

The origins of modern-day positive psychology

“Psychology is much larger than curing mental illness or curing diseases. I think it’s about bringing out the best in people; it’s about positive institutions; it’s about strength of character.”

– Martin Seligman

Definition

- According to [Martin Seligman](#)– who is seen as the [founding father of positive psychology](#)– the positive psychology movement can be described as:



“The study of what constitutes the pleasant life, the engaged life, and the meaningful life.”

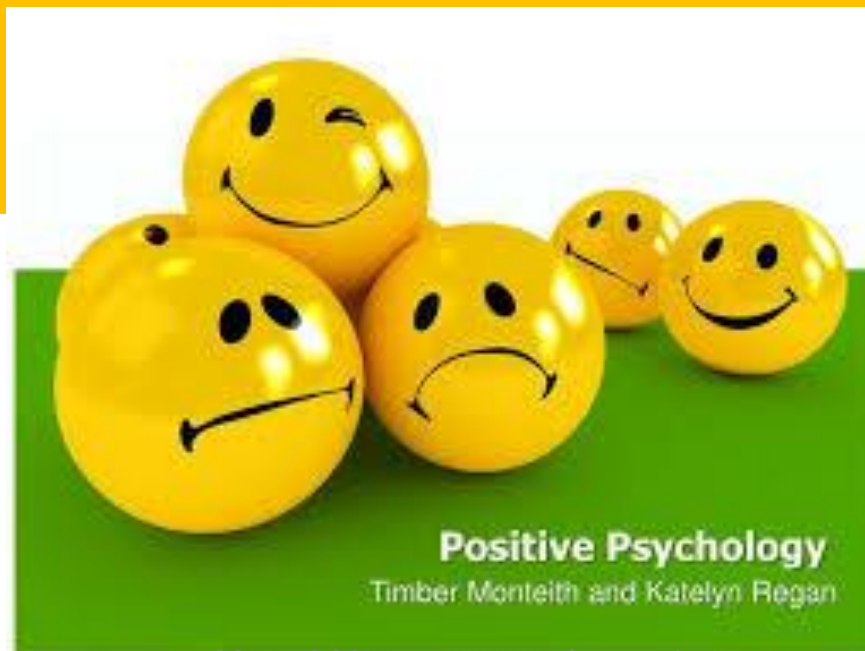
The personal stories behind the movement

- [Martin Seligman](#) is considered the [father of positive psychology](#).
- He tells the story of a central moment during 1998, a few months before he was elected president of the American Psychological Association:

- *“I was weeding the garden with my 5 year old daughter Nikki. She was throwing weeds, singing and dancing while I was actually trying to get the weeding done. I yelled at her, she walked away, then came back and said:*



•Daddy, do you remember, before my 5th birthday? I was a whiner (complainer). I whined everyday. When I turned 5 I decided not to whine anymore. That was the hardest thing I've ever done. And if I can stop whining, you can stop being such a grouch.”



Positive Psychology

Timber Monteith and Katelyn Regan

- He realized that raising children is not about fixing and correcting what's wrong with them. But identifying and enhancing their strongest qualities and what they do best.

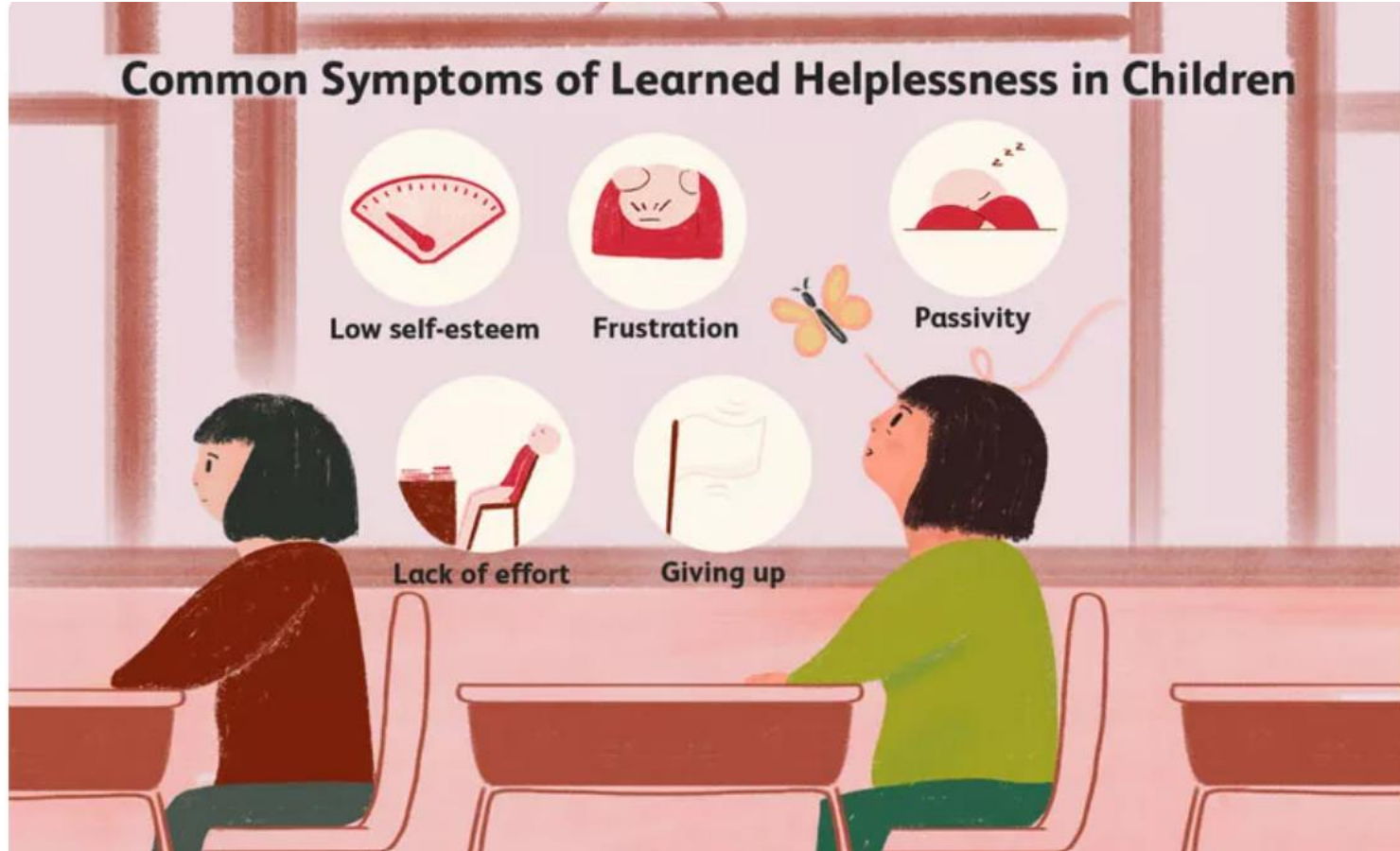


- Helping them find the environments that allow them to play out their strengths and live productive, fulfilled lives.



- After decades of experimental research and success with his **learned helplessness theory**, Seligman was appointed President of the American Psychological Association (APA) in 1998.

Learned helplessness



- When bad things happen, we like to believe that we would do whatever necessary to change the situation. Research on what is known as learned helplessness has shown that when people feel like they have no control over what happens, they tend to simply give up and accept their fate.
- Learned helplessness occurs when an animal is repeatedly subjected to an aversive stimulus that it cannot escape. Eventually, the animal will stop trying to avoid the stimulus and behave as if it is utterly helpless to change the situation. Even when opportunities to escape are presented, this learned helplessness will prevent any action.

- Positive psychology is mainly striving to find applications in relationships, both in personal and work-related.
- It is presumably aiming to further expand on the scope of this dimension as well.
- It is also looking to improve upon structures and frameworks within the military and, more aggressively, in education.

- **Parameters:**

- The phenomenon of “**flow**”, which is colloquially referred to as being “in the zone”.
- Happiness in general, and also how to classify different types of happiness as well as their effects on well-being and productivity.
- Creativity
- Determining and promoting values and virtues, which is directly tied into “**eudaimonia**” or “the good life”.
- The cultivation of talents and strengths, particularly in relation to work and sports performance.
- Mindfulness
- Social cognition and skills

- One important distinction between positive psychology and virtually every other branch of psychology is that positive psychology *does not deal* in what we might broadly call mental or psychological illness - which includes such things as depression (although it's beginning to make headway into possible treatments for this), schizophrenia, sociopathy among others.

- Another way to put this is **that it focused on healthy growth or development, rather than treatment of pathology.**
- To this end, positive psychology does not cover negative emotions or affective states, and thus does not delve into understanding, explaining or treating them.

- **Negative emotions are more powerful than positive emotions.**
 - **True**
 - **False**

• 'Hedonia' means-----

- A. pain
- B. discomfort
- C. pleasure
- D. none of them

• 'Eudonia' means-----

- A. sense of inferiority
- B. sense of guilt
- C. sense of well-being
- D. none of them

Happiness is related to-----

- A. Developmental Psychology
- B. Positive Psychology
- C. Experimental Psychology
- D. None of them