

CENTER FOR WELL-BEING AND POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY



YUMNA QURESHI

The Power of Connection: Nurturing Social Bonds for Better Mental Health

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Have you ever noticed how a heartfelt conversation or a shared laugh can lift your spirits? That's the magic of social bonds. These connections, whether with friends, family, or even kind acquaintances, play a crucial role in mental health.

Humans are inherently social beings. Our relationships offer a sense of belonging, reduce feelings of isolation, and create a safety net during tough times. When we share our joys, they double; when we share our burdens, they lighten. Research consistently shows that strong social ties can lower stress, reduce the risk of depression, and even improve physical health.

Building these bonds doesn't require grand gestures. A simple check-in text, a coffee catch-up, or lending a listening ear can weave the fabric of meaningful relationships. So, as you go about your day, take a moment to nurture your connections. Your mental health will thank you for it.



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In Search of Happiness: Part-II

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In previous (Part-I) of this article, I discussed the phenomenon of happiness. In this article (Part-II), I shall examine the ideas of famous thinkers and will also highlight happiness from a religious perspective. And in the concluding (Part-III), the pragmatic aspects of happiness, and practical strategies to enhance mental health and well-being will be highlighted.

Throughout history happiness has been one of the most conspicuous topics of debate. Ancient as well as modern thinkers have been preoccupied with the concept and attainability of happiness. In the last three decades, immense research has been conducted in the area of subjective well-being and mental health. The word happiness is derived from the archaic 'hap' meaning 'chance', 'luck' or 'good fortune'. Feeling happy (implying a transitory agreeable mood) and 'being happy in life' involve different senses of happiness. Aristotle's Ethics gives rise to most of the conceptual questions about happiness. He was the first philosopher to examine the notion of happiness systematically. He claimed that happiness is 'an activity of the soul in accordance with virtue'; that happiness lies in a life of moderation; that friendship is crucial to happiness; and that ideally, man's happiness should be achieved through intellectual pursuits.

Jeremy Bentham, father of utilitarianism, said that mankind has been under the guidance of two sovereign masters: pleasure and pain. Not everyone has seen happiness in terms of means and ends, utility and enjoyment or satisfaction. Plato, for example, identifies happiness with spiritual well-being, a harmony in the soul, an inner peace that results from the proper order of all the soul's parts. According to Socrates, the unjust or vicious man is miserable in himself, regardless of his external gains. Socrates says, "The happy are made happy by the possession of justice and temperance, and the miserable by the possession of vice."

On the other hand, Kant posed the pertinent and provocative question: Should people make happiness their goal and direct their acts accordingly? He pays little attention to the value of happiness and emphasizes being virtuous for its own sake. He understands happiness to consist in "the satisfaction of all our desires: extensive, in regard to their degree; pretensive, in regard to their duration." In his book, Man for himself, Erich Fromm quotes Spinoza: Happiness is not the reward of virtue but is virtue itself; nor do we delight in happiness because we restrain our lusts; but, on the contrary, because we delight in it, therefore are we able to restrain. According to the theory of Hedonism, pleasure is the guiding principle of human action. Aristippus believed the attainment of pleasure and the avoidance of pain to be the aim of life and the criterion of virtue.

Happiness has been a recurrent theme in numerous fictional works. Leo Tolstoy's War and Peace, Iris Murdoch's "The Black Prince" and Henry James's "Portrait of a Lady" are all centrally about man's search for happiness. Poets like Alfred Tennyson, Alexander Pope, and Mirza Ghalib have mentioned happiness in their poetry. Many plays and movies, have been produced on this topic. In The Book of Life, Krishnamurti asks: "What is it that most of us are seeking? What is it that each of us wants?". He then proceeds to answer these questions: "Probably most of us are seeking some kind of happiness, some kind of peace; in a world that is ridden with turmoil." "How to gain, how to keep, how to recover happiness is in fact for most men at all times the secret motive for all they do", observed William James. Locke also supports this view. To the question of what moves desire? Locke says the only possible answer is: "happiness, and that alone".

*To be continued on the next page

UAE Delegation Visits IAC's Center for Well-Being and Positive Psychology

On November 21, 2024, a distinguished delegation from the UAE, including Mr. Fouad Darwish and Mr. Daud bin Farooq, accompanied by the esteemed Chancellor Muhammad Faisal Janjua, visited the Institute for Art and Culture, Lahore.



During their visit, the Deans and Heads of Departments delivered presentations showcasing the initiatives and achievements of their respective schools. Prof. Dr. Shabbir Ahmad Rana, Head of the Center for Well-Being and Positive Psychology, along with his team, provided an in-depth overview of the Center's initiatives and accomplishments. The presentation emphasized the Center's unwavering commitment to promoting mental well-being, personal growth, and the principles of positive psychology within both academic and professional environments.

Mr. Fouad Darwish and Mr. Daud bin Farooq expressed their admiration for the Center's innovative efforts and impactful contributions. They praised the team's dedication and professionalism. The delegation also shared encouraging feedback, recognizing the Center's vital role in fostering the well-being of students, faculty, non-teaching staff, and the broader community.

CWPP: A Day Out

On November 29, 2024 The Center for Positive Psychology Team recently enjoyed a delightful day out complete with a shared lunch, fun and meaningful conversations. Such gatherings are a wonderful way to unwind, foster positivity, and strengthen the bonds among team members.



Beyond relaxation, the day out served as a platform for team members to reflect on their shared goals, exchange new ideas, and nurture their collective vision. Taking time to connect outside the usual work setting allows for deeper camaraderie, a renewed sense of purpose, and an even stronger commitment to the center's mission of promoting mental well-being, personal growth, and positivity. At the end, Dr. Shabbir Rana asked all team members to compile and submit a brief report in writing of their respective responsibilities and tasks assigned to them.

Here's to more moments that celebrate teamwork, collaboration, and the spirit of togetherness that drives our success!

Happiness is chiefly a function of enduring personality dispositions; wealth, social class, and other markers of the objective quality of life are virtually unrelated to subjective happiness; and processes of adaptation quickly return persons to their own characteristic baseline of happiness after favorable or unfavorable life events. Victor Frankl in his book, *From Death Camp to Existentialism*, highlights the importance of some meaningful goal in life to attain happiness. Some thinkers have wondered whether true happiness is possible on this earth or only in the next world. "None can we call happy until his corpse is laid in the tomb", says Ovid. However, Freud argued, "anyone who is born with especially unfavorable instinctual constitution, and whose libido-components do not go through the transformation and modification necessary for successful achievement in later life, will find it hard to obtain happiness."

At the end, I would like to mention one of the most important concepts of happiness: the religious concept. According to the Christian theologian Augustine, any happiness which men can have on earth and in time is "rather the solace of our misery than the positive enjoyment of felicity." The Persian Sufi thinker, Rumi says: 'From time-to-time heartache ambushes you, attacking your sense of joy. Do not worry: it is preparing you for deeper happiness. Heartache sweeps away the false joys that had observed you, and compels you to seek solace in the only true source of joy - God himself.' To conclude, in Quran, The Last Testament, God has promised happiness to those who follow His Path.

Absolutely, God's allies will have nothing to fear, nor will they grieve.
They are those who believe and lead a righteous life.
For them happiness in this life, and in the Hereafter.
Such is God's inviolable law.
This is the true triumph..... [10:62-64]

***To be continued in next issue...**

CWPP: Annual Review and Planning Meeting: Advancing Well-Being Initiatives

On December 13, 2024, the Center for Well-Being and Positive Psychology conducted a productive meeting to review the year's progress and discuss strategic plans for the future. During the session, the team presented a comprehensive update report detailing the Center's activities, key achievements, and milestones accomplished over the past year.

The meeting also focused on outlining the 2025 activity calendar, with an emphasis on introducing innovative initiatives aimed at enhancing student and staff engagement. Dr. Shabbir Ahmad Rana, Head of the Center, commended the team for their dedication and unwavering commitment to fostering a culture of well-being and positivity. The discussion concluded with a shared sense of enthusiasm and optimism for the year ahead.

Following the meeting, the finalized report was submitted to the esteemed Chancellor, Muhammad Faisal Janjua, and the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Najma Najam, for their review and record. The leadership acknowledged and appreciated the efforts of the Center, reaffirming its importance in promoting holistic well-being within the institute and the outside world.



ZAINAB ZUBAIR

Student Testimonial

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I am deeply grateful for the support I have received from the Center for Well-Being and Positive Psychology. The counselors have consistently provided a safe and empathetic environment, always taking the time to listen to my concerns and offer valuable guidance.

Whenever I have faced personal or academic challenges, they have been there to help me navigate through them with understanding and professionalism. Their insights have not only helped me overcome obstacles but have also empowered me to build greater emotional resilience and maintain a positive mindset.

I am truly thankful for the transformative experience this center has provided, as it has equipped me with the tools to face future challenges with confidence.

Mood Meter: Check-In with Yourself

Circle how you're feeling today:

😊 Happy | 😊 Optimistic | 😐 Reflective | 😌 Calm | 💪 Motivated | 🎯 Focused

If feeling low, what's one small action you can take to feel better? _____



AYESHA HAIDER

The Benefits of Yoga and Meditation for Stress Management

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Yoga and meditation have become powerful tools for managing stress in today's fast-paced world. Yoga combines physical postures, controlled breathing, and mindfulness to promote relaxation and reduce tension in the body. Regular practice helps lower cortisol levels, the hormone associated with stress, while improving flexibility and physical strength.

Meditation, on the other hand, focuses on calming the mind and enhancing self-awareness. Techniques like mindfulness and deep breathing activate the parasympathetic nervous system, encouraging a state of deep relaxation. Studies show that meditation can reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression, improving emotional resilience.

Together, yoga and meditation form a holistic approach to stress management, offering both physical and mental health benefits. They help individuals respond to challenges with greater clarity and calmness, fostering a sense of inner peace. By incorporating these practices into daily life, one can build a stronger foundation for overall well-being.



RIDA BIBI

The Power of Soft Skills: Your Key to Workplace Success

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In today's dynamic workplace, soft skills have become as vital as technical expertise. Soft skills, such as communication, adaptability, teamwork, and emotional intelligence, enhance your ability to interact effectively with colleagues, clients, and stakeholders. They set you apart by improving how you navigate challenges, resolve conflicts, and build relationships.

For instance, strong communication skills ensure that ideas are clearly conveyed, minimizing misunderstandings and fostering collaboration. Emotional intelligence, the ability to understand and manage emotions, helps in handling workplace stress and responding empathetically to others, creating a positive work environment. Adaptability ensures you can thrive in rapidly changing scenarios, a crucial trait in industries driven by technological advancements.

Employers value these skills because they boost team efficiency, foster innovation, and improve client relations. Employees who can communicate clearly, lead teams, and adapt to change tend to take on leadership roles more quickly.

As leadership expert John C. Maxwell said, "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." Soft skills reflect this principle by emphasizing human connection, empathy, and collaboration. By mastering these skills, you position yourself as a valuable asset in any organization, unlocking opportunities for growth and success.



MAHWISH IQBAL

Healing from Heartbreak: How to Rebuild Yourself After a Broken Relationship

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Heartbreak is one of the most painful experiences we can go through, and it can feel overwhelming to rebuild yourself after a broken relationship. The first step in healing is acknowledging your emotions. Allow yourself to grieve, whether it's sadness, anger, or confusion. Suppressing your feelings only prolongs the healing process. It's important to give yourself permission to feel the pain and understand that it's okay to mourn the end of something that once mattered deeply to you.

Next, focus on self-care. Take time to nurture your body and mind. Engage in activities that bring you joy, such as hobbies, exercise, or spending time with loved ones. Practicing mindfulness can also help you stay present and reduce stress during this turbulent time.

Reassess your personal goals and rediscover who you are outside of the relationship. Reflect on the lessons you've learned and how you've grown. This period can be an opportunity for self-discovery and strengthening your emotional resilience.

Finally, remember that healing isn't linear. It takes time, and it's okay to seek support from friends, family, or a counselor when needed. Trust that with patience and self-compassion, you will emerge stronger and more confident.

Gratitude Mapping Exercise

Time: 10-15 minutes

Goal: Shift focus toward positive aspects of life and foster emotional resilience.

Instructions:

- Find a quiet space and take a few deep breaths to center yourself.
- Draw a large circle in the center of a blank page or journal and write "Things I Am Grateful For" inside.
- From the circle, draw lines outward and list different areas of your life you are grateful for (e.g., relationships, personal achievements, qualities you admire in yourself, simple joys).
- For each item, add a few words about why you're grateful for it and how it positively impacts your life.
- Reflect on your gratitude map and consider how shifting your focus to these positives affects your mood and perspective.



Reflect:

Take a moment to sit quietly and reflect on how focusing on gratitude has shifted your mindset. How do you feel after this exercise?



HAMZA TAHIR KHAN

The Leadership Challenge

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It was a typical, energetic Monday morning, and the students couldn't wait for Soft Skills class with Ms. Nawal. They'd been buzzing with excitement all week because today's topic was their favorite: Leadership.

As the class started everyone settled down quickly, eager to hear what Ms. Nawal had planned. Ms. Nawal grinned at the class. "Alright, today we're going to put your leadership skills to the test. Each group will have a leader, but there's a catch—the leader cannot speak. They'll have to guide their team with only gestures and actions."

The students exchanged curious glances as the groups quickly formed. Each team had to build a tower using only paper, tape, and scissors. Both the leaders jumped into action, using exaggerated gestures and energetic motions to guide their teams. No words, just pure non-verbal leadership.

When the timer went off, all the towers were impressive, but more importantly, the students had learned that leadership wasn't just about giving orders—it was about guiding, inspiring, and adapting to the situation.

Ms. Nawal smiled and looked around at the groups. Great job, everyone! You all showed fantastic leadership today. Remember, leadership isn't just about talking or giving orders, it's about knowing how to connect with your team, no matter how you communicate. Whether through words, actions, or gestures, the key is understanding and guiding others with confidence.



SIBTAIN UMAR

This Award is For You! Employee of the Month

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We are delighted to recognize Mr. Sibtain Umar from the General Administration team as the Employee of the Month. Sibtain has consistently demonstrated exceptional dedication, efficiency, and professionalism in managing administrative operations. His proactive approach, attention to detail, and ability to streamline processes have significantly contributed to the smooth functioning of the department.

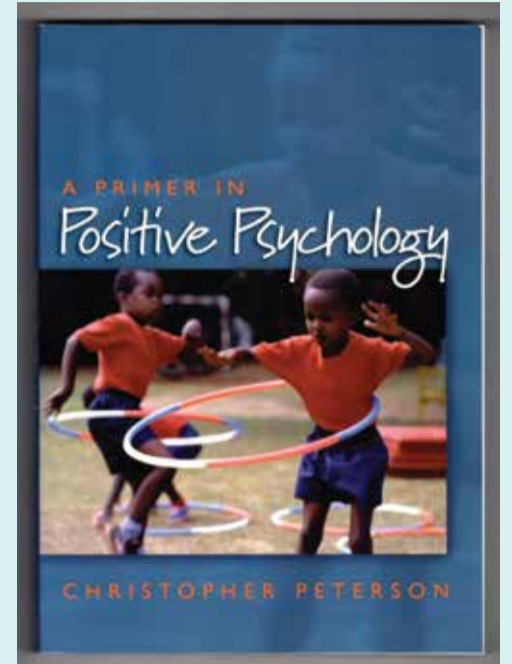
Congratulations, Mr. Sibtain, on this well-deserved recognition! Your commitment inspires us all.

BOOK RECOMMENDATION



A Primer in Positive Psychology

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If you're looking for a comprehensive introduction to the transformative field of positive psychology, *A Primer in Positive Psychology* by Christopher Peterson is a must-read. This book serves as an engaging and accessible guide for anyone interested in understanding the science of well-being, happiness, and human flourishing.

Peterson, a renowned figure in the field, masterfully combines research-based insights with practical applications, making it a valuable resource for students, educators, and professionals alike. The book explores foundational concepts such as character strengths, resilience, optimism, and the importance of relationships, offering readers tools to apply these principles in their personal and professional lives.

With its conversational tone and thought-provoking examples, *A Primer in Positive Psychology* is not just an academic text but also an invitation to live a more meaningful and fulfilling life. Whether you're new to positive psychology or looking to deepen your knowledge, this book is a remarkable starting point.

Be Gentle to Yourself

8 types of self care

PHYSICAL nutrition exercise sleep	MENTAL mindfulness self-talk therapy	EMOTIONAL gratitude triggers journal	SPIRITUAL meditate nature yoga
INTELLECTUAL read learn hobbies	ENVIRONMENT clean safety	SOCIAL boundaries connection	FINANCIAL budget save



ANUM AZHAR

From the Counselor's Desk: A New Year, A New Beginning: Reflections and Resolutions

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Dear Students,

As we close the chapter on this year, it's a valuable moment to reflect on our journey. We've faced challenges, learned new lessons, and discovered the strength within ourselves to grow. Each experience, whether tough or uplifting, has contributed to our personal growth and resilience.

The new year brings with it an opportunity for renewal. It's a time to set intentions and embrace the lessons we've learned. As you consider your resolutions, focus on small, meaningful goals that will nurture your mental and emotional well-being. This could be practicing self-compassion, setting healthy boundaries, or investing time in relationships that matter.

Remember, growth isn't always about big changes; it's the small steps that create lasting impact. Be kind to yourself in the process, and don't hesitate to reach out for support when needed. You are not alone on this journey.

Let this new year be a time for self-discovery, healing, and positive transformation. Together, we can navigate whatever comes our way and make the most of the opportunities ahead. Wishing you a year filled with peace, strength, and growth.



AMNA SALEEM

Myth Busting: Debunking Common Misconceptions About Happiness

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Happiness is one of the most sought-after emotions, yet it is often misunderstood. Many of us chase an illusion of happiness shaped by societal norms, media portrayals, and personal expectations. Let's bust some of the most common myths about happiness and uncover what the science of positive psychology actually tells us.

Myth #1: "I'll Be Happy When I Achieve [X]"

Many people believe that happiness comes after reaching a milestone like getting a degree, landing a dream job, or buying a house. While achievements can bring temporary joy, research shows that long-term happiness is not tied to external success but rather to internal factors like gratitude, relationships, and personal growth. This is known as the hedonic treadmill effect, where people quickly adapt to new successes and return to their baseline happiness level.

Reality: True happiness comes from the journey, not just the destination. Cultivating mindfulness and finding meaning in everyday experiences enhances well-being.

Myth #2: "Money Buys Happiness"

It's true that financial stability reduces stress and improves life satisfaction, but beyond a certain point, more money doesn't necessarily lead to more happiness. Studies suggest that once basic needs are met, additional wealth has diminishing returns on well-being. The key lies in how money is used, spending on experiences, personal growth, and helping others contributes to greater happiness than material possessions.

Reality: Instead of chasing wealth, focus on meaningful experiences, relationships, and generosity.

Myth #3: "Some People Are Just Born Happy"

While genetics play a role in our happiness set point, they do not determine our overall well-being. Research in positive psychology suggests that intentional activities, such as practicing gratitude, fostering strong social connections, and engaging in acts of kindness can significantly boost happiness levels over time.

Reality: Happiness is a skill that can be developed through habits and mindset shifts.

Myth #4: "Happiness Means Always Being Positive"

Many believe that to be happy, they must avoid negative emotions like sadness, anger, or frustration. However, true happiness doesn't mean suppressing emotions, it means understanding and managing them effectively. Accepting negative emotions and using them as a guide for growth leads to a more authentic and resilient form of well-being.

Reality: Happiness includes embracing the full range of emotions and developing emotional resilience.

Final Takeaway

Happiness is not a destination, a single achievement, or a fixed trait. It's a combination of mindset, habits, and meaningful experiences. By shifting our perspective and focusing on what truly contributes to well-being, we can cultivate a more fulfilling and lasting sense of happiness.



NAWAL BASHIR

Dear Counselor: How do I?

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Dear Counselor, how can I manage the stress caused by broken relationships? Dear Reader,

Managing the stress caused by broken relationships can be incredibly challenging, but it's an essential part of healing. First, it's important to acknowledge and allow yourself to feel the full range of emotions, whether it's sadness, anger, or confusion.

Give yourself the time and space to process these feelings without judgment. Seeking support from trusted friends, family, or a counselor can also make a significant difference. Talking about your experience can help you gain perspective and feel less isolated.

Practicing self-care is another crucial aspect of managing stress during this time. Focus on activities that nurture your physical and emotional well-being, such as exercise, hobbies, or spending quality time with loved ones. If the relationship continues in some capacity, like through co-parenting or work, it's essential to establish emotional boundaries to protect your mental health.

Finally, use this time to reflect on what you've learned about yourself, your needs, and what you want from future relationships. This reflection can be empowering and help you move forward with clarity. Healing takes time, and it's okay to seek help whenever you need it. With patience, support, and self-compassion you can navigate this difficult period and emerge stronger.

Warm Regards,
Nawal Bashir
Head Counselor

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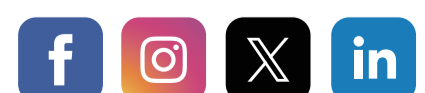
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