

# *Development of Positive Psychology: Contributions from Traditional Psychological Disciplines*

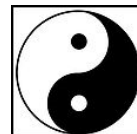
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## WHAT IS POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY?

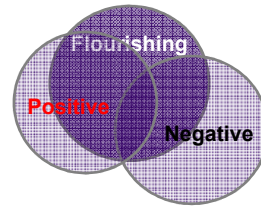
- Positive Psychology (PP):
  - Optimal human functioning
  - Positive subjective experiences, positive traits, and positive institutions & communities  
(Gable & Haidt, 2005; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000)
- Second wave PP: (Lomas, 2015; Lomas & Ivztan, 2015; Wong, 2011)
  - Encompasses both the positive and negative
  - Dialectical nature of well-being & flourishing



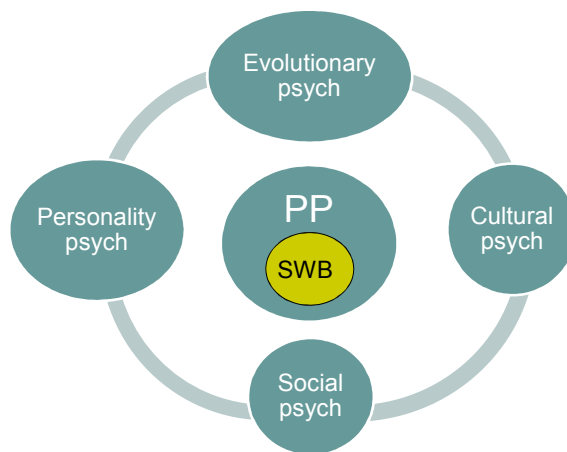
## WHAT IS POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY?



- Second wave PP: (Lomas & Ivtzan, 2015)
  - Improving well-being
  - Suffering: another dimension of human experience and functioning
    - Posttraumatic growth & building of positive resources
  - Excessive happiness and positive traits → negative outcomes
  - Flourishing
    - Not only involves enhancing the positive; encompasses capacity to experience negative emotions
    - Develop positive outcomes from both positive and negative



## FROM TRADITIONAL PSYCHOLOGICAL DISCIPLINES TO PP



## EVOLUTIONARY PSYCHOLOGY & PP



- Emotions as evolved psychological mechanisms

- Negative emotions:

- Aid in survival

(Fredrickson, 2013; Forgas, 2013)

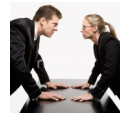
- Improved judgmental accuracy

- Utilitarian benefits

(Tamir & Ford, 2012; Tamir, Chiu, & Gross, 2007)



Specific action tendencies, e.g., run away



- Value of an emotion is not tagged to its valence

- Context:

- Inherently positive or negative characteristics can yield good or bad outcomes, depending on the context (McNulty & Fincham, 2012)

## EVOLUTIONARY PSYCHOLOGY & PP



- Positive traits, emotions, or processes do not always contribute to flourishing

- Can promote or undermine well-being

- Benefits of experiencing happiness & positive emotions:

- More successful outcomes in the domains of:

Work



Social



Health



- Leads to success-enhancing behaviors

(Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2013)

## EVOLUTIONARY PSYCHOLOGY & PP



- Pitfalls of happiness

- Happiest possible  $\neq$  best outcomes (Oishi, Diener, & Lucas, 2007)
  - Relationships; Volunteer work ✓
  - Income; education level; GPA ✗
- Happiness and positive emotions are not always beneficial (Gruber et al., 2011)
  - Intensity of happiness  
→ engage in riskier behaviors
  - Circumstances → context

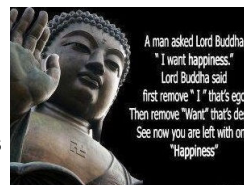


## CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY & PP



- Western vs. Eastern notions of well-being (WB)

- Different concepts of self
  - Western: self-enhancement, autonomy
    - Individualistic viewpoint of WB: Positive qualities (e.g., self-esteem) and control important to WB
  - Eastern: social aspect of self, self-transcendence
    - Collectivistic viewpoint: Social harmony is essential to WB
- (Heine et al., 1999; Joshanloo, 2014)
- Belief systems and religions of Eastern cultures
  - Focus on virtues
  - More accepting of the negative; negative emotions & suffering can contribute to WB



## CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY & PP



- How culture impacts well-being

	Self-construal	Cognition	Value of emotion
European Americans	Maintain positive self-evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximize positive emotions</li> </ul>	Analytical thinking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Polarize contradictory perspectives → emphasize one type of emotions over another</li> </ul>	Positive emotions are desirable and appropriate
Asians	Maintain positive evaluations of others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Control and moderate one's emotional experiences</li> </ul>	Holistic, dialectical thinking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek compromise &amp; accept seeming contradictions → acceptable to experience emotions of opposite valence</li> </ul>	Positive emotions are not always desired and valued

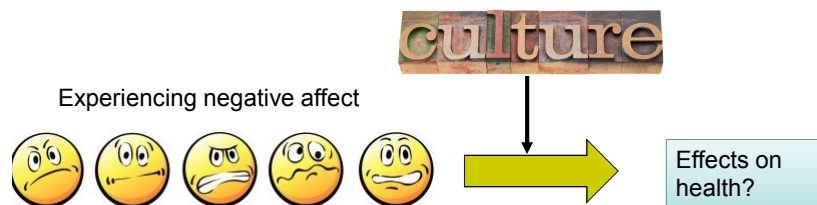
(Eid & Diener, 2001; Heine et al., 1999; Lehman et al., 2004; Nisbett et al., 2001)

## CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY & PP



- Moderating effects of culture on well-being

- Negative affect has adverse consequences on health
  - Depends on culture: stronger detrimental effects among Americans than Japanese (Curhan et al., 2014; Miyamoto et al., 2013)
  - Expression of anger associated with greater biological health risk for Americans, but not for Japanese (Kitayama et al., 2015)



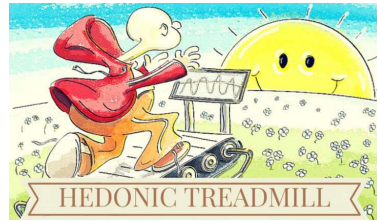
## SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY & PP



- Is it really possible to increase people's SWB?

- Adaptation theories

- Revised hedonic treadmill model (Diener et al., 2006)
  - Set-point is not neutral
  - Separate set point for each SWB facet
  - Individual differences in set points
  - SWB can and does change



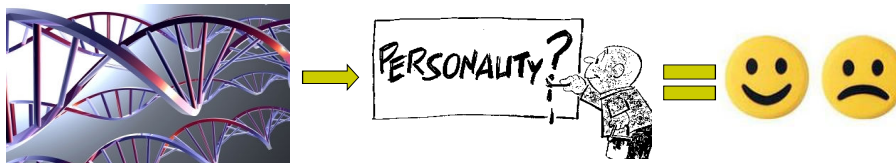
## PERSONALITY PSYCHOLOGY & PP



- Personality and well-being

- Neuroticism (N) is associated with lower happiness; Extraversion (E) is associated with greater happiness (Cheng & Furnham, 2003; DeNeve & Cooper, 1998; Hayes & Joseph, 2003)
- N is linked to higher NA; E is linked to higher PA (e.g., Costa & McCrae, 1980; Larsen & Ketelaar, 1989, 1991; Lucas & Fujita, 2000)

- Heritable differences in SWB accounted for by genetic influences from N, E, and C (Weiss, Bates, & Luciano, 2008)



## PERSONALITY PSYCHOLOGY & PP



- Personality differences in utility of happiness
  - Not everyone seeks to increase happiness
    - Low E are less motivated than high E to increase happiness when preparing for effortful tasks (Tamir, 2009)



- High N: those who experienced worry performed better on cognitively demanding tasks (Tamir, 2005)
- Experiencing trait-congruent emotions may be more beneficial to overall well-being because of their utilitarian benefits

## PERSONALITY PSYCHOLOGY & PP



- Moderating effects of personality on well-being
  - Personality traits moderate happiness-enhancing effects of positive interventions (PIs)
    - PIs of exercising gratitude and using signature strengths were more effective for high E (Senf & Liau, 2013)
    - Sustainability of effects of PIs: effects endured a week after participants stopped performing the activity, but only for low N (Ng, 2016)
  - Influences which types of emotion regulation strategies are used (Connor-Smith & Flachsbart, 2007; Gross & John, 2003)
    - Low-, but not high-N successfully decreased negative emotions when they reappraised unpleasant events (Ng & Diener, 2009)
    - Dampening pleasant events decreased positive emotions among high- but not low-N (Ng, 2012)

## CONCLUSIONS

PP is not only about strengthening the positive

- Flourishing encompasses the negative
- Optimal functioning viewed & attained differently across various cultures
- Lacks measures that reflect Eastern notions of WB

Evolutionary psych

Negative emotions not always detrimental → utilitarian benefits, positive emotions & happiness not universally beneficial

PP

SWB

Personality psych

Individual differences in WB, utility of negative emotions, indirect influences on WB

Cultural psych

Social psych

Social processes that undermine or enhance effects of WB correlates

*Thank you*