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MANITOBA'S CONFERENCE FOR LEADERS

TUESDAY, MAY 16, 2017

Renewal: Take Control Through Learned Optimism

Dr. Chuck Meltzer, President, SynTECGroup

*Syn*TEC*Group*

Synergistic Management of Change

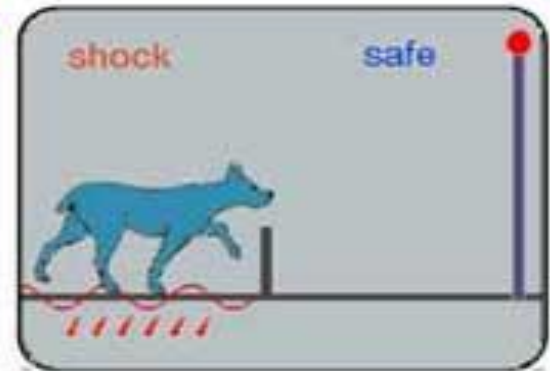
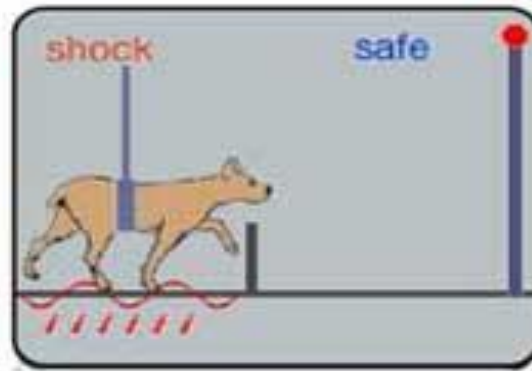
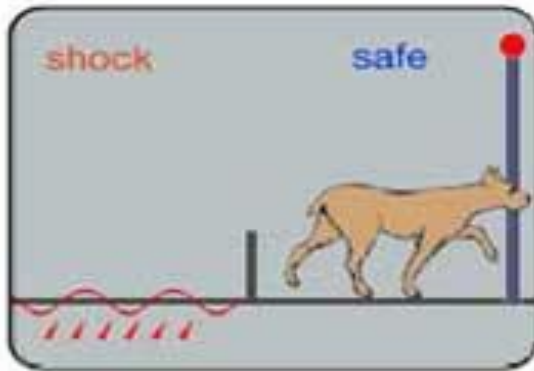
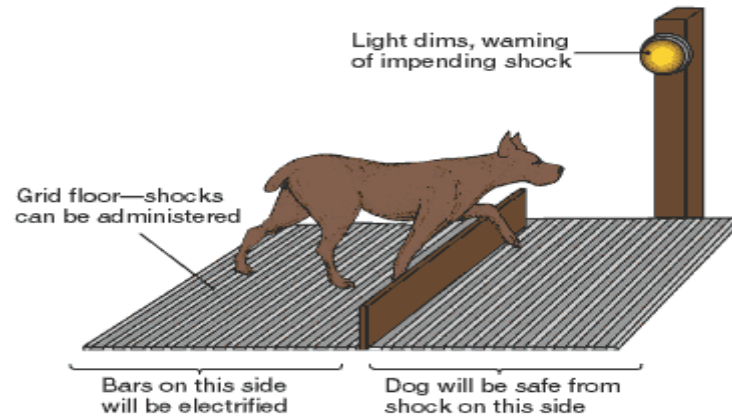
Buchenwald



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Martin Seligman's Dog Experiment: Learned Helplessness



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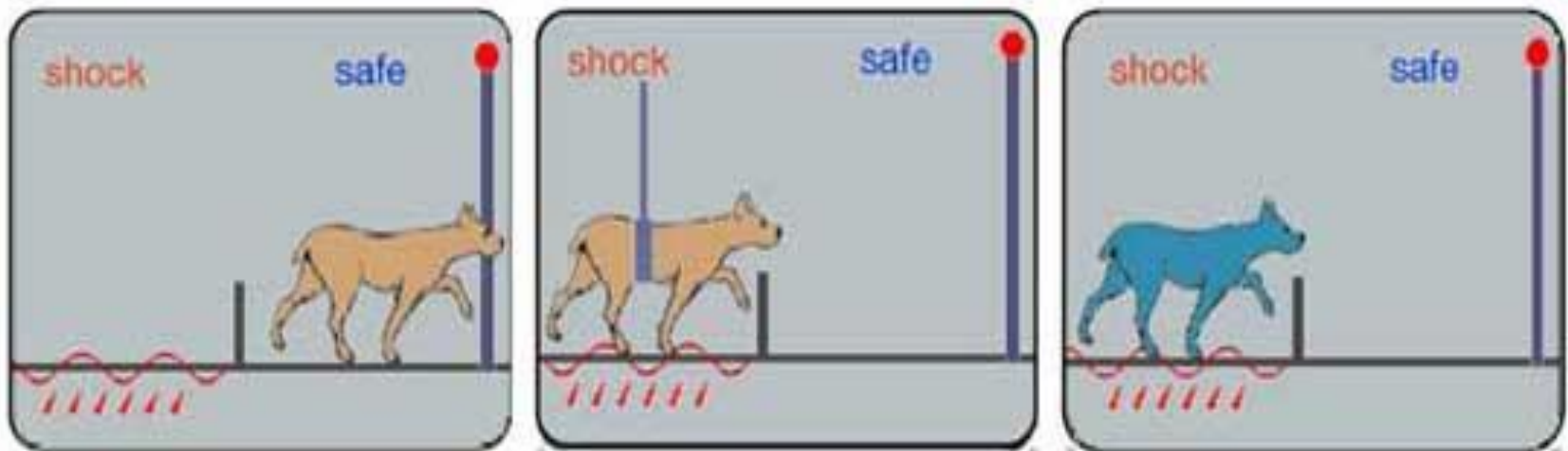
Hiroto's Human Experiment: Learned Helplessness

Experiment 1:

Group 1: Loud noise and work together to solve the combination to turn off noise. No combination worked

Group 2: Loud noise and solve the combination to turn off noise. Solvable combination worked

Group 3: No loud noise

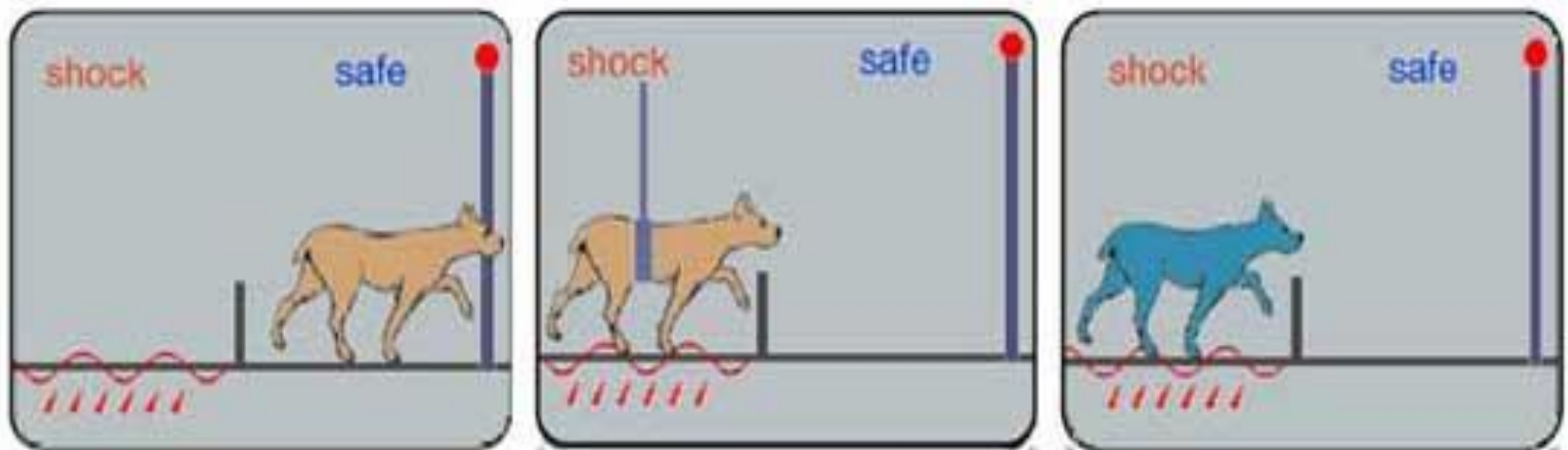


Shuttle box with an annoying swooshing sound

Hiroto's Human Experiment: Learned Helplessness

The Results: What do you think he found?

- Escapable group and no loud noise group learned the shuttle box quite easily.
- Non escapable group, the majority just sat and did not try to escape. About 30% did not become helpless
- 1 in 10 of the other groups did not try to escape as they seemed to be helpless before



Hiroto's Second Human Experiment: Learned Helplessness



Perception alone can produce helplessness

Questions this research leads to:

1. What can we make of the 33% who did not succumb to the helplessness condition?
2. If perception can make us helpless, can perception play a role in our not becoming helpless?
3. How do these perceptions impact our day to day lives, our health, our mental health and our success in navigating life?
4. Could the psychological state of mastery – the opposite of helplessness – somehow reach inside and strengthen the body?

Can Mastery Impact Illness?



Implanted tumors that had 50% lethality rate on their flanks
Three groups- **mild escapable shock** - 25% mortality
mild inescapable shock - 75% mortality
no shock - 50% mortality

Human Research:

1. Nursing Home study: 2 floors

Floor 1: they chose among options for breakfast, Movies, choice of plants in their room and whether they wished to water it or not

Floor 2: They had a schedule for the same meals, movies and days were selected for them, the nurse picks the plant and waters it.

18 months later: floor 1 residents was healthier and happier and there were fewer deaths?

The Overwhelming Evidence for Being Optimistic

1. 160 Post MCI Patients Measured for Type A, cholesterol, extent of damage, blood pressure, body mass, life style changes and optimism.
Results: - non of the factors predicted those who would or would not have a second attack and die 8.5 years later
- When examining the optimism scores 15/16 least optimistic had dies – 5/16 of the most optimistic had died
2. 1995 Nova Scotia study
1,739 healthy adults measured for optimism and happiness in life and followed for 10 years
Results: Based on a 5 point scale, each point higher on the scale translated into 22 percent lower incident of heart disease



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The Overwhelming Evidence for Being Optimistic

3. 3 Japanese Longitudinal Studies measuring both optimism and meaning in life

Results: Mortality CVD rate 160% higher for lower scores
28% less likely to have stroke for higher scores

4. Study injecting students with rhinovirus (common Cold) in a controlled environment (sleep, diet, exercise etc.)

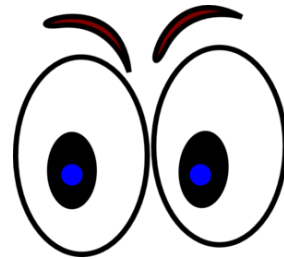
Results: - People with high positive emotions had fewer colds prior to the injection than people with average positive emotion scores and in turn they had fewer than those with Lower positive emotion scores

- Positive emotion people have fewer colds and lower IL-6 (indicator of inflammation)

5. Finally, Positive emotion and meaning in life have been linked to fewer deaths from CVA, renal failure, and HIV.

So if meaning can be found and positivity, happiness and well being can be learned, what can we do about it?

Lets take a look



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Smile



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Laughter



THE PHYSICAL BENEFITS OF LAUGHTER



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Gratitude Exercise:

Take a minute, close your eyes and think of someone who is alive who did something or said something that changed your life for the better. Someone who you never thanked. Can you see them?

Now in your mind visualize telling that person in specific terms what they did and how it impacted your life, how you often think about them and what you are doing now.

Challenge: Write it out in 3 hundred words, meet them and read the letter. Read it and then discuss it with them. A month later you will be happier

Well Being Exercise:

Take 10 minutes for 7 days and just write three things that went well each day and why they went well. You can add more if you wish but a minimum of three. Write the event and beside it write why it went well or why it happened. The event need not be earthshattering. Take a minute to examine yesterday and come up with one event and why it went well.

Challenge: Do this for a week to 21 days and you will be happier.

Creating Meaning Exercise:

What is important to you and why is it important. Write a list of things that are important to and then ask the question why. Then ask why again and again until the answer to two whys are the same. Apply this to personal and professional life

Challenge: Once you have arrived at the themes that relate to meaning and purpose, ask yourself daily in what ways have I behaved or acting in line with my meaning or purpose. What approach's in situations might I take to increase that ALIGNMENT.



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Difference between Optimists and Pessimists

Optimism - reaction to setbacks from a presumption of personal control

- Bad events are temporary setbacks
- Isolated to particular circumstances
- Can be overcome by my effort and abilities

Pessimism - reacting to setbacks from a presumption of personal helplessness:

- Bad events will last a long time
- Will undermine everything I do
- Are my fault



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The ABCDEs of: Well Being and Resilience

1. **A**dversity: Describe the event
2. **B**elief: What did you think or believe happened and the intent behind the other person's actions or why the event occurred
3. **C**onsequence: How did you feel?

Example: A friend doesn't return your phone call
Pessimist vs Optimist approach

4. **D**isruption and **D**istracton
Debate your beliefs with alternative explanations, dispute the facts or question the usefulness of your thought process

Here is where we can choose and have control

5. **E**nergization: What is different for me

How Do We Make Positivity, Personal Purpose and Controlling What *WE* Personally can control work for us at work?



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Key Points

- Our outlook on life plays a significant role in determining our well being
- This outlook is within in our control
- Do we choose to focus on those things upon which we have control or influence or those things beyond our control- The choice we make will determine our overall happiness, well-being and our health.



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Friedrich Nietzsche

Three Stages of Human Growth and Human History

Stage 1: *The Camel* (the first 4 millennia)

The camel just sits there and moans and takes it



Stage 2: *The Lion* (Since the time of the Magna Carta)

The lion says no to poverty, no to tyranny, no to ignorance



Stage 3: *The Reborn Child*

The reborn child asks “to what can we say yes”



We can all say “yes” *to more positive emotions*

We can all say “yes” *to more engagement*

We can all say “yes” *to better relationships*

We can all say “yes” *to more meaning in life*

We can all say “yes” *to more positive accomplishments*

So which Animal do you choose to be The Camel, The Lion or the Reborn Child?

What will you do to take personal control, starting today?



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Resource List

- Martin E.P. Seligman, Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being (Free Press, 2012)
- Steven J. Stein and Howard E. Book, The EQ Edge (Jossey-Bass, 2006)
- Martin E.P. Seligman, Learned Optimism: How to change your mind and your life. (Pocket Books, 1998)
- Daniel Goleman, Destructive Emotions (Random House, 2013)



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Speaker Contact Information:

- Charles (Chuck) Meltzer Ph.D.
- President, SynTECGroup
- 204-793-7067
- cmeltzer@syntecgroup.ca

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Synergistic Management of Change