Joy at Work: Why this is so vital

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Science of Improvement

W. Edwards Deming, 1900-93
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.
Our Objectives for this Workshop

• Describe the scientific underpinnings of five principles of positive psychology that can be used to create sustainable cultural change
• Utilise five positive psychology strategies for coaching employees to higher performance
• Develop an action plan for creating sustainable cultural change in your workplace
W. Edwards Deming’s Objectives were to:

• To learn
• To make a difference
• To have fun
Let’s start with some action!
Abundance

5 AREAS

POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Flourish

Strenghts & Virtues

Positive Deviance

Well-being
1. Abundance

• Focus on what is working well and how it can work even better
• People are creative and enjoy self-determination
• Three important questions to ask yourself and how to work with people around you
  – “What makes some people succeed?”
  – “Which activities broaden and build people’s resources”
  – “How can we create environments where people perform at their best?”
1. Abundance

• Positive Psychology applies an abundance lens to help people, organisations and communities flourish and excel—focus on what is working well and how it can work even better. It views people as creative and self-determined with access to inner resources, able to actively create the outcomes to which they and others aspire, rather than as passive victims of external forces. Thus it seeks to answer questions such as: “What makes some people succeed?” “Which activities broaden and build people’s resources” and “How can we create environments where people perform at their best?”

• It shares much with the abundance and solution-focussed field of coaching psychology, which has grown alongside positive psychology to facilitate positive outcomes and performance.
Talking with the person next to you, discuss these principles:

– “What makes some people succeed?”
– “Which activities broaden and build people’s resources?”
– “How can we create environments where people perform at their best?”
2. Strengths and Virtues

- Concepts of strengths and virtues have infused human history across many cultures.
- Focus moves from fixing weakness to identifying and building on what people do well and enhancing their potential to develop.
- Everyone has their own strengths and deserves respect for them.
- Our weaknesses improve when we work to our strengths.
2. Strengths and Virtues

• Concepts of strengths and virtues have infused human history across many cultures. They shape our character, our identity and our capacity to flourish. Aristotle extolled us to strive to “live in accordance with the best thing in us” if we want to attain a good life. In other words, to amplify and refine our virtues and strengths.

• The strengths approach at the heart of positive psychology shifts the focus from fixing weakness to identifying and building on what people do well and enhancing their potential to develop. It assumes strengths are part of human nature; everyone has them and deserves respect for them. It also suggests we can only address our weaknesses when we also make the most of our strengths.

• Positive psychology itself can be seen as taking a virtuous or ethical stance by advocating that the desire and capacity to improve is latent within people and human systems and should be further activated.
• Make a note of what you think your strengths are
• How can these help you at work?
• Using this piece of theory, how can you work with another person better?
If you’re curious about your own strengths (and weaknesses), you can take the VIA Survey of Character Strengths here, issued by the University of Pennsylvania.

(Look under the "Questionnaires" pull-down menu; you'll need to register.) Of 24 possible strengths, the quiz will rank yours in order. (If you don’t want to take the full test of 240 questions, you can go here to rank yourself. (Click on the "Signature Strengths Self-Rating Scale" link.)
3. Positive Deviance

• Sometimes people are able to thrive even against the odds
• They find solutions when others are only seeing problems
• This is positive deviance- responding positively to difficult situations
3. Positive Deviance

- Striving to be exceptional, daring to go against the grain, and looking for solutions that may not be accessible from a problem or deficit focus are all part of positive deviance—a key concept in positive psychology.

- Why is positive deviance so necessary or advantageous? Our brains tend to have a bias toward the negative. There are more negative emotions that positive; their intensity is often stronger and we respond more powerfully and automatically to negative events.

- Neuroscientists call this the ‘walk towards, run away’ theory. We want to act first and fast to minimise perceived threat, yet we approach situations and people that will reward us more leisurely. In many cases our negative focus is an evolutionary hangover that leaves us with an opportunity cost and keeps us from devoting energy, time and effort that may be better spent building resources and moving toward greater wellbeing and success. A key goal of positive psychology is to help reset our bias from negative to positive and spark flourishing by amplifying the impact of positive emotions, experiences, influences and practices.
3. Positive Deviance

- Can you think of examples at your organisation of *Positive Deviance*?
4. Flourishing vs. Languishing

• Flourishing—a state characterised by generosity, growth and resilience.

• The opposite of flourishing is in fact “languishing”—a state where positive emotions appear too low to stimulate flourishing: emotional distress, social impairment or lack of fulfilment are present.

• Both need to be understood & addressed together.
4. Flourishing vs. Languishing

• Positive and negative are commonly seen as polar opposites. Yet this notion can create an artificial dichotomy when it comes to understanding flourishing—a state characterised by generativity, growth and resilience. Corey Keyes, studying the relationship between mental health and mental illness, concluded that the absence of mental illness does not equate to the presence of mental health. Treating or preventing mental illness will not by itself result in greater mental health as the two exist on different spectrums.

• The opposite of flourishing is in fact “languishing”—a state where positive emotions appear too low to stimulate flourishing, and emotional distress, social impairment or lack of fulfillment are present. Both need to be understood and addressed holistically.
4. Flourishing and Languishing

• Discuss with the person next to you a time when you were able to flourish at work. Why was this able to happen?

• How can you recreate the same conditions?
5. Happiness and Well-being

Two forms of well-being:

• Subjective well-being—hedonic experience, satisfaction with life, matched with a high level of positive emotions and low level of negative emotions;

• Psychological well-being— the more enduring sense of fulfilment we get from personal relationships, living a meaningful life and developing as a person.
Introducing a New Theory of Well-Being

P
Positive Emotions

E
Engagement

R
Positive Relationships

M
Meaning

A
Accomplishment

University of Pennsylvania
Positive Psychology
5. Happiness and Well-being

• How are you doing at work? What is your sense of well-being like?
• How can you create a sense of well-being for others at work

Have a chat with your neighbour. (Connecting is good for us!)
5. Happiness and Wellbeing

• Positive psychology has traditionally conceived of happiness as comprising two forms of wellbeing:
  • Subjective wellbeing (SWB) — hedonic experience, satisfaction with life, matched with a high level of positive emotions and low level of negative emotions;
  • Psychological wellbeing (PWB) — eudaimonic experience, the more enduring sense of fulfillment we get from personal relationships, living a meaningful life and developing as a person.
THANK YOU! IT’S BEEN FUN. YOU HAVE THE START OF A PLAN.