

PERMA THEORY FOR WELLBEING

In 1998 Dr. Martin Seligman flipped the world of psychology on its head when instead of focusing primarily on curing mental illness, he encouraged researchers around the world to focus their efforts on building mental wellbeing.

More than 20 years and tens of thousands of research papers later, there is strong evidence to support the idea that not only are there several factors that can impact our wellbeing, but there are practical steps that you can take to improve it.

Based on the research, Dr. Seligman has proposed that your wellbeing comprises the presence of:

POSITIVE EMOTIONS

ENGAGEMENT

RELATIONSHIPS

MEANING

ACCOMPLISHMENT

So what do they mean??

1. Positive emotions

As human beings, we need to be able to feel good, hopeful, and inspired by the things we do and the life we live. It's easy to see how we can allow our positive emotions to take the lead in our life when we feel good.

Positive emotions help us in a myriad of ways, including being better able to tackle negative emotions or experiences when they arise. For positive emotions to be able to support us, we first need to ensure that our basic needs are met.

Basic needs include adequate food, water, shelter, and sleep. When these needs are met, we can then explore what can further fuel our positive emotions, such as intellectual and creative pursuits, relationships, and fulfilling work.

2. Engagement

Engagement is sometimes also referred to as 'flow' (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002). It's the process of being fully engaged and immersed in the activities, duties, and tasks that fill our lives.

When we are in a flow state, not only are we engaged, but we also find a reliable source of passion and commitment to these things. When this is the case, we can draw energy from being engaged and enjoy the activities we are committed to.

3. Relationships

Relationships are a crucial part of our sense of wellbeing and happiness. The authenticity of these relationships and the depths of our interactions with friends, family, loved ones, and our wider social circle have a significant impact.

Positive, useful, and inspiring connections lead to more positive emotions, enabling us to feel heard, seen, and supported. Playing an active role within those relationships, by offering support, listening, and helping in return, will also lead to greater positive emotions.

4. Meaning

Building a sense of purpose and using that purpose to contribute to the community help us find meaning in life.

Meaning is about more than just what you do; it also includes the ideas and beliefs you hold about yourself and life in general, and how well you feel you live those beliefs authentically.

A sense of happiness and wellbeing isn't just derived from having already found a purpose or meaning; it also comes from feeling that you have clear ideas for what those concepts might mean and look like. Even if you are starting to pursue a greater sense of purpose, this in itself can lead to greater happiness and wellbeing.

5. Achievement

Achievement is not just about a strong sense of success or 'winning.' It also refers to how much we challenge ourselves in positive and progressive ways that enable us to further develop our strengths and skills, both practically and emotionally.

Achievement can also be found through setting feasible goals that we can reach realistically and feeling a sense of progress in how we want to live our lives. Finding achievement in these ways again helps to

encourage further positive emotions, such as confidence, and adds to our continued sense of happiness and wellbeing.

RESOURCES

Martin Seligman Utube – 23 min

The new era of positive psychology -PERMA

<https://www.bing.com/videos/riverview/relatedvideo?q=%e2%80%a2%09Martin+Seligman%3a+The+New+Era+of+Positive+Psychology&mid=B8CC619C20789115BF8FB8CC619C20789115BF8F&FORM=VIRE>

BOOK

Authentic Happiness: Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize Your Potential for Lasting Fulfillment – Martin Seligman