

What is Positive Psychology and Why is it Important?

Positive psychology is the scientific study of optimal human functioning, the goals of which are to better understand and apply those factors that help individuals and communities to thrive and flourish. Perusal of the literature on positive psychology reveals many potential applications of the emerging research for a diversity of people within a wide variety of settings (Linley and Joseph, 2004; Snyder and Lopez, 2002, 2007). There seems to be no better fit, however, for positive psychology than within the therapy room. Indeed, research to date supports the notion that client conceptualizations and the incorporation of exercises informed by positive psychology can provide lasting positive outcomes for therapy clients (Duckworth et al., 2005; Seligman et al., 2005, 2006). In this text, strategies and exercises that therapists can use to begin incorporating positive psychology into their work with clients are provided.

1.1 THE HISTORY OF POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

In his 1998 presidential address to members of the American Psychological Association, Martin Seligman put a call out to applied psychologists to return to their roots and focus on not only curing mental illness, but also on making the lives of people more productive and fulfilling, and identifying and nurturing talent (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Indeed, these were the main foci of applied psychologists prior to World War II. After the war, however, the emphasis shifted to curing mental illness with the other two aims almost completely forgotten. Such a change in focus is understandable, given the number of soldiers coming back from war with psychological problems and the resulting issues they and their loved ones faced as they tried to reorient themselves to civilian life. Following these societal changes, the development of Veterans Administration Hospitals proliferated, as did the availability of research funding by the National Institute of Mental Health for those researching cures for mental illness (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Hence, psychologists realized that jobs and research funding were readily available to those who

focused on mental illness. The same could not be said for those focusing on the other two aims of applied psychology.

As a result of the almost exclusive shift in focus to curing mental illness, therapists adopted a disease model of client functioning which almost completely overlooked individual strengths, virtues, and areas of well-being, focusing instead upon pathology, weaknesses, and deficits. Since Seligman's declaration in 1998, however, a large group of scholars has looked to abandon this negative focus in psychology and to replace or at least augment it with a focus on positive emotions, positive traits, strengths, and talents, as well as positive institutions (Seligman, 2002). According to Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000), the time is right for the study of positive mental health since psychologists' understanding of mental illness and of human survival under conditions of adversity is thorough, whereas our knowledge of what makes life meaningful and how people flourish under more benign conditions is lacking.

In the past decade, research in positive psychology has proliferated. Indeed, in 2008 the first issue of the *Journal of Positive Psychology* was published to accommodate much of the research being done on positive emotions, traits, strengths, and well-being. A variety of books devoted exclusively to positive psychology and even textbooks for use in the college classroom are available as well. Positive psychology is now being taught at over 100 colleges and universities in the USA and Britain and several schools even offer a master's degree in applied positive psychology. Furthermore, there are several professional organizations (i.e., the International Positive Psychology Association and the Positive Psychology Section of the Society of Counseling Psychology within the American Psychological Association) and conventions (i.e., The Gallup Global Well-Being Forum, the International Positive Psychology Summit, the European Conference on Positive Psychology, and the World Congress on Positive Psychology) devoted to the study of positive psychology.

Although there is still much to be done to fully understand and implement what positive psychology has to offer, the available literature suggests that positive psychology can play a prominent role in counseling and psychotherapy. The rest of this chapter is devoted to addressing some of the core theories and concepts from positive psychology that serve as a foundation for many of the activities and client exercises that will be presented in later chapters.

1.2 CORE POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY THEORIES AND CONCEPTS

1.2.1 Strengths Theory

Enter every activity without giving mental recognition to the possibility of defeat. Concentrate on your strength, instead of your weaknesses... on your powers, instead of your problems.

Paul J. Meyer

Those who study and practice positive psychology subscribe to strengths theory or the idea that it is vital to understand and build from one's strengths while managing (rather than focusing on or repairing) weaknesses (Clifton and Nelson, 1996). This perspective is not a common one. According to Clifton and Nelson (1996), many employers, teachers, parents, and leaders work off the following unwritten rule: "Let's fix what's wrong and let the strengths take care of themselves" (p. 9). (It seems that this is the perspective of many therapists as well *if* they fail to practice from a strengths-based or positive psychology viewpoint, but we will address this in more detail in the following chapter.) Indeed, many managers send their employees off to be trained in areas that they struggle with and when they provide reviews of their work, the focus is on what needs improvement while what they are doing well gets little, if any, attention. Many children bring their report cards home and are afraid to show their parents their grades because they know they got a D+. It doesn't matter that in addition to the D+ were several A's and B's. The parental focus, and therefore the child's focus, is on the area of weakness. Teachers often fall into this same "weakness trap" as well, honing in on what is wrong with a student, rather than what is going right.

Why is this focus on fixing what is wrong while overlooking what is right so prevalent? According to Clifton and Nelson (1996), it is because of several errors in thinking and logic to which most people fall victim. The first error is the idea that fixing or correcting a weakness will result in making a person or organization stronger. This is not true, as eliminating a weakness does not make one great; at best it will only help the individual or organization become normal or average.

The second error is the notion that there is no need to foster strengths, as they will take care of themselves and develop naturally (Clifton and Nelson, 1996). Again, this is faulty because taking one's strengths for granted results in just normal or average outcomes, as those strengths do not mature to their full potential. In order to capitalize upon strengths, they must be nurtured and honed. For example, a child who does well in spelling but struggles with math is often assisted with his math skills while the spelling ability is ignored. While the child's math skills may get a bit better, his spelling will likely only slightly improve as well. Ideally, teachers and parents would work to manage his math weakness while simultaneously honing his spelling skills. With such an approach, they may be able to nurture the next national spelling bee winner.

The third error in thinking is the belief that strengths and weaknesses are opposites (Clifton and Nelson, 1996). Although many people think that if they shore up their weaknesses they can turn them into strengths, this simply is not true. We do not learn about strengths by studying weaknesses. For example, we cannot learn why college students stay in school and make it to graduation by studying those that drop out, nor can we understand how to create secure infant attachments by studying infants with insecure attachment styles. Yet, this

is often the approach taken by those trying to improve the lives of individuals and organizations. Unfortunately, the study of weaknesses and deficits provides erroneous information about what to work on to improve performance.

The final error in thinking that keeps people from approaching life from a strengths perspective is the idea that people can do anything they put their minds to (Clifton and Nelson, 1996). This notion suggests that *anyone* can be successful at *anything* if they are willing to work hard. This is not the case, however, as all people have their own unique sets of strengths that will empower them to be successful in certain areas but not others. Clifton and Nelson (1996) state that “the reality is that we can (and should) *try* anything we wish to try, but long-term success will elude us unless we determine early on that we have a basic talent for the endeavor” (p. 16). Indeed, working hard to be successful in an area that fails to capitalize on one’s strengths leads to a negative view of oneself and one’s abilities. For example, a person who is tone deaf who “puts her mind to” becoming a musical theater star will surely feel bad about herself as she is rejected over and over again at auditions. However, if she focused on her wonderful acting abilities and tried out for plays, rather than musicals, her dream to be on Broadway could become a reality.

Research on strengths theory has been conducted for the past fifty years, largely by researchers at the Gallup Organization who have studied successful managers, executives, teachers, coaches, athletes, doctors, nurses, salespeople, and more. More recently, research on strengths theory has been carried out by researchers in positive psychology. Indeed, a major ingredient in Seligman’s (2002) happiness formula is for one to discover his or her character strengths and then to find ways to capitalize upon those strengths on a regular basis. Doing this will lead one to feel engaged with life and therefore to be more satisfied and happy. There are many applications of strengths theory and many measures of strengths that can be utilized in the therapy room. These applications and measures will be further elucidated in the following chapters.

1.2.2 The Broaden and Build Theory of Positive Emotions

The strangest and most fantastic fact about negative emotions is that people actually worship them.

P.D. Ouspensky

The broaden and build theory of positive emotions is another key theory that underpins many of the ideas of positive psychology. This theory provides an explanation of the utility and importance of positive emotions in people’s lives. Prior to the development of this theory about a decade ago, little to no research existed on the value of positive emotions. In contrast, negative emotions have been studied for many decades and most people understand that negative emotions are important for a variety of reasons, including survival. For example, if

you were to ask the average person if they would like the ability to no longer feel negative emotions such as fear, anger, or sadness, most, if not all, would say “no” to this ability. This is because they realize that these emotions are important for functioning safely in the world. Indeed, without the ability to feel fear, one would not run from danger and without the ability to feel anger, one would not defend oneself when appropriate. However, most people, including those who have researched negative emotions, conclude that positive emotions have little utility beyond signaling that one is free of negative emotions. The broaden and build theory explains that positive emotions do much more than just signal that there are no problems. In fact, this theory posits that positive emotions are just as important to our survival and our ability to flourish in life as negative emotions (Fredrickson, 1998, 2001).

The broaden and build theory is a multifaceted model of positive emotions, consisting of the broaden hypothesis, the build hypothesis, the undoing hypothesis, the resilience hypothesis, and the flourish hypothesis (Fredrickson, 1998, 2001). In the following sections, each of these hypotheses will be defined and examples of research findings that support these ideas will be described as well.

The Broaden Hypothesis

We are wide-eyed in contemplating the possibility that life may exist elsewhere in the universe, but we often wear blinders when contemplating the possibilities of life on earth.

Norman Cousins

According to Fredrickson (1998, 2001), positive emotions broaden momentary thought-action repertoires, resulting in a wider range of thoughts and actions one is likely to pursue. In other words, when someone is feeling positive emotions, they are able to see more possibilities. This broadening effect of positive emotions is essentially the opposite of what happens when people experience negative emotions (see Figure 1.1 for a pictorial representation of the differences between broadened and narrow mindsets).

According to Frijda (1986), Lazarus (1991), and Levinson (1994), negative emotions narrow momentary thought-action repertoires. In other words, when one experiences negative emotions, it is as if they have tunnel vision and the range of possibilities is narrowed. Very specific action tendencies narrow the action-urges that come to mind and at the same time, prepare the body to take that specific action. For example, when a person feels afraid, they have the action-urge to run, and the body prepares for taking flight by increasing blood flow to the appropriate muscles. The narrowed action-urges that come to mind when one experiences negative emotions are thought to be adaptive from an evolutionary perspective. Indeed, such fight-or-flight responses in the face of fear or anger helped to ensure the survival of our ancestors in life-threatening situations (Toobey and Coosmides, 1990).

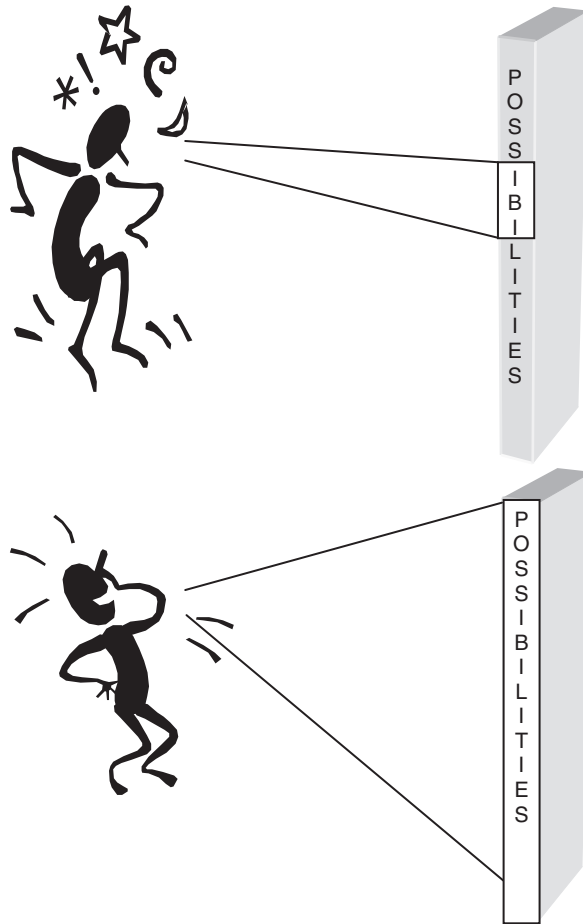


FIGURE 1.1 The impact of negative and positive emotions on mindsets.

The broadening effect of positive emotions is also adaptive from an evolutionary perspective; however, not in the same way as negative emotions. More specifically, while the narrowing of thought-action repertoires helps to ensure survival in specific life-threatening circumstances, the broadened thought-action repertoires that correspond to the experience of positive emotions are adaptive over the long-term (Fredrickson and Branigan, 2005). This is largely a result of the *building* of personal resources that this broadened mindset brings. The building hypothesis will be explained in the following section; however, first a brief summary of the research that supports the broadening hypothesis is reviewed.

Most of the research that supports the broadening hypothesis has been done utilizing video clips that elicit various emotions in the viewers. For example, to induce joy, Fredrickson and Branigan (2005) showed participants a short

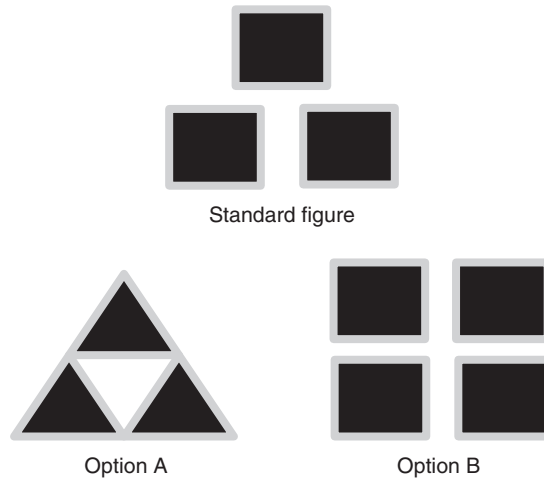


FIGURE 1.2 Global-local visual processing task. When experiencing positive emotions, people are more likely to choose the global response (Option A) as being more like the standard figure than the local response (Option B) in global-local visual processing tasks. This is because positive emotions broaden people's mindsets (Fredrickson, 2003).

video of penguins at play; to induce contentment, they saw a video of various nature scenes; a video of a group of men taunting an Amish family was used to elicit anger; a video of a mountain climber who is hanging precariously from the edge of a mountain elicits fear; and a video of a screen-saver consisting of colored sticks piling up on one another was used for the control condition, eliciting virtually no emotion.

Participants viewed one of the five video clips and then completed a series of global-local processing tasks. Essentially, these tasks consisted of viewing a standard figure and then deciding which of two comparison figures was most like the standard figure (see Figure 1.2). Although these tasks do not consist of correct or incorrect answers, the global response consists of choosing the comparison figure that is more similar to the standard figure based on the overall shape (option A in figure 1.2), whereas the local response consists of choosing the comparison figure that is more similar to the standard figure based on the individual shapes that make up the total figure (option B in Figure 1.2). According to Fredrickson and Branigan (2005), the global response option represents more broadened thinking. The results of this study support the broaden hypothesis, as participants in the positive emotion conditions choose the global response options more often in comparison to those in the neutral or negative emotion conditions, suggesting a more broadened pattern of thinking (Fredrickson and Branigan, 2005).

A second study supporting the broaden hypothesis was conducted by Fredrickson and Branigan (2005) using the same video clips but asking participants to then imagine being in a situation in which the most powerful emotion

they felt while viewing the film clips was occurring. Given that emotion, they were instructed to list as many things as they felt like doing right at that moment. Each participant was given a handout that had 20 blank lines that began with the statement "I would like to ____." The number of sentences completed was tallied. The more sentences completed represented broader thought-action repertoires. The results of this study confirmed that those who felt positive emotions were able to complete more sentences in comparison to those in the neutral and negative emotion conditions, supporting the broaden hypothesis of positive emotions as well as the narrowing hypothesis associated with negative emotions (Fredrickson and Branigan, 2005).

The Build Hypothesis

In spite of illness, in spite even of the archenemy sorrow, one can remain alive long past the usual date of disintegration if one is unafraid of change, insatiable in intellectual curiosity, interested in big things, and happy in small ways.

Edith Wharton

When positive emotions broaden momentary thought-action repertoires, a variety of personal resources are also built up over time (Fredrickson, 1998, 2001). These resources include physical resources (i.e., coordination, cardiovascular health, and muscle strength), social resources (i.e., friendships, social skills and support), intellectual resources (i.e., knowledge and problem-solving), and psychological resources (i.e., creativity, optimism, and resilience). Although the positive emotions that lead to the building of these resources are transient, the personal resources acquired are lasting and can be utilized later when one finds oneself in a potentially life-threatening situation or experiencing hard times.

To better understand how positive emotions build durable physical, social, intellectual, and psychological resources, consider children. Play is the work of childhood. When children are at play, they are typically experiencing positive emotions such as joy, happiness, or contentment. While playing and experiencing positive emotions, the children are also gaining physical strength. As they run at the park and play kick ball, they are building their cardiovascular strength and lung capacity, honing their motor skills, and fine-tuning their coordination. At the same time, they are building social bonds with their playmates and learning the rules of the game and teamwork. These resources are lasting, even after the positive emotional experience is over. Although one hopes this is never the case, should children find themselves in a situation in which their well-being is at stake, for example, being attacked by a bully, they can turn to the reserve of personal resources they have developed to safely navigate through that negative experience. The physical resources they have developed can help them physically fight off their bully, while the friends they made when at play can also come to their aid. Indeed, a few simple photos (see Figure 1.3) illustrate how the very behaviors children engage in while at play are the same behaviors they utilize when under attack. Had the children not learned



FIGURE 1.3 Similarities between the behaviors children engage in when at play (left) and when under attack (right). According to the broaden and build theory of positive emotions, when in positive emotional states, individuals build enduring personal resources, including physical resources such as coordination, cardiovascular and muscular strength (Fredrickson, 2000). The children in the photo on the left who are in a positive emotional state during play are developing the physical resources necessary to defend themselves when under attack as depicted by the children who are fighting in the photo on the right.

these skills under a positive emotional state, they would not have the skills necessary to protect themselves in a fight-or-flight situation. Later in life, these same resources can be called upon to help in other stressful life situations, even if those situations do not involve danger of life or limb (Fredrickson, 2000).

Research that supports the building hypothesis includes studies of securely attached children who are more resourceful, flexible, and perseverant when it comes to problem-solving in comparison to their insecurely attached peers (Arend et al., 1979; Matas et al., 1978). Other studies show that securely attached adults also show superior intellectual resources. More specifically, they are more curious and open to new information (Mikulincer, 1997). In general, research supports the notion that people learn faster and demonstrate improvements in intellectual performance when in a positive emotional state in comparison to neutral or negative emotional states (Bryan and Bryan, 1991; Bryan et al., 1996). Furthermore, research with both humans and animals indicates that social play is positively related to the building of social relationships (Boulton and Smith, 1992; Lee, 1983; Marinueau, 1972). Finally, evidence for the development of physical resources under positive emotional states is available via studies with nonhuman mammals. Indeed, the juvenile play of many

mammals has been linked with specific survival maneuvers they utilize later in life to avoid predators and to fight off enemies (Boulton and Smith, 1992; Caro, 1988). Similarly, rats that were deprived of the ability to engage in play as juveniles were slower to learn a complex motor task in comparison to rats that were not play-deprived (Einson et al., 1978).

The Undoing Hypothesis

The way to overcome negative thoughts and destructive emotions is to develop opposing, positive emotions that are stronger and more powerful.

Tenzin Gyatso

In addition to broadening momentary thought-action repertoires and building enduring personal resources, positive emotions have the potential to *undo* lingering negative emotions. Fredrickson labels this idea the undoing hypothesis. More specifically, the idea behind this hypothesis is that thought-action repertoires cannot be narrowed and broadened simultaneously. Hence, inducing positive emotions in the wake of on-going negative emotions may loosen the grip of the negative emotion, as the broadening qualities of positive emotions begin to widen the lens through which one views the world. This undoing effect occurs not only at the cognitive level, but at the physiological level as well (Fredrickson, 2003).

Fredrickson et al. (2000) tested the undoing hypothesis by measuring the baseline heart rates, blood pressure rates, and peripheral vasoconstriction indices of research participants just before inducing the negative emotion of fear or anxiety in them by telling them that they had one minute to develop a speech that they would present in front of a video camera. They were told that the recording of their speeches would then be evaluated by a group of their peers. Given the popular notion that the number one fear of the average American is public speaking, these instructions indeed elicited fear in many of the participants. (Interestingly, the number two fear of the average American is death. According to a comedy routine by Jerry Seinfeld, this is very interesting, as it means that for the average American, at a funeral they would rather be in the coffin than giving the eulogy!) The participants reported an increase in anxiety and their measures of heart rate, blood pressure, and peripheral vasoconstriction were elevated as well. Participants were then randomly assigned to view one of four emotion-inducing film clips. Two of the clips induced the positive emotions of joy and contentment, one was neutral, and the other elicited sadness. The participants' cardiovascular measures were monitored from the time they began viewing the film clips until the point at which their cardiovascular activity had returned to baseline levels. The results of this study support the undoing hypothesis, as those who saw the two positive emotion videos returned to their baseline levels of cardiovascular activity significantly more quickly than those in the neutral and negative emotion conditions, with those in the negative emotion condition taking the longest to return to baseline functioning (Fredrickson et al., 2000).

The undoing hypothesis explains why there is often much laughter at the receptions following funerals or why friends often crack jokes or make light of a situation for a friend in need. Best friends and loved ones often help us find meaning in the difficult experiences we face, which also has the effect of increasing positive emotions. Indeed, it seems that many people intuitively know that positive emotions can have this undoing effect. With this research, however, we can help those who do not have such intuition to understand the utility of eliciting positive emotions when negative emotions are lingering and getting in the way of one's ability to cope and move forward in life.

The Resilience Hypothesis

Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.

Confucius

The resilience hypothesis of the broaden and build theory of positive emotions states that positive emotions, through their broadening affects, trigger upward spirals of well-being (Fredrickson, 2000). The idea of upward spirals of well-being is the conceptual opposite of the common notion of downward spirals of depression. When people have negative experiences and therefore negative affect, they begin to experience tunnel vision which often leads to negative, pessimistic thinking. This negative thinking leads to more negative affect that can spiral downward very quickly. In contrast, positive emotions take the blinders off, allowing people to see more possibilities and to think more optimistically. Those who experience positive emotions more regularly are likely to experience upward spirals of well-being, which is enjoyable in and of itself. However, perhaps more importantly, upward spirals of well-being also serve to build one's toolbox of coping skills. Hence, those who experience positive emotions more often are better able to cope and are more resilient in the face of adversities in life (Fredrickson, 2000).

Research on the resilience hypothesis includes a study of college students who completed self-report measures of affect and coping on two different occasions, five weeks apart. Results showed that positive affect at time one predicted broad-minded coping at time two and broad-minded coping at time one predicted more positive affect at time two. Furthermore, mediational analyses revealed that broad-minded coping and positive affect serially enhanced each other (Fredrickson and Joiner, 2002). A similar study was conducted in the days following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, with a portion of the participants from the previously reported study (Fredrickson et al., 2003). The participants were asked to report what emotions they were feeling in the wake of the attacks, what they learned from the attacks, and how they felt about the future. Almost all the participants reported feeling sad, angry, and afraid, yet those that had been identified as resilient in the previous study also reported feeling positive emotions in the wake of the tragedy as well. More specifically, they reported

positive feelings such as gratitude and optimism, as they could find goodness in people who were helping in the aftermath of the event. Statistical analyses showed that the tendency to feel positive emotions buffered the resilient people against depression.

The Flourish Hypothesis

Feelings of worth can flourish only in an atmosphere where individual differences are appreciated, mistakes are tolerated, communication is open, and rules are flexible – the kind of atmosphere that is found in a nurturing family.

Virginia Satir

The final hypothesis of the broaden and build theory of positive emotions is the flourish hypothesis. To flourish is to live optimally and to experience the good things in life such as personal growth, generativity, and resilience (Keyes, 2002). The flourish hypothesis states that a key predictor of human flourishing is the ratio of positive to negative affect that one experiences (Fredrickson and Losada, 2005). More specifically, the ratio of positive feelings or sentiments to negative feelings or sentiments over time that one needs in order to flourish has been hypothesized to be 2.9 to 1. In other words, for each negative affective experience, one must experience 3 positive affective experiences over the course of time to keep moving forward in life. As the ratio dips below 2.9 to 1, flourishing becomes less likely and problems may arise. Based on the research of Fredrickson and Losada (2005), this ratio holds true for individuals, marriages, and business teams. Furthermore, positive to negative affect ratios up to 11.6 to 1 will promote flourishing, however, ratios beyond 11.6 to 1 may lead to the disintegration of flourishing (Fredrickson and Losada, 2005).

1.3 A NOTE ON WHAT POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY IS NOT

Before moving onto the applications of positive psychology in counseling and psychotherapy, it is important to note some common misperceptions of positive psychology. Those who study and practice positive psychology are not people who are naïve or engage in Pollyanna thinking. They do not see the world through rose-colored glasses, ignoring the problems in life and focusing instead only on the positives. In fact, positive psychologists are as concerned with building strengths and the best things life has to offer as in managing weaknesses and repairing the worst things in life. Positive psychologists, especially those who work in applied fashion with clients, are as interested in helping those who experience pathology to overcome it as they are in helping those who are free of pathology to lead the most fulfilling lives possible (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Those who subscribe to the theories and principles of positive psychology are seeking a vital balance in the way that people are understood and treated. Indeed, many years ago the famous psychoanalyst, Karl Menninger, noted a

need for a vital balance in mental health care when he challenged the standard view of mental illness as progressive and refractory, calling instead for mental health practitioners to view mental illness as amenable to change and improvements (Menninger et al., 1963). Positive psychologists today are calling for a similar vital balance in which all people are understood according to both their weaknesses and strengths (Lopez et al., 2003).

Such a vital balance seems to be lacking in applied psychology at large, given that the focus of applied psychologists has largely been upon the study of what is wrong with people. This may be due to the path that Freud took in studying patients many years ago. A simple way to understand where psychology at large has come from is the story of “watchology” as described by Laura King (2007). King puts forth a question to college students who read the introductory psychology text she has written from a non-pathological perspective. She asks them which of two watches they would choose to study if they were charged with the task of creating the science of “watchology” or the science of how watches work. She tells them that both watches have gone through the worst trauma a watch can go through – the laundry cycle. One watch comes out still working while the other is broken and no longer ticking. Which watch would one choose to work with? Hopefully the obvious answer is the one that is working, as one could not learn much about how a watch works by studying the broken one. She explains, however, that Freud chose to study the one that was not working, so to speak, when he set out to understand human behavior. Based on his work with people who were experiencing pathology, Freud generalized his work to all people. Essentially, he used the exception to explain the rule. Why not use the rule to explain the rule? Although positive psychologists find the study of pathology important and many utilize the research from the study of pathology in their daily work, the need to study and incorporate information about what works for people and what factors buffer people from pathology is just as crucial. Again, it is all about striking a delicate, vital balance.

1.4 APPLICATIONS OF POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

In the past decade, research in positive psychology has proliferated. Along with the advancements in research have come many applications of this work. Indeed, research from positive psychology has been applied in education, business, organizational consulting, marriage and interpersonal relationships, parenting, athletics, coaching, and more. As noted in the introduction of this chapter, it seems that there is no better application of positive psychology than in the therapy room. This, of course, is the main focus of this text and the many applications of positive psychology for clients in counseling and therapy will be elucidated in the remaining chapters.

