Ingredients for Human Flourishing
Lessons from Positive Psychology
University Evening
Fall 2007 Program

7:00
Introduction to University Evening
Provost, Mark Nook
Introduction of Jeana Magyar-Moe
Professor Emeritus Dennis Eisenrath

7:15
Ingredients for Human Flourishing:
Lessons from Positive Psychology
Professor Jeana Magyar-Moe,
Department of Psychology

8:15
Reception in the courtyard
outside of 221

University Evening is sponsored by the Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor, with help from University Relations and Communications.

Lessons from Positive Psychology

Psychologists, educators, and other professionals from a variety of disciplines have recently joined together out of a desire to know more about positive human functioning. What has come to be known as Positive Psychology emphasizes using science in the pursuit of knowledge about optimal human functioning and what makes life worth living. Positive psychologists call for as much focus on strength as on weakness, as much interest in building the best things in life as in repairing the worst, and as much attention to promoting the fulfillment of lives of healthy people as to healing the wounds of the distressed.

In her presentation entitled Ingredients for Human Flourishing: Lessons from Positive Psychology, Dr. Magyar-Moe will introduce the audience to the history, core assumptions, and cutting-edge research findings of this growing effort, then move on to explore interventions and applications informed by this perspective in counseling and psychotherapy, education, and other domains personally relevant to the lives all people, such as work, family, and other close relationships. Audience members will be provided with ideas and tips for potentially increasing their own levels of happiness and satisfaction with life as well as examples of feedback from University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point students who have implemented these ideas as part of their learning in Positive Psychology classes.
1. Write and personally deliver a detailed letter of gratitude to someone in your life that you are thankful for, but to whom you have never formally expressed your gratitude.

2. Intentionally set out to do at least one altruistic act for another person each day. Better still, become a regular volunteer for a community organization that you admire.

3. Each night before you go to bed, take a few minutes to reflect on your day and write down three things that went well or that you were grateful for that day.

4. Set aside 15-30 minutes each day to mindfully engage in a pleasurable activity such as taking a relaxing bath, listening to your favorite music, eating a favorite food, doing yoga, or reading a great book. The key is to be focused only on the pleasurable activity and to engage in a variety of such activities over the course of the week.

5. Discover what your strengths are (by taking a free on-line survey called the Values in Action Signature Strengths Inventory at www.authentichappiness.org) and then seek work and leisure activities that will allow you to utilize your strengths on a regular basis.

6. Nurture your relationships with others. Spend quality time with your friends and loved ones on a regular basis.

7. Tell those you are closest to when good things happen. Feel okay about talking about the good stuff in life, not just the problems. Be sure to respond to the good things that happen to others in an active, constructive way as well. Celebrate the positive events, good times, and accomplishments of your loved ones with as much enthusiasm and care as you provide when helping console them when they experience negative events.

8. Do not focus on money as a means to happiness. Money does not make people lastingly happier unless they are living below the poverty line.
Suggestions for Increasing Positive Emotions and Life Satisfaction  
from David G. Myers, The Pursuit of Happiness

- Realize that enduring happiness doesn’t come from financial success. People adapt to changing circumstances—even to wealth or a disability. Thus wealth is like health: Its utter absence breeds misery, but having it (or any circumstance we long for) doesn’t guarantee happiness.
- Take control of your time. Happy people feel in control of their lives, often aided by mastering their use of time. It helps to set goals and break them into daily aims. Although we often overestimate how much we will accomplish in any given day (leaving us frustrated), we generally underestimate how much we can accomplish in a year, given just a little progress every day.
- Act happy. We can sometimes act ourselves into a frame of mind. Manipulated into a smiling expression, people feel better; when they scowl, the whole world seems to scowl back. So put on a happy face. Talk as if you feel positive self-esteem, are optimistic, and are outgoing. Going through the motions can trigger the emotions.
- Seek work and leisure that engages your skills. Happy people often are in a zone called “flow”—absorbed in a task that challenges them without overwhelming them. The most expensive forms of leisure (sitting on a yacht) often provide less flow experience than gardening, socializing, or craft work.
- Join the “movement” movement. An avalanche of research reveals that aerobic exercise not only promotes health and energy, it also is an antidote for mild depression and anxiety. Sound minds reside in sound bodies. Off your duffs, couch potatoes.
- Give your body the sleep it wants. Happy people live active vigorous lives yet reserve time for renewing sleep and solitude. Many people suffer from sleep debt, with resulting fatigue, diminished alertness, and gloomy moods.
- Give priority to close relationships. Intimate friendships with those who care deeply about you can help you weather difficult times. Confiding is good for soul and body. Resolve to nurture your closest relationships: to not take those closest to you for granted, to display to them the sort of kindness that you display to others, to affirm them, to play together and share together.
- Focus beyond self. Reach out to those in need. Happiness increases helpfulness (those who feel good do good). But doing good also makes one feel good.
- Be grateful. People who keep a gratitude journal—who pause each day to reflect on some positive aspect of their lives (their health, friends, family, freedom, education, senses, natural surroundings, and so on.) experience heightened well-being.
- Nurture your spiritual self. For many people, faith provides a support community, a reason to focus beyond self, and a sense of purpose and hope. Study after study finds that actively religious people are happier and that they cope better with crises.

Jeana L. Magyar-Moe Biography

Jeana L. Magyar-Moe (Summa Cum Laude UWSP Class of 1998) received her Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology from the University of Kansas in 2003. She is currently an Assistant Professor of Psychology at the University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point (UWSP) where she is a Wisconsin Teaching Fellow and the recipient of the 2006 University Excellence in Teaching Award and the 2007 University Scholar and University Leadership Mentor Awards. Magyar-Moe created and has been teaching a successful undergraduate course in Positive Psychology at UWSP for six semesters. Magyar-Moe’s research interests include positive psychology, diversity issues, therapy process and outcome, and the scholarship of teaching and learning. She was an Invited Scholar and Fellow at the 2002 and 2003 International Positive Psychology Summits and an Invited Speaker at the 2007 Gallup Global Well-Being Summit and the 2008 Positive Psychology Forum.

Jeana continues to focus her research primarily on the study of optimal human functioning with her most recent publications on positive psychology topics appearing in the Major Contribution on Positive Aspects of Human Functioning in the March 2006 issue of The Counseling Psychologist.

She has also co-authored book chapters in the Handbook of Positive Psychology (Snyder & Lopez), Positive Psychological Assessment: A Handbook of Models and Measures (Lopez & Snyder), Positive Psychology in Practice (Linley & Joseph), Counseling Psychology and Optimal Human Functioning (Walsh), Wellness for Life: The Personal Dynamics of Living Well (Gentile & Gentile), and The Biennial Review of Counseling Psychology (Walsh).

In addition to teaching and scholarly work, Dr. Magyar-Moe, who is also a licensed psychologist in the state of Wisconsin, conducts psychological assessments and provides counseling to community clients and is a sport psychology consultant for athletes and athletic teams at UWSP. Magyar-Moe is on the Board of Trustees for the National Wellness Institute, is a member of The American Psychological Association (APA), and a member of Division 17 of the APA: The Society of Counseling Psychology. Within Division 17 she serves as the Treasurer and Chair-Elect of the Positive Psychology Section and is also a member of the Division 17 Special Task Group on Early Career Psychologists.

When not at work, Jeana enjoys spending time with her wonderful husband, David, and their beautiful two-year-old daughter, Tahlia.
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University Evening Selection Committee
Kama Almasi, Department of Biology
Lisa Bardon, School of Education
Don Guay, Department of Paper Science and Engineering
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Matheu Buchman, Department of Music

Thanks to our ushers
& former students of Positive Psychology
Courtney Ludwig, Katie Becker, Katie Deneys, Michelle Smith

Thanks to
Diana Black, Virginia Crandall, Jamie Karoses,
Leslie Midkiff DeBauche, and Barb Nelson