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Canadian Positive Psychology Association

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# Building Positive Ensembles: Ritual and Play

# Agenda

- + Some **RESEARCH** on play
- + Let's **PLAY** together
- + How to **DESIGN** rituals
- + Let's create **RITUALS** together

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# Definition of PLAY

Play is a state of being

"Play is something done for its own sake. It's voluntary, it's pleasurable, it offers a sense of engagement, it takes you out of time. And the act itself is more important than the outcome."





# Process of PLAY

1. Anticipation
2. Surprise
3. Pleasure
4. Understanding
5. Strength
6. Poise



# Why does play matter?

+ Play has been found to:



Play facilitates  
learning of  
emotional control,  
social competency,  
personal resiliency  
and continued  
curiosity



It forms  
connections  
between strangers  
and cultivates  
healing



Play is a biological  
necessity

# Lack of play?

+ When it comes to lack of play:



Researchers studied murderers and the two consistent things in their history were abusive families and lack of play as children



Lack of play = social, emotional and cognitive narrowing, be less able to handle stress, and often experience depression





# How does play work in groups?



Humor lowers defenses – making your ensemble more open to your message

# Why does play build positive ensembles?

+ Researchers have found that:

Positive emotions creates  
less racial bias and more  
creativity.





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# I MADE A MISTAKE! Exercise

1

Form a circle of about 8 people

2

Introduce yourself with your new superhero name

3

Point to someone in the circle and say their name

4

When you pause or make a mistake, throw your hands up and say “I made a mistake!”

5

The whole circle applauds!

6

Run to the next circle and introduce yourself



A whiteboard on a black tripod stand is positioned on the left side of the frame. The word "DEBRIEF" is written in a large, dark, sans-serif font on the whiteboard. The background is a bright blue sky with a few wispy clouds. The bottom of the image features a blue and green decorative bar.

DEBRIEF

# DEBRIEF

mistakes

What was it like to make a mistake?

What was the benefit of making mistakes?

positive experiences

How did it feel to be able to play?

How does this build positive ensembles?

# How to Build in Play Experiences



Lieberoth, A. (2015). *Games and Culture*, 10(3), 229-248.



# The Triangle Exercise

1

Silently  
choose two  
people

2

In a moment you will  
move to make an  
equilateral triangle with  
them.

3

Keep moving until  
you succeed

# The Triangle Exercise

1

Silently  
choose two  
people

2

In a moment you will  
move to make an  
equilateral triangle with  
them.

3

Keep moving until  
you succeed

4

Now be aware of  
everyone in the room.

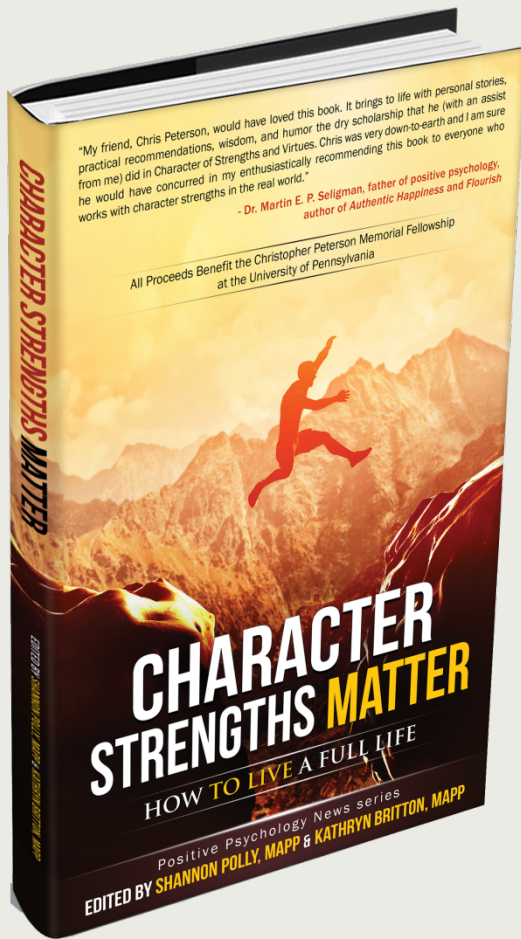
5

How can  
you help  
everyone  
succeed?

A whiteboard on a black stand is positioned on the left side of the frame. The word "DEBRIEF" is written in a large, dark, sans-serif font on the whiteboard. The background is a light blue sky with some wispy clouds. The bottom of the image features a blue and green decorative bar.

DEBRIEF

# Character Strengths Matter: How to Live a Full Life





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# The rise of modern ritual



# The rise of modern ritual



Age cohorts who  
value meaning

Distractions

Portable work

Membership decline





# The rise of modern ritual



Ritual then	Ritual now
Sacred spiritual actions	And...morning cup of coffee
Scholarship of ritual as an element of other disciplines	And...the advent of inter-disciplinary ritual studies
Mystical	And...the psychology of ritual

# The Psychology of Ritual



Rituals Enhance  
Pleasure

Vohs, Wang,  
Gino, Norton



Rituals  
Lessen  
Grieving

Gino &  
Norton



# What is a ritual?



Scholars agree that a ritual is an ACTION



# What is a ritual?



“Little certainty in identifying  
ritual’s center and its boundaries.”

Ronald Grimes



# What is a ritual?



“Little certainty in identifying  
ritual’s center and its boundaries.”

Ronald Grimes

Deeply in the bones  
Elevates the mundane  
Invites a sacred pause  
Infuses action with meaning

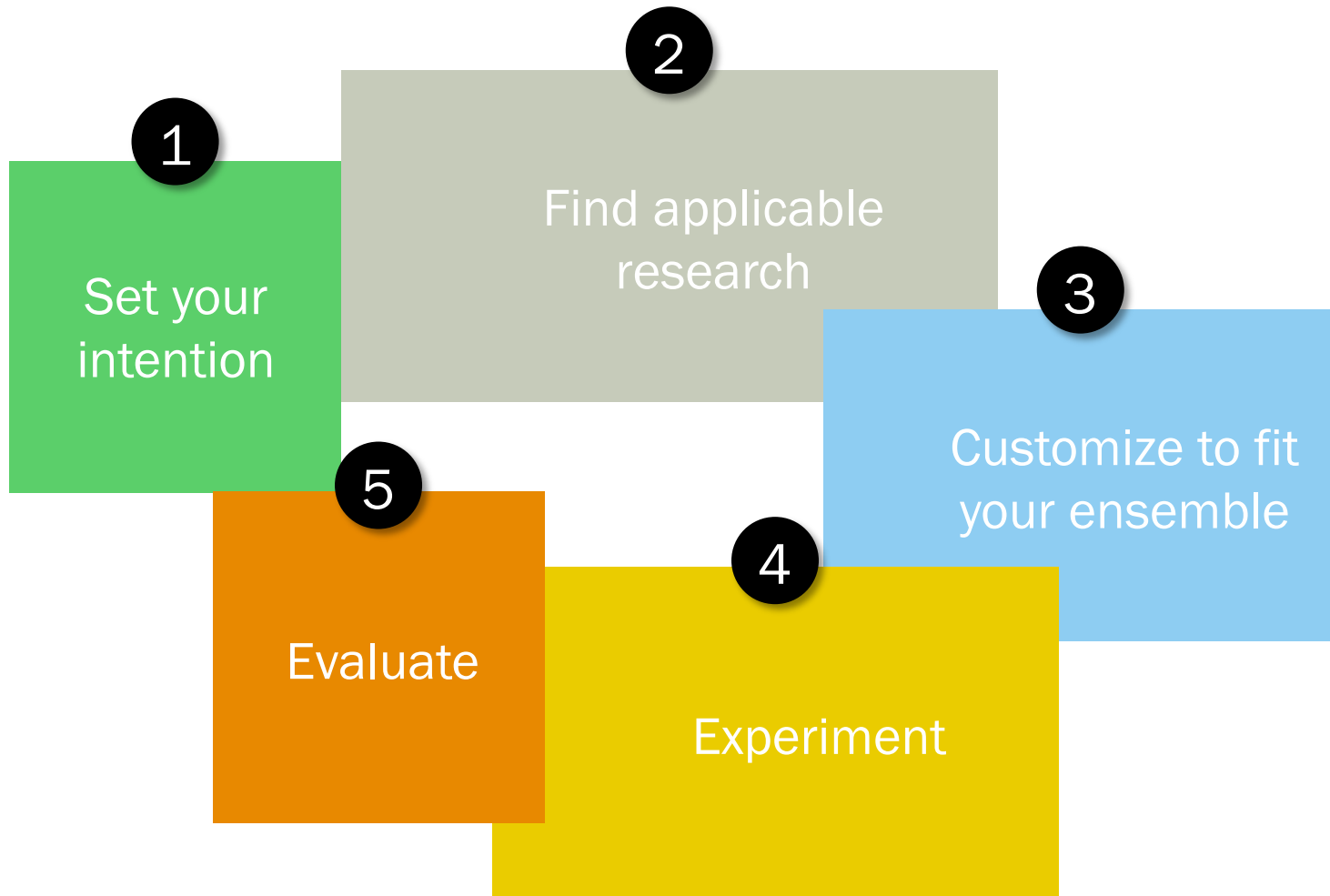
# What is a ritual?



Ritual is used to act out or to express beliefs, intentions, desired states.

Well being?  
Positive ensembles?

# Design a Ritual



# Incorporate rituals into team routines





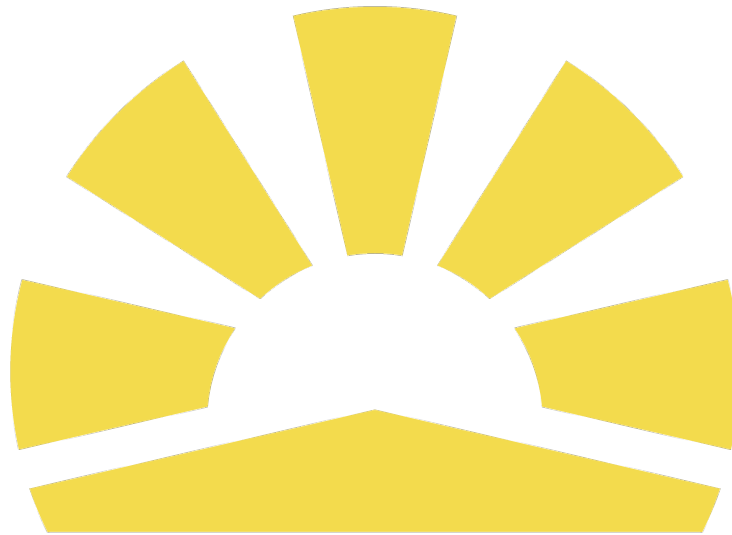
# Design one-time team rituals



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# Good Life Rituals

# RECAP

## + PLAY – the Research

- + It's not just for children

## + DESIGN your play experience

- + Mistake!
- + Triangle

## + Rituals

- + Artifacts
- + Reading aloud





# Questions?



# How can you learn more?

[www.shannonpolly.com](http://www.shannonpolly.com)

[www.positivebusinessdc.com](http://www.positivebusinessdc.com)

[www.goodliferituals.com](http://www.goodliferituals.com)



# THANK YOU



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# Ensemble Ritual

