draw upon worldviews in which personal factors are emphasized over social forces (Bellah et aI., 1985; Kagitcibasi, 1994; Triandis, 1995).

**Secondary Emphases:**

Several secondary emphases flow from the individualistic focus upon the self rather than the group. These are listed in Table 18.1. Goals set by citizens of an individualistic society typically are for the self; moreover, success and related satisfactions also operate at the level of the self. Simply put, the payoffs are at the personal level rather than the group level. The individualistic person pursues what is enjoyable to him or her, in contrast to collectivistic people, who derive their pleasures from things that promote the welfare of the group. Of course, the individualist at times may follow group norms, but this usually happens when she or he has deduced that it is personally advantageous to do so.

As may be obvious by now, individualists are focused upon pleasure and their own self-esteem in interpersonal relationships and beyond. Individualists also weigh the disadvantages and advantages of relationships before deciding whether to pursue them (Kim, Sharkey, & Singelis, 1994). Thus, individualistic persons engage in benefit analyses to determine what may profit them, whereas collectivists are more likely to give their unconditional support to their group and think first and foremost in terms of their duties to the group. Unlike individualists, collectivists are not likely to behave spontaneously, because of their concerns about their peer group. Individualists tend to be rather short-term in their thinking, whereas collectivists are more long-term in their thought patterns.

**The Need For Uniqueness:**

Although it is true that the norms in individualistic societies emphasize the person (see the dotted line with an arrow at the bottom), you will notice that some people belong toward the group end of the continuum and others toward the individual end. In this latter regard, we now explore the desire to manifest specialness relative to other people. The pursuit of individualistic goals to produce a sense of specialness has been termed the need for uniqueness (see Lynn & Snyder, 2002; Snyder & Fromkin, 1977, 1980). This need is posited to have some universal appeal, as people seek to maintain some degree of difference from others (as well as to maintain a bond to other people). In the 1970s, researchers Howard Fromkin and C. R. Snyder (see Snyder & Fromkin, 1977, 1980) embarked on a program of research based on the premise that most people have some desire to be special relative to others. They called this human motive the *need for uniqueness.* Beyond establishing that some specialness was desirable for most of the people in their American samples, these researchers also reasoned that some people have a very high need for uniqueness, whereas others have a very low need for uniqueness. In short, there are individual differences in need for uniqueness.

**A historical comment on collectivism: We came together out of necessity** Thousands of years ago, our hunter-gatherer ancestors realized that there were survival advantages to be derived from banding together into groups with shared goals and interests (Cheney, Seyforth, & Smuts, 1986; Panter-Brick, Rowley-Conwy, & Layton, 2001). These groups contributed to a sense of belonging, fostered personal identities and roles for their members (McMillan & Chavis, 1986), and offered shared

emotional bonds (Bess, Fisher, Sonn, & Bishop, 2002). Moreover, the resources of the people in groups helped them fend off threats from other humans and animals. Simply stated, groups offered power to their members (Heller, 1989).

The people in such groups protected and cared for each other, and they formed social units that were effective contexts for the propagation and raising of offspring. Gathered into groups, humans reaped the benefits of community (Sarason, 1974). By today's standards, our hunter-gatherer relatives were more primitive in their needs and aspirations. But were they really that much different from people today in the satisfactions and benefits they derived from their group memberships? We think not, because human beings always have had the shared characteristics of what social psychologist Elliot Aronson (2003) has called "social animals." In this regard, one of our strongest human motives is to belong-to feel as if we are connected in meaningful ways with other people (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).

Social psychologists Roy Baumeister and Mark Leary (1995) and Donelson Forsyth (1999; Forsyth & Corazzini, 2000) have argued that people prosper when they join together into social units to pursue shared goals.

**Emphases In Collectivism:**

Now, let's return to Figure 18.1 on page 446. As shown there, when the average person in a society is disposed toward group interdependence, then that society is labeled "collectivist" (see the bell-shaped curve drawn with the solid line). At this point, you may be curious as to which country most markedly adheres to collectivistic values. In response to this question, research suggests that China is the most collectivistic of the various nations around the globe (see Oyserman et al., 2002).

**Core Emphases:**

the three core emphases of collectivism are dependence; conformity, or the desire to fit in; and perception of the group as the fundamental unit of analysis. First, the dependency within collectivism reflects a genuine tendency to draw one's very meaning and existence from being part of an important group of people. In collectivism, the person goes along with the expectations of the group, is highly concerned about the welfare of the group, and is very dependent upon the other members of the group to which he or she belongs

**Secondary Emphases:**

The collectivist is defined in terms of the characteristics of the groups to which she or he belongs. Thus, collectivist-oriented people pay close attention to the rules and goals of the group and often may subjugate their personal needs to those of the group. Moreover, success and satisfaction stem from the group's reaching its desired goals and from feeling that one has fulfilled the socially prescribed duties as a member of that effective,

goal-directed, group effort (Kim, 1994). Collectivist people obviously become very involved in the ongoing activities and goals of their group, and they think carefully about the obligations and duties of the groups to which they belong (Davidson, Jaccard, Triandis, Morales, & Diaz-Guerrero, 1976; Miller, 1994). Furthermore, the interchanges between people within the collectivist perspective are characterized by mutual generosity and equity (Sayle, 1998). For such people, interpersonal relationships may be pursued even when there are no obvious benefits to be attained (see Triandis, 1995). In fact, given the great emphasis that collectivists place on relationships, they may pursue such relationships even when such interactions are counterproductive

**Both The Individualistic And The Collectivistic Perspectives Are Viable:**

Social scientists often have conceptualized individualism and collectivism as opposites (Hui, 1988; Oyserman et aI., 2002), and this polarity typically has been applied when contrasting the individualism of European Americans with the collectivism of East Asians (Chan, 1994; Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, & Norasakkunkit, 1997). This polarity approach strikes us as being neither good science nor necessarily a productive strategy for fostering healthy interactions among people from varying ethnicities within and across societies. In the watershed review on this topic, Oyserman and colleagues (2002) found that Americans indeed were high in individualism, but they were *not necessarily lower* than others in collectivism. Thus, there was support for only half the stereotype.

Viewing individualism and collectivism as opposites also has the potential to provoke disputes, in which the members of each camp attempt to demonstrate the superiority of their approach. Such acrimony between these two perspectives seems especially problematic given that the distinctions between individualism and collectivism have not been found to be clear cut. For example, Vandello and Cohen (1999) found that, even within individualistic societies such as the United States, the form of the individualism differs in the Northeast, the Midwest, the Deep South, and the West. Moreover, cultures are extremely diverse; each has dynamic and changing social systems that are far from the monolithic simplicities suggested by the labels “individualist” and “collectivist” (Bandura, 2000). Likewise, there may be generational differences in the degree to which individualism and collectivism are manifested (e.g., Matsumoto, Kudoh, & Takeuchi, 1996). And when different reference groups become more salient, propensities toward individualism and collectivism vary (Freeman & Bordia, 2001). Furthermore, a seemingly individualistic propensity in actuality may contribute to collectivism; for example, consider the fact that a robust personal sense of efficacy may contribute to the collective efficacy of a society (Fernandez-Ballesteros, Diez-Nicolas, Caprara, Barbaranelli, & Bandura, 2002).

## 4.5 REFERENCES

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