

*POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY, PART 2:
A STRENGTH BASED
APPROACH TO WORKING WITH
GAMBLERS*

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The Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling

Learning Objectives

- Learn what Positive Psychology is and how it can be applied
- Learn how a strength-based approach to gambling treatment helps to improve treatment outcomes
- Develop a greater understanding of how to employ the principals of Positive Psychology into healthy lifestyle choices for the gambler and their families
- Learn how to create the therapeutic conditions to allow our clients to thrive

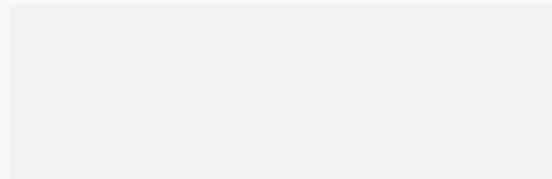
To Begin




Breathe

Deeply – Slowly

CALM





**Wherever you are is the
perfect place to awaken.
This moment is the exact
place to practice
compassion and loving
awareness. You have all
the ingredients to
breathe and find freedom
just where you are.**

~ Jack Kornfield

morefamousquotes.com

Exercise 1 – Gratitude

■ 3 Good Things...

Think about yesterday and the first half of today. What were 3 good things that have happened? List them.

Why did this good thing happen?

What was my contribution to this good thing?

Reflect on how this practice impacts your mood. What feelings arise?

Example: I had a good day at work yesterday, and my sessions went well. Why this happened?

My contribution:

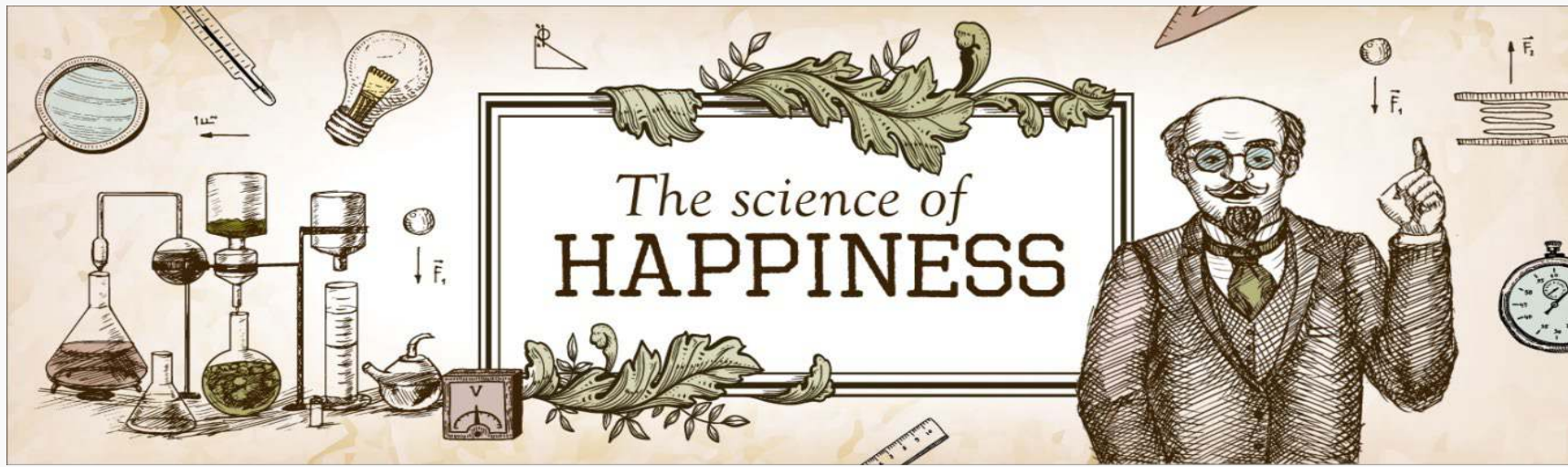
I made sure that I got good rest last night and tried to be present and attuned in my sessions today.

Do this everyday for 2 weeks. Reflect on how this practice impacted your mood.

Positive Psychology

- What is it?

- **Positive Psychology** is the scientific study of the strengths that enable individuals and communities to thrive. The field is founded on the belief that people want to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives, to cultivate what is best within themselves, and to enhance their experiences of love, work, and play.



Positive Psychology

A Strength-Based Approach to Treatment

Strength-based therapy is a type of positive psychotherapy and counseling that focuses more on a client's internal strengths and resourcefulness, and less on weaknesses, failures, and shortcomings. This focus sets up a positive mindset that helps clients build on their best qualities, find their strengths, improve resilience and change their worldview to one that is more positive. A positive attitude, in turn, can help a person's expectations of themselves and others become more reasonable.

This word cloud features three primary terms: "Positive Psychology", "Strengths", and "Flourishing". The words are rendered in three distinct color schemes: a vibrant green, a dark forest green, and a rich brown. The size of each word varies, with "Positive Psychology" and "Strengths" appearing in the largest font sizes, while "Flourishing" is also prominently displayed. The words are densely packed and overlap significantly, creating a complex, multi-layered visual effect. The overall composition is centered and fills most of the frame.

Gambling Disorder

DSM-5 Diagnostic Criteria: Gambling Disorder

- Persistent and recurrent problematic gambling behavior leading to clinically significant impairment or distress, as indicated by the individual exhibiting four (or more) of the diagnostic criteria in a 12-month period:

- Psychological Causal Factors

Biological/Psychological/Social Environmental

How can we use positive psychology to address these issues?

Positive Psychology

Positive Psychology involves...

Gratitude

Optimism

Happiness

Flow

Purpose

Flourishing

Positive Psychology Part 1

■ Optimism

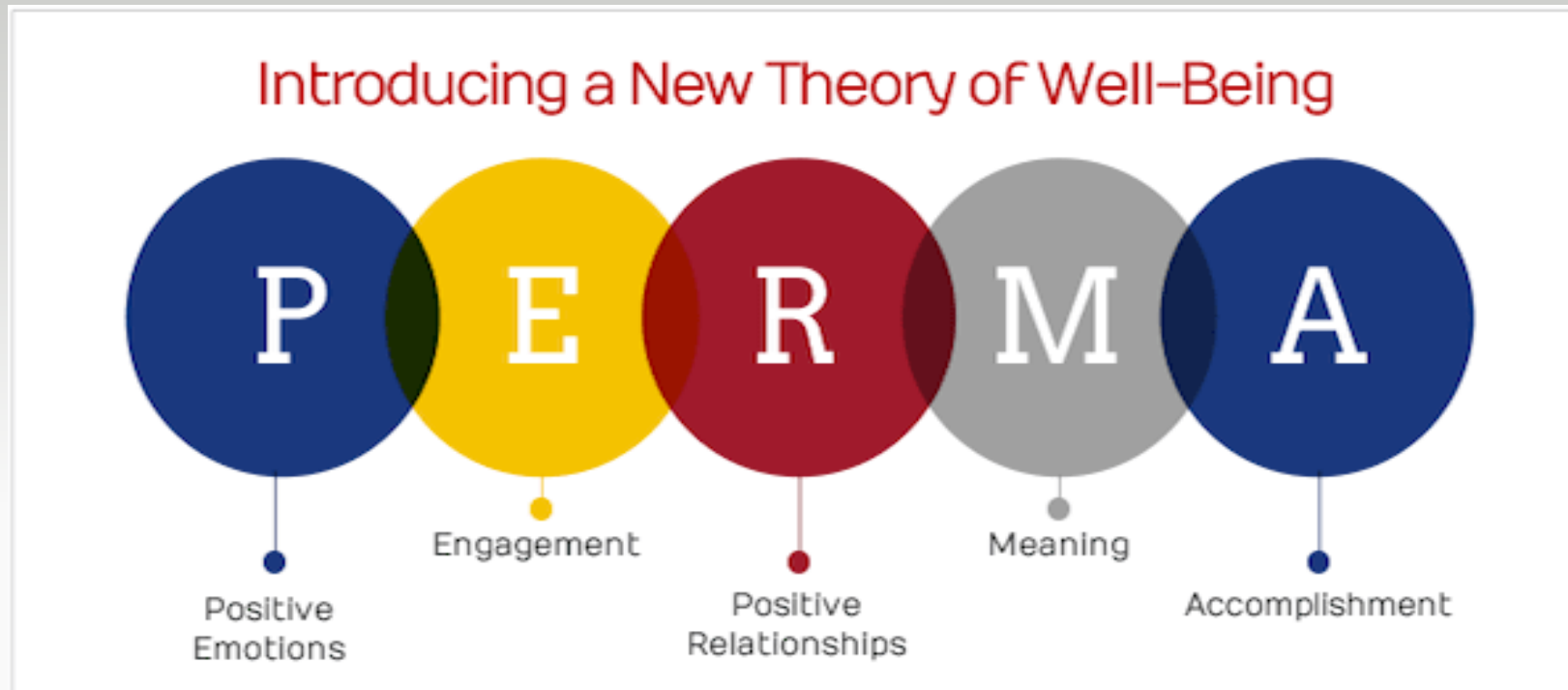
A characteristic frame of mind that leads someone to expect positive outcomes and to view the world as a positive place.

■ Happiness

Positive Psychologists use the term happiness to refer to the subjective sense of well-being, as well as the sense that your life is worthwhile.



Positive Psychology



P-E-R-M-A

How can we help our clients pay attention to each aspect of the PERMA Model and build up a solid sense of well-being?

FLOURISHING

When we cultivate our talents and strengths, develop deep meaningful relationships, feel pleasure and enjoyment, and make a meaningful contribution to the world.

Flourishing is the product of the pursuit and engagement of an authentic life that brings inner joy and happiness through meeting goals, being connected with life passions, and relishing in accomplishments through the peaks and valleys of life

Dr. Lynn Soots

Flow

Defined –

Active engagement in an activity that takes great concentration on the task at hand. Losing oneself in their work. (note of caution...not dissociation)

- Intense concentration in the moment
- Merging of action and awareness, or being fully present in your actions
- A loss of reflective self-consciousness
- A sense of personal control or agency in the situation
- A distorted sense of time passing
- Experiencing the activity or situation intrinsically rewarding.

(Csikszentmihalyi, 1975)

Flow is linked to greater happiness and well-being, more academic (subsequently, career) success, and more positive and healthy relationships.

(Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1988)

Flow Exercise – 2 - Reflection

List the activities that you enjoy engaging in?

Which Flow characteristics are true for you because it...

- a. Inspires me to solve challenges creatively;
- b. Let's me feel like I'm at one with everything that's happening;
- c. Is about the only time I can turn off my 'to-do' list;
- d. Let's me share amazing moments with others.

I find myself in Flow most often...

- a. Alone or with a tight crew who can keep up;
- b. With people so we can build off each other's energy;
- c. When I'm by myself so I can focus deeply;
- d. In serene settings where I feel connected to something bigger than myself.

I find flow when...

- a. My heart's beating, adrenaline's pumping and it's make or break time;
- b. We're all swept up in the moment together and feel connected to something bigger than ourselves;
- c. Everything's beautiful and effortless—things happen perfectly;
- d. Hours go by, and I lose myself in my work and come up with something amazing.

Flow Profile

- *Hard Charger* –

Active Lifestyle – Adventure Sports, Rock climbing, Mountain Biking

Favoring non-traditional, off the beaten path travel.

- *Flow Goer* -

Soul Searching Activities – Yoga, Meditation, Tia-Chi, Retreats

- *Deep Thinker* –

Hiking, Playing a Musical Instrument, Gardening, Reflection

What's Your Flow Type?

When Do You Find Yourself in **FLOW**?

Living a Life of Purpose

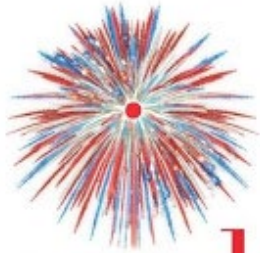
Living a life of purpose reflects who you are deep inside, your beliefs, values and passion for living. It is about following your heart and doing what you love to do with passion and purpose.

- Live by Your Beliefs and values
- Set Priorities
- Follow your Passion/Interests
- Achieve Balance
- Feel Content
- Make a Difference
- Live in the Moment



Flourishing

A Visionary New Understanding
of Happiness and Well-being



Flourish

MARTIN
SELIGMAN

AUTHOR OF THE INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER
AUTHENTIC HAPPINESS

Help Clients to Enhance these 5 Qualities:

- The ability to direct and redirect their attention
- The tendency to shape their time with intention for impact
- The practice of constant improvement
- The ability to communicate and listen to others
- The commitment to positive experiences



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Scientific Benefits of Self - Compassion

■ Increases Positive Emotions & Decreases Negative Emotions

In a landmark study, Barbara Frederickson and her colleagues ([Fredrickson, Cohn, Coffey, Pek, & Finkel, 2008](#)) found that practicing 7 weeks of loving-kindness meditation increased love, joy, contentment, gratitude, pride, hope, interest, amusement, and awe.

■ Increases vagal tone which increases positive emotions & feelings of social connection

A study by [Kok et al \(2013\)](#) found that individuals in a Loving Kindness Meditation intervention, compared to a control group, had increases in positive emotions, an effect moderated by baseline vagal tone – a physiological marker of well-being.

■ Decreases PTSD

A study by [Kearney et al \(2013\)](#) found that a 12-week Loving Kindness Meditation course significantly reduced depression and PTSD symptoms among veterans diagnosed with PTSD.

■ Activates empathy & emotional processing in the brain

Studies showed this link research by ([Hutcherson, Seppala & Gross, 2014](#)) and also by ([Hoffmann, Grossman & Hinton, 2011](#))

■ Decreases Your Bias towards others

A recent study ([Kang, Gray & Dovidio, 2014](#)) found that compared to a closely matched active control condition, 6 weeks of Loving Kindness Meditation training decreased implicit bias against minorities.

Scientific Benefits of Self - Compassion

■ Curbs Self-Criticism:

A study by [Shahar et al \(2014\)](#) found that Loving Kindness Meditation was effective for self-critical individuals in reducing self-criticism and depressive symptoms and improving self-compassion and positive emotions. These changes were maintained 3 months post-intervention.

■ Is Effective Even in Small Doses

A study found an effect of a small dose of Loving Kindness Meditation (practiced in a single short session lasting less than 10 minutes). Compared with a closely matched control task, even just a few minutes of loving-kindness meditation increased feelings of social connection and positivity toward strangers. [Hutcherson, Seppala and Gross \(2008\)](#).

■ Has Long-Term Impact.

A study by [Cohn et al \(2011\)](#) found that 35% of participants of a Loving Kindness Meditation intervention who continued to meditate, and experience enhanced positive emotions 15 months after the intervention. Positive emotions correlated positively with the number of minutes spent meditating daily.

Emma Seppala, PhD – Stanford University *Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education*.

Loving Kindness Meditation

*PRACTICE RANDOM ACTS OF
KINDNESS*

PEACE

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