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The PERMA Model: Your Scientific Theory of Happiness

 24 FEB 2017

 POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY STUDIES, SCIENCE OF HAPPINESS

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happiness nowadays.

There are many ways to reach happiness, though including **training your mind** for happiness, **spending money on others** to promote happiness, and following the code to well-being and happiness.

Most of us think we know what happiness is, but what are the actual elements that promote happiness within each of us?

Seligman's theoretical model of happiness (PERMA) helps us understand these elements and what we can do to maximize each element to reach a life full of happiness.

This article contains:

- ▶ **Seligman's PERMA Model**
- ▶ **P – Positive Emotion**
- ▶ **E – Engagement**
- ▶ **R – Relationships**
- ▶ **M – Meaning**
- ▶ **A – Accomplishments**
- ▶ **How to Apply the PERMA Model in Your Life**
- ▶ **References**

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- Written by academics, **100% science-based**
- **Includes visual** 'Wheel of Life' + how to apply it

Yes, please send me the Wheel of Life

Seligman's PERMA Model

The PERMA model was designed by **Martin Seligman** with five core element of psychological well-being and happiness. Seligman believes that these five elements can help people reach a life of fulfillment, happiness, and meaning. This model can also be applied to institutions to develop programs to help people develop new cognitive and emotional tools.

P – Positive Emotion

This element of the model is one of the most obvious connections to happiness. Being able to focus on positive emotions is more than just smiling, it is the ability to be **optimistic** and view the past, present, and future in a positive perspective.

This positive view of life can help you in relationships, work, and inspire you to be more creative and take more chances. In everyone's life, there are highs and lows, focusing on the lows increase your chances of developing depression, therefore, you should focus on the high and positive aspects of life. There are also many **health benefits to optimism** and positivity.

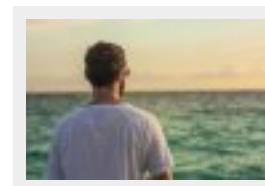
Distinguishing between pleasure and enjoyment is important in this element of the model. Pleasure is connected to satisfying bodily needs for survival; such as thirst, hunger, and sleep. Whereas enjoyment comes from

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intellectual stimulation and creativity, for example when a child completes a complex lego car that requires his concentration, he will be beaming with joy and satisfaction from his work.

This type of positive emotion is needed, as when someone enjoys the tasks in their lives they are more likely to persevere and battle challenges through creative and alternative solutions.

E – Engagement

It is important in our lives to be able to find activities that needs our full engagement. Engagement in the activities in our lives is important for us to learn, grow and nurture our personal happiness.

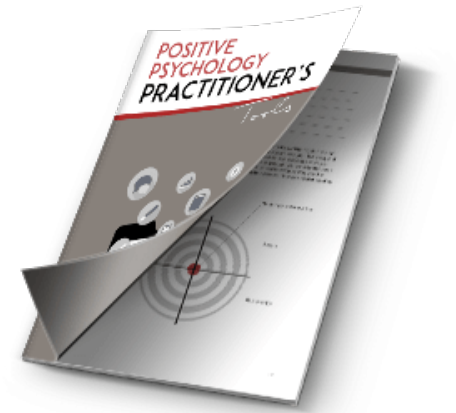
Everyone is different and we all find enjoyment in different things whether it's playing an instrument, playing a sport, dancing, working on an interesting project at work or even just a hobby.

We all need something in our lives that entirely absorbs us into the present moment, creating a 'flow' of blissful immersion into the task or activity. This type of 'flow' of engagement is important to stretch our intelligence, skills, and emotional capabilities.

R – Relationships

Relationships and social connections are one of the most important aspect of life. Humans are social animals that thrive on connection, love, intimacy, and a strong emotional and physical interaction with other humans. Building positive relationships with your parents, siblings, peers, and friends are important to spread love and joy. Having strong relationships gives you support in difficult times.

Positive Psychology Exercises



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In an **interview with Dr. Mitch Printein's** about his **course on the psychology of popularity**, he mentioned that there has been researching that shows that pain centers in our brain become activated when we are at risk of being isolated. This is because, in an evolutionary perspective, isolation would be the worse thing we could do for survival.

M – Meaning

Having a purpose and meaning to why each of us is on this earth is important to living a life of happiness and fulfillment. Rather than the pursuit of pleasure and material wealth, there is an actual meaning to our

life. Such meaning gives people a reason for their life and that there is a greater purpose to life.

To understand the greater impact of your work and why you chose to the pursuit that work will help you enjoy the tasks more and become more satisfied and happier.

Check out Itai Ivtzan's **Awareness-Meaning Therapy** that helps people find profound meaning in themselves and their lives.

A – Accomplishments

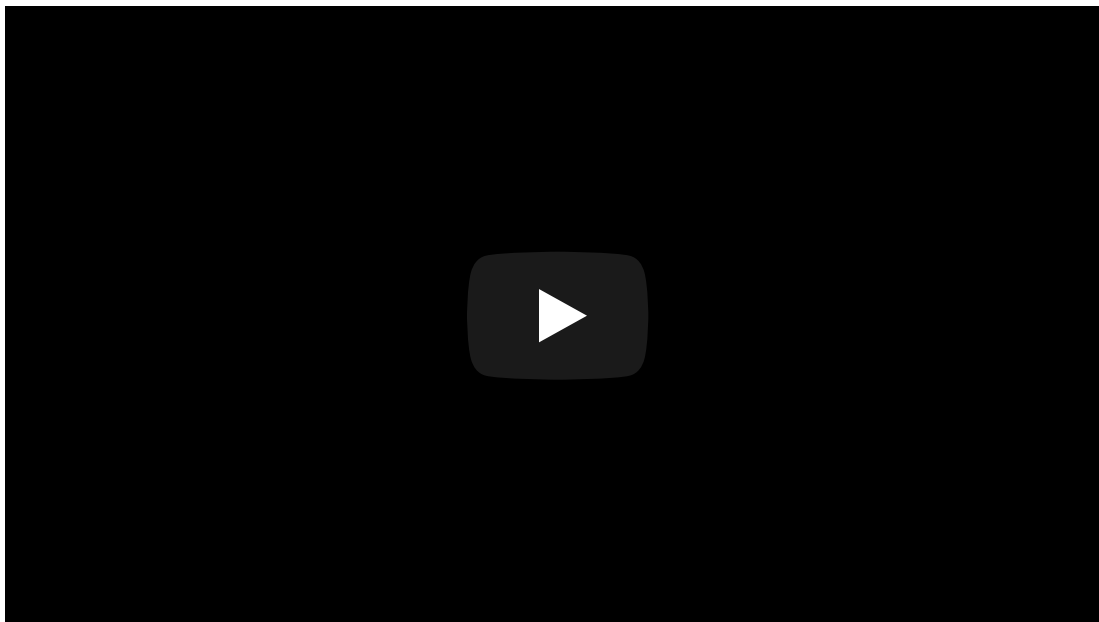
Having goals and ambition in life can help us to achieve things that can give us a sense of accomplishment. You should make realistic goals that can be met and just putting in the effort to achieving those goals can already give you a sense of satisfaction when you finally achieve those goals a sense of pride and fulfillment will be reached. Having accomplishments in life is important to push ourselves to thrive and flourish.

How to Apply the PERMA Model in Your Life

Being aware of the PERMA model is the first step to applying this theory to your life. Keep referring back to the 5 elements of the model to help you apply it to each aspect of your life. Remember to think in a positive perspective at home and at work.

Find the things that make you happy and can make you fully engaged. You could even put goals to achieving more and challenging yourself in the activities you enjoy. Focus on your relationships with your family and friends by finding ways to connect and enjoy each others company. Find the meaning to your life and what gives you a sense of purpose, it's different for everyone.

Watch Seligman's Talk About His PERMA Model



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About the Author

Mariana hopes to use positive psychology as a way of improving

lives, starting at the fundamental developmental years of life. PP has appealed to her because it deals with improving everyone's life and takes psychology beyond mental illnesses.

Get to know our whole team!

11 Comments



Ramanjit Garewal *May 19, 2017 at 10:15 am* [Reply](#)

Dear All...

Nice informative write up...

Thank you...

Presently I am pursuing my MPhil at the Department of Philosophy... Mumbai University...

My research topic for my MPhil dissertation is Happiness...

Especially from an Indian perspective...

I will appreciate it if any or all of you could forward me relevant Links...to articles... Journals... Books...

Regards...

Thanking you...

RAMANJIT GAREWAL

My email id is ramanjitji@gmail.com



gustavo *March 27, 2017 at 10:56 pm* [Reply](#)

Thank you Mariana!



Jessie van den Heuvel *February 24, 2017 at 8:38 pm*

[Reply](#)

This post has been updated on the 24th of February 2017. Please enjoy!



ines *February 10, 2017 at 10:04 am* [Reply](#)

bonjour

ou pouvais je trouver ce modele en Français,
exercice, approche....

merci



Seph Fontane Pennock *February 10, 2017 at*

1:31 pm [Reply](#)

Bonjour Ines, je suis pas sure si ou où ce
modele est disponible en Francais. Est-ce
que tu as essayé Google.fr?



Leoni *February 8, 2017 at 8:47 am* [Reply](#)

Dear all,

We have a training company in Amsterdam,
The Netherlands. Our work is PERMA inspired
and we are looking for a measurement tool to
use for big groups like communities and
teams. Does anyone have
contacts/experience with doing zero
measurements and second measurements
with PERMA? I would be incredibly grateful to

hear from you. All the best, Leoni Over The Moon Amsterdam



Susan *November 2, 2016 at 2:45 am* [Reply](#)

I would want to know if the PERMA MODEL can be put among the cognitive theory



Iman Setiadi Arif *January 28, 2016 at 5:47 am* [Reply](#)

Hello, I'm just curious about the scientific status of this PERMA model. Has it been validated scientifically? Thank you very much.

Arif
Clinical Psychologist
Lecturer at
Maranatha Christian University
BAndung – Indonesia



Steve Milton *December 27, 2016 at 10:44 am*

[Reply](#)

Hi Iman

The PERMA model is scientifically verified and peer reviewed – there are many published articles. Check out Dr Martin Seligman's (Psych, University of Pennsylvania) website for more details.

Cheers!

Steve Milton
Coach



Joseph Plowman *September 11, 2015 at 10:02 pm*

[Reply](#)

Hi,

I would argue that, firstly, as Seligman himself says, PERMA is not a theory of happiness. (Seligman even denies there are such meaningful theories with happiness as a unitary construct.)

I would also argue that PERMA as Seligman describes it is not just about 'psychological wellbeing'. Rather, it's about wellbeing itself, and aims to be a comprehensive list of objective goods. Psychological wellbeing would imply subjective states ontologically, albeit objective in existence. But wellbeing itself, or flourishing, is an objective state which is only partially instantiated by psychological factors.

Just my two-cents. 😊

Best,

Joe



Javier Santos *July 7, 2015 at 3:57 pm* [Reply](#)

Thank you for the summary Mariana!

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